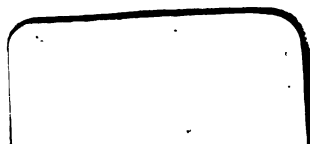


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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME XI.

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**CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,
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THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1873,

ENTITLED

THE BLUE CHAMBER,

WILL BE FOUND AT THE END OF THE VOLUME.

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1873.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGERD," "A PERFECT TREASURY," &c. &c.

CHAPTER VII. A NEW PROFESSION.

READER, have you ever lived in lodgings? If so, you cannot fail to have observed that your landlady is in the enjoyment of all those Woman's Rights for which so many of her sisterhood are so vainly clamorous; that her domestic sway is supreme, and that her husband is very literally "nowhere." If you see him at all (which is unusual), it is always in a subordinate capacity; if you hear him address his wife—"answer" her in the sense that that "hussy" the servant-girl understands the phrase, he never does—it is in meek and deferential accents. Under the course of treatment to which he is subjected, he not seldom succumbs altogether, which is why so many landladies are widows; but if he lives, he plays second fiddle in the matrimonial duet. If, being yourself a lady, and interested in the triumphs of your sex, you inquire of his wife how this most desirable state of things has been brought about, she will plump down, uninvited, on the nearest chair, begin to rock herself to and fro, and presently burst into tears. "He'd need do all he could, ma'am," she explains, "and never cross me in anything while the breath is in him, for when I married him I was well-to-do in the world, and he has brought ruin upon me."

It may have been drink, or it may have been a passion for bagatelle, or even skittles (for some men are very low in their tastes); but he has spent her money, and surely the least he can do in reparation is to constitute himself her slave. In China the villain would probably have lost him-

self, after all else was gone, to some antagonist at cards or dice; but that being impossible in a civilised country, his services are his ruined wife's—"and very little use, Heaven knows, he is to me."

Now Lucullus Mansion was a glorified lodging-house, the very pink and perfection of one, but still a lodging-house—and what holds good of the least holds good of the lordliest, in such cases; its mistress, Mrs. Hodlin Barmby, had been ruined by the husband over whom she now reigned. This mischance had not been owing to bagatelle, nor yet to skittles. Mr. Hodlin Barmby was a gentleman by birth and taste, and had lost his wife's money where he had lost his own, years before, in a gentlemanly way, on Epsom Downs. He was the younger son of a baronet, and had had but four thousand pounds to lose, but such was his impulsive nature and so broad were his views, that he would have got rid with equal facility of forty thousand. The loss of his own patrimony affected him very little, but that of his wife's went to his heart. "My dear," said he, on the evening of that fatal Derby, "I have been a selfish scoundrel. You have only to endorse that statement and I'll blow out my—"

"Stop, Charles," cried his wife, imperatively (up to that hour she had been the mildest of women, and permitted him to have his own way in everything). "You have shown that there is nothing of that description to blow out; there is no use in crying over spilt milk, but henceforth permit me to manage matters. Will you do as I tell you; and let me hold our purse-strings in case there may be one day anything in it?"

"My dear," said he, with all the solemnity of which he was master, "with all my worldly goods—if I ever have any—I thee

endow. It is true I said that once before; but the obligations of the marriage service have a certain legal compulsion about them, like a tradesman's bill, which is offensive to a man of honour; this time you have my word as a gentleman. Henceforth I am entirely in your hands."

"Very good, Charles," rejoined his wife, who never gave him one word of reproach for having ruined her, except what was implied in that form of address; up to that time, she had always called him "Charley," but henceforth that playful diminutive was denied to him; the position she designed for him did not permit of it. "Very good, Charles; I feel confident you will never repent it. You are doubtless surprised at my receiving your bad news so coolly, but the fact is, the catastrophe is only what I expected would happen sooner or later, even at the moment when I accepted you."

"The deuce you did!" exclaimed her husband.

"Yes, Charles," she went on, "a woman is always a fool when she is in love; but she is not always unconscious of the fact. However, as I say, I knew you would come to smash, as you had done before, and I laid my plans for this emergency long ago. I don't say, mind, that they will recover the money you have lost to-day—but if they succeed as I expect they will do, they will enable us to live in comfort."

"That would be more than I deserve," said Mr. Hodlin Barmby, meekly.

"Listen, Charles. You are not a clever man, but you are very nice. Everybody likes you, and would do anything for you, if they could, short of dipping their hands into their pockets—"

"I shouldn't like them to do that," put in Mr. Barmby, reddening.

"You have nothing to do with it, sir," replied the lady, firmly. "Please to remember that it is I who am manager now. As it happens, however, we are agreed upon this point—I do not intend to be under obligations to anybody. Let us add up our assets. You have, on your side, social popularity and some judgment in wines and horses. I, on my part, understand how to keep house, to give really good dinners, and to set people at ease with one another. Now you, and many persons who have money to spare, have often told me that at the very best hotels—as they are at present managed—you get nothing fit to eat, and are half poisoned by the wines. The master and mistress, being themselves only fourth-

rate people, cannot of course be expected to know what persons of position are accustomed in their own houses, and are only bent on getting so much a head out of every meal."

"Good gracious!" ejaculated her husband, arranging his shirt-collar, "we are going to keep an inn. I see the sign before my eyes. The Pig and Periwinkle. Hodlin Barmby; licensed retailer of spirits."

"No, Charles, we are not. If you were a wiser man, we might indeed take the Star and Garter at Richmond, and make our fortune; but I anticipated your conventional objections to such a scheme. We must content ourselves with a fashionable boarding-house. You will superintend the wine department, look after the men-servants, and preside at the table d'hôte. As the son of a baronet—to which circumstance you must make constant allusion—you will attract the small deer in crowds; while our own friends will rally round us, at first for our own sake, and afterwards because they will find themselves ten times more comfortable at Lucullus Mansion than elsewhere. I fixed on the name six months ago, ever since you told me you had put the 'pot' on Lucullus, who, Lord George informed me, was named after a Roman gourmand. The house is that large hotel in which we stayed during our honeymoon at Balcombe, and which has been advertised for sale these three weeks. Of course we can't buy it, but I have no doubt I can make some arrangement for carrying it on for the next year or so."

"But where is the money to come from, my good woman?"

"The money, sir? Do you know how Rothschild made his money? Entirely by confining himself to his own affairs. Pray don't let me have to remind you for the third time of the change in our positions."

And thus it was that Mrs. Hodlin Barmby became the tenant of Lucullus Mansion. Some say an uncle of hers who had made his fortune in trade, and had looked very coldly on her in her days of prosperous dissipation, lent her the necessary money; others assert that she had always kept a few hundred pounds of her own against that "rainy day" which she had foreseen only too clearly; and one or two scandalous persons will have it that the required capital came from Lord George. To these last I give the lie direct. Mrs. Hodlin Barmby was as honest as she was pretty, and Lord George Despard was as poor as he was unprincipled—a comparison which to those

who know him implies that he had not a single penny. His "countenance," however, was invaluable to the new speculation, of which he good-naturedly appointed himself tout in ordinary; and he even brought Lady George herself—with whom he was not accustomed to travel—to shed a social lustre on the establishment in its first season. By this time, thanks to the tactics of its female manager, it was a very thriving concern, and most deservedly so. Living, indeed, was far from cheap at Lucullus Mansion, but on the other hand it was not only good, but excellent. The gravy soups did not remind you of beef-tea; the entrées were to be eaten, not passed untasted; the wines (even the port) were to be drunk. The house was always full during the two seasons of which Balcombe boasted, and which extended respectively from the beginning of November to the end of April—from the beginning of May to the end of October—and Mr. Hodlin Barmby was never without a ten-pound note in his pocket, to spend as he pleased. He kept his word to his wife; never disobeyed her; never interfered with her arrangements; and always "knew his place," which, when not at the head of his table d'hôte, was a very subordinate one. At the same time he was not without his uses. Disagreeable things will happen even in the best regulated households; gentlemen sometimes came to the mansion who fancied that their length of purse permitted them to find fault without occasion, and to take other unaccountable liberties. To these Mr. Barmby presented in person a printed card with the following inscription: "H. B. presents his compliments to —, and while thanking him for his past patronage begs respectfully to decline a continuance of it, after to-morrow, at noon, at which hour Number—(the apartment of the offender) has been bespoken by a gentleman."

Mr. Hodlin Barmby was six feet two in his stockings, besides being, as we have already hinted, the son of a baronet, and this combination of physical and moral force never failed in its desired effect. If any lady misconducted herself, or (as happened once or twice) arrived as a privateer under the false colours of Respectability, Mrs. Hodlin Barmby needed no assistance to settle that little matter; she was five feet ten in her—well, in her evening shoes, and the co-heiress of a most respectable county clergyman who had made forty thousand pounds in mines; and if one of

these two female antagonists happened to be taken with hysterics, it was never Mrs. H. B., let me assure you.

And yet upon ordinary occasions nothing could be more agreeable and even winning than the excellent hostess of Lucullus Mansion. When she entered our heroine's apartment now, in answer to the latter's courteous "Pray come in," Evy thought she had never beheld a handsomer or more kindly-looking woman.

"Pardon this intrusion, Miss Carthew," said she, "but it is my duty, as your landlady, to ask whether you have all you want—you are dressed, I see. Else if I could have helped you, I should have been very glad. One never gets proper attention from one's own maid on the first day of one's arrival anywhere—or at least that used to be my experience, when I kept a maid."

Evy's own personal attendant had, in fact, been so occupied in getting her tea, and making her acquaintances below stairs, that she had neglected to visit her young mistress until she was far advanced with her toilet, and occupied as Evy was with her own tender thoughts, she had declined her services and dismissed her.

"I have got on very well, Mrs. Barmby, thank you," said Evy; "and find everything very nice, quite as nice as in one's own home, just as your old friend Mrs. Mellish told me I should do. By-the-bye, I have a note for you from her, which in the hurry of our arrival I forgot to give you down-stairs."

While Mrs. Barmby read it, Evy took stock of her, as women are wont to do of one another. How tastefully, yet quietly, she was dressed; and what a perfect lady she looked in that grey silk trimmed with black lace, an attire rather too matronly perhaps for so young a woman—she was not more than thirty-two at worst—but still that was a fault on the right side. She would grow too stout in time, doubtless, but at present her figure was splendid, and if all that beautiful hair was her own—and it really looked as if it was—she had more than Evy herself had, though being of a lighter brown, it made less show. What long lashes her eyes had, and—but, surely they were wet with tears!

Evy was not mistaken, there was something in that little note which had set Mrs. Barmby crying.

"It must seem very foolish, dear Miss Carthew," explained she, "for a person in my position to give way to sentiment, but

I have not seen Mary Mellish—she was Mary Newcombe then—for these fifteen years. We were great allies at school, and it was not likely that I should forget her of course; but I didn't expect her to remember *me*, or at all events to write so very kindly. Such things don't happen to me every day, I assure you. 'You must make a friend of her'—that's of you, Miss Carthew, Mary says, 'for my sake! May I?'

"I am sure, Mrs. Barmby, I hope you will," said Evy, earnestly.

"Did Mrs. Mellish tell you about me—I mean about my little antecedents—my dear?"

"Yes," said Evy, blushing.

"Come, that's a comfort," exclaimed the other, simply. "I know it's very weak and foolish in me, but I do like ladies who come here to know something about who I was. Not that I was anything to boast of, but only that they shouldn't ask me, so very sharply at the outset, whether the beds are aired, and if there isn't some reduction in our charges in case they have their luncheons out. Of course *you* wouldn't have done it; my instinct told me that you were just what Mary describes you to be, and seeing you so young and winsome—just such a one, I thought, as the only child we ever had might have grown up to be, had she lived—I made bold to come and see you in your room, my dear."

"That was very kind of you," said Evy, "and, to tell the truth, I was rather alarmed at the prospect of going down to the table d'hôte, without knowing anybody there."

"You shall sit next to me, my dear, and your uncle shall be on the other side of you, if you please," said Mrs. Barmby, assuringly, "though I did intend it to be the other way, in which case you would have had Mr. De Coucy for your neighbour, a most charming old gentleman. He will probably propose to you in a day or two; but you must not mind that."

"But I think I shall mind it very much!" ejaculated Evy, with unfeigned alarm.

"Oh no, you won't, when you have seen a little of him. It's only a way he has with all young ladies; and when you have refused him—as of course you will do—it will not make a bit of difference in his pleasant talk (for he is a most agreeable man), and it will only amuse you the more

to see him laying siege to somebody else. He is a thorough gentleman at heart, besides being very well connected; he's first cousin to Lord Dirleton, who lives in your neighbourhood, by-the-bye, and whom you doubtless know."

"I have seen him," said Evy, conscious that she was growing very red; "but I cannot say I know him. Will there be many people at the table d'hôte to-day?"

"Well, my dear, about fifty." Mrs. Barmby took out a slip of paper, with a list of names very neatly written out, and referred to it. "Yes; there are fifty-three, which, unless somebody omits to come at the last moment—I hope it will be that Mr. Paragon—will make us a little lopsided. Come down as soon as the first bell rings, and you will find me waiting for you—and then you will not be flustered by the mob of people. And, lest I should forget it when the time comes, don't pass the kromeskies, nor the crème renversée, my dear, whatever you do, for they're perfection, though perhaps I ought not to say so." And with that farewell word of advice, and a reassuring smile, Mrs. Hodlin Barmby sailed majestically out of the room, like a frigate parting from her convoy.

The idea of sitting next but one to Mr. De Coucy fluttered Evy not a little; not because he was likely to make her an offer of marriage, though *that* was a little embarrassing, but because his relationship to Lord Dirleton made him first cousin once removed to her own dear Jack. Everything else sank into insignificance before that tremendous fact. If she could only get him to talk of Jack, without his suspecting her tender interest in the topic, how very nice that would be; and yet, if she blushed as she had done just now, how could he help suspecting?

Here was another knock at the door, and in came Uncle Angelo with a pill-box in his hand.

"Do you think it would excite general observation, Evy," inquired he, "if I were to take one of these little pills between the courses?"

"Indeed, I do think it would, dear uncle," answered Evy, appealingly.

"Very good, my dear; then I suppose I must be content with my Vichy water, and the elixir after dinner, for nobody will know that from sherry unless by the smell."

Here the first dinner-bell sounded, and

Evy laid her small hand, which trembled not a little, on her uncle's arm, and descended to the *salle à manger*.

PLANETARY LIFE.

BY HERMES.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

OUR philosophy has however dreamed to some purpose, and the result of one of the dreams is a general belief, almost amounting to a conviction, that the planets are inhabited. Of the life in one of these planets the following papers give a fragmentary account. The things described are not creatures of the imagination, but actual realities of the Star City, and the narration is consequently to be looked upon as that of a traveller, who makes others acquainted with the remarkable objects he has seen in an unexplored country. Some of the manners and institutions of Montalluyah may suggest improvements in our own world; but they are not held up as models to be imitated. This assertion that the Star City is not a creation of fancy will, doubtless, be received with incredulity. Time, and time only, will prove its truth.

Indeed, the institutions of Montalluyah so completely harmonise with each other, that it would be difficult to adopt some of them to the exclusion of the rest, and I do not know a case to which I could more aptly apply Lord Bacon's maxim: "It is a secret both in nature and state that it is safer to change many things than one." The customs connected with the dinner table, for instance, which I describe in my first paper, could only be healthful in a climate where from early youth men have been thoroughly trained to habits of moderation. Here, as a rule, abstinence is easier than temperance, and we must, like Ulysses, be tied to the mast if we would resist the temptation of the siren's song. It is not so in Montalluyah, the Star City, where, as I have said in "Another World," all have been taught by their great lawgiver that intemperance destroys the power of enjoyment, and that like guests invited to a banquet, we ought neither to run riot nor to reject the good things offered to us in love.

NO. I. DINNER IN ANOTHER WORLD.

The citizens of Montalluyah, situated in the planet which may possibly be your so-called Mars, although they have attained a high degree of moral excellence, are by no

means ascetic in their habits, but constantly endeavour to obtain, from every source, the greatest amount of innocent entertainment. It would be not altogether wrong to call them sensual, if it were assumed that this word did not imply any sort of moral degradation, and that everything is made subservient to health and mental elevation.

Many of the particulars concerning the laws, manners, and customs of Montalluyah are now before the (terrestrial) public, but a description of the manner in which they dine on a grand scale, in the favoured city, has not yet been given.

Beginning with the background of the picture, let me attempt to convey some notion of our interiors. That we are able to utilise sunbeams for the production of colour has already been stated in "Another World." Of this power we avail ourselves in the decoration of our rooms, which are highly ornamented, the rays of the sun being concentrated so as to form part of the general design.

With us it is a leading principle to give our interiors such an appearance as to combine the comforts derived from walls and roofs, with a sense of freedom that belongs to a life in the open air. Thus we make our ceilings resemble a cloudless sky, with a clearness that, as far as the eye is concerned, more than approximates to reality. The only visible difference, between the artificial and the natural luminary, consists in the circumstance that the former does not dazzle the sight. In our palaces and principal houses every article of furniture is imitated from some attractive object, say, a picturesque rock, or a beautiful bird or flower, the greatest attention being paid to form and colour. Do not imagine from what I have just stated that we only appreciate a crude realism, and think that the only duty of art is to copy. In nature, with us as with you, many dark nooks and sharp angles are to be found, but not in our rooms. In the shape of these and of our doors, windows, furniture, and picture-frames, everything is circular, oval, or otherwise curvilinear. We like roundness and undulating lines, and look upon an angle as something to be avoided.

Our ears are sensitive as well as our eyes, and we are careful to prevent the recurrence of harsh sounds. The floors of our palaces are, indeed, of marble, and in the style which you would call "Mosaic," but our movable articles of furniture run upon casters covered with a material that,

while it facilitates movement, also renders it noiseless. The material is the hide of the hippopotamus, an animal which, as the readers of "Another World" are aware, we first regarded as our worst foe, and afterwards discovered to be of the utmost utility. When we use the hide as a covering for casters two layers are cemented together by the action of the sun, and are then gilded or bronzed, according to taste. Our doors and windows move on similar casters. When a knob is touched the door gradually glides sideways into the wall, in which there is a groove to receive it. If not checked by another pressure of the knob, the door, when it has reached its extreme point, will return to its place.

The windows, called by us "Zoolo Firmini" (firmament viewers) are as transparent as yours, when your panes are made of the finest plate-glass, but we do not use the same material. The hippopotamus, besides his principal hide, has several thin skins, and immediately below the thick outer hide lies the skin from which we make our panes, and which has this advantage, that it is not brittle. It is in itself diaphanous, but it does not attain the degree of transparency which we require without the application of electricity, and which, in the case of some hippopotami, is not attained at all. When the inner skin is of a coarser kind, we use it as you use "ground glass," and skins of a middling quality are found serviceable in ladies' boudoirs. The material, however, of whatever quality, is capable of receiving transparent colours, the beauty and brightness of which it heightens in an extraordinary manner, and we are great proficient in the art of producing painted windows. When our subjects are real we idealise far less than you; when they are ideal we idealise much more. Our pictures likewise differ from yours through an entire absence of black, so valuable in your pictures, the difference probably arising from the fact that our shades are red.

Let us now come to the dining-hall, called by us "Vuliole," that is to say, the "gratifier of appetite." This is a large circular room communicating with the hall of reception by means of two doors so skilfully contrived that, when they are closed, there is no indication of even their existence. Round the walls are panels of the most transparent kinds, nearly the height of the room, and somewhat less than three of your feet in width. Between every two of the panels stands a statue of some lady of Montalluyah remarkable for

talent, virtue, or beauty—statues of celebrated men being reserved for our galleries. Unpleasant subjects are avoided everywhere, except where the treatment of them is requisite for the ends of science, or for perpetuating some memorable incident. But even in these exceptional cases, the pictures and statues that do not make an agreeable impression are kept in establishments appropriated to this particular purpose. On the panels behind the statues are exquisite paintings, showing the condition of Montalluyah before and after the reforms took place which brought it to its present happy condition. In different parts of the hall are fountains springing from the midst of flowers of exquisite beauty.

The ceiling of the grand dining-hall in the palace of the Tootmanyoso—or supreme ruler—is concave, and painted so as to represent the sky studded with stars. These stars are connected with each other by links invisible to the naked eye, which communicate with a reservoir of electricity; and as soon as the fluid is brought into operation, they shine with a brilliant light, which is, however, softened by painted transparencies. The Tootmanyoso's seat is not higher than the others, but is distinguished from them by a star of exceptional brilliancy, which shines over the spot occupied by the monarch, being so arranged that it throws its converging light on his head, covering him, as it were, with an aureole of glory.

When a dinner-party is given in the royal palace, the guests at first assemble in a large oval hall, where they are received by the Tootmanyoso, seated on a dais. As they enter, their names are announced, according to sex, by one of two masters of the ceremonies, and the approach of each guest, accompanied by an officer appointed for that purpose, is preceded and accompanied by musical strains, generally conveying to the hearers an intimation of the talent, or other quality, by which the lady or gentleman is distinguished. I have stated elsewhere that with us music, as well as flowers, has a language of its own. I may now add that our instruments are, for the most part, different from yours, and are found serviceable in many details of ordinary life. A gentleman, when he is at a short distance from the dais, makes an inclination and falls on one knee. The duty of kneeling does not extend to the lady guests, and even the gentleman is assisted in the act of obeisance by a sloping rise of the part of the floor which is touched by his knee, and which is, more-

over, covered with padded cushions. After this preliminary the guests take their places on soft couches, placed in recesses at equal distances from each other.

When all are assembled the fact is announced by a short musical strain, and a little girl, selected for the elegance of her manner and the beauty of her voice, and educated for her particular office, enters the reception-hall in a dress covered with freshly-gathered flowers, the fragrance of which pervades the atmosphere. Presently, taking her place on a revolving pedestal, and standing in a statue-like attitude, she strikes a chord on an instrument somewhat similar to the lyre of the ancient Greeks. At this signal the hum of conversation ceases, and the little girl describes, in a pleasing song, the particulars of the coming feast—what you commonly call the menu, or bill of fare—the pedestal revolving all the time, that she may in turn face every one of the company.

When the song is ended, the inner doors of the reception-room are opened by an electrical knob, and the girl, descending from her pedestal, leads the way into the dining-hall. She is followed by the ladies, two and two, in a strictly defined order. Thus the first rank is given to age and talent, the second to beauty combined with virtue, and so forth. In "Another World" I have incidentally stated the fact that, with us, the dinner-table is circular, and that the guests are seated on the convex side only. Let me here add that it is fixed to the ground, and that this portion of the floor can be lowered entire to the offices beneath, and restored when wanted to its former place, which may, in the meanwhile, be occupied by another table.

Pursuing the order in which they entered the room, the ladies occupy alternate seats at the convex side of the table, to which, strange as it must appear to you at the first glance, their backs are turned. The gentlemen then enter, also according to a precedence regulated by a respect for moral and intellectual excellence, and each takes his seat next to the lady whom he prefers as a companion at the banquet. The attendants stand on the concave side of the table, and one of these, when all the guests are seated, touches a spring, which communicating with a piece of mechanism, causes each chair to describe a semicircle and bring towards the table the faces of their several occupants. Opposite the guests are mirrors made of the material above

described, which are fixed in the wall, where they are separated from each other by a narrow panel of exquisite workmanship. The ladies and gentlemen are thus reflected in various compartments, and can contemplate each other with mute admiration, without their glances being directly observed. Round the room at intervals above these mirrors are recesses occupied by musicians, who, concealed by a drapery of the finest golden tissue, accompany each course of the dinner with appropriate music; the little girl, who is so important in the reception-room, and who now reclines on a revolving couch, sometimes responding to them with her lyre.

Against the walls of the dining-room are suspended placards, which may be varied at pleasure, and which are inscribed with precepts enjoining temperance and decorum. While on the subject of decorum I may remark that, by us, a reference, during meals, to any painful or otherwise unpleasant subject would be considered a gross breach of etiquette. Some of your medical gentlemen might feel ill at ease at a dinner in Montalluyah.

To enter into the details of our cuisine would occupy too much space. The courses at one of our grand dinners are many and various, and we have no objection to animal food, but as we are firmly convinced that it is inexpedient to put too great a stress on the digestive powers, we reduce nearly all our viands to a pulp; that the stomach may be saved unnecessary labour. Even our fruits are scarcely ever eaten raw, but by a somewhat elaborate process their syrups are extracted and poured into moulds, each of which represents the fruit to which the particular syrup belongs. Whether our method of cooking could be beneficially adopted in the colder climates of your earth—and all your climates are colder than ours—I will not undertake to say. The extreme heat of our planet renders it necessary that animal food should be deprived as much as possible of its solidity, especially when prepared for the use of our higher, that is to say, our more intellectual classes. The abstinence from raw fruits is due to another consideration. In consequence of the heat these are commonly peopled with animalcules of every description, some of which, if swallowed, would prove a fertile source of disease.

Passing from meat to drink, it is not too much to say that our favourite beverage is water, which with us is of a most pure and delicious quality, agreeable not only to the

taste but to the eye. Our other beverages, which consist principally of the fresh juices of fruit, prepared on the day on which they are drunk, are gently stimulating, and being unfermented, incapable of causing intoxication. Not that inebriety is beyond our reach. We not only understand fermenting, but have a plant, the very fragrance of which causes those who approach it to become somewhat intoxicated, and fills them with a desire to taste its berries. A few of these are sufficient to inebriate the strongest man, and so much havoc did they cause in former times, that the plant acquired the name of "Gusharla," or "cruel tempter." As the juice of the berries is useful for medicinal purposes, we do not destroy the plant altogether, but surround it with walls too high for even the most adventurous to climb.

Let me return to the dining-hall and its arrangements. The attendants, whose place is on the concave side of the table opposite to the guests, form a special class, having been instructed in their duties from early youth, as soon as the "character-divers" have ascertained their special qualities. They have generally been selected with a regard to elegance of form and manners, and they are attired in picturesque dresses of purple, blue, and scarlet, with a beautiful turban composed of similarly coloured tissues richly ornamented with precious stones. During the dinner they place upon the table the dishes, which, unseen by the guests, rise invisibly from the offices below. The sole charge of one little boy is to watch the occasions that arise for a change of napkins, which is effected by an ingenious mechanical contrivance. In front of the attendants, when these are not immediately engaged in the service of the table, passes a train of handsome children, each armed with a musical instrument smaller than your guitar, which it otherwise resembles. As a dish rises from below, one of these children proclaims its contents, not by words, but by an appropriate musical strain. The appearance of birds, for instance, is announced by a chirping sound, that of other meats, by an imitation of the lowings of the herd. Even fish, proverbially mute, rise to strains resembling the sounds peculiar to the waters in which they have been caught, the produce of the river being widely distinguished from that of the sea. Some of my readers may, I fear, think this practice ridiculous, so I should add, that our imitations of natural sounds are highly idealised, and by no means copies.

Our dinner-table, when laid out, presents a very gay appearance, every expedient having been adopted to produce a picturesque effect. On the cloth are painted, at equal intervals, large rings of purple and gold, to mark the place for every plate, which is thus surrounded by a beautiful ring. Ovals, one in front of each ring, are likewise painted, that the cases containing the knife, fork, and spoon may be similarly framed. These useful articles, which differ from yours, are among the chief ornaments of the feast. The handles and cases are mostly of gold, inlaid with precious stones, and are highly ornamented, especially when they are for the use of ladies, who regard them as a valuable portion of their jewellery. When dinners are given at private houses, each guest is expected to bring his own knife-case, which, if he is a married man, is always the property of the lady, but the custom does not extend to the banquets given by the Tootmanyoso. Another important ornament of our tables are our goblets, each being provided with a spout, or tube, which is placed in the mouth, so that neither the lips nor teeth are wetted while an act of suction is performed. I am told that the principle of these goblets is recognised by the Anglo-Americans, and that with them the tube is simply a straw. It is a rule with us that the colours of the goblets should be at once varied and harmonious, and by an artistical distribution of the glasses among a series of guests, an effect is produced by the entire combination equal to that of the most beautiful rainbow.

I should not forget to state that at the side of every cover is a fan, elegantly formed, and made of material so slight, that a person, merely by speaking, sets it in motion, when it diffuses a delicious fragrance around. In form and colour these fans commonly resemble our most beautiful birds and butterflies, the motion of whose wings they imitate, and care is taken that all differ from each other. Our grand rule for the production of beauty is the combination of the most perfect harmony with the greatest possible variety.

When the dinner, strictly so called, is at an end, the table is removed as if by enchantment, and is replaced by another covered with cool and refreshing fruits prepared in a peculiar way, in dishes that have the appearance of ice. There is, however, an interval between the removal of the first table and the rise of the second, and during this a number of little boys and girls march

in procession, each carrying, by a long handle, a basket of exquisite workmanship, filled with fragrant flowers and fruit-blossoms, which, when waved, spread a delicious odour. During the procession the children sing a hymn of thanks in harmony with the perfume. It will be understood that the special musical performances in the body of the hall are entirely independent of those of the instrumentalists in the galleries, who are silent when they take place.

The procession ended, the amusements of the evening begin. The centre of the room opens and a circular platform rises, upon which is stationed a group of female dancers. They wear dresses of a peculiar gauze, and in the course of their performance, which is distinguished by grace and elegance, they produce combinations, imitating beautiful objects in nature, such, for instance, as a rose, or a bouquet containing all the flowers of spring. The ornaments with which their dresses are decorated are chosen with regard to the proposed effects.

When the dance, which lasts about twenty minutes, is over, the most accomplished lady harpist, having volunteered to entertain the company, is led to a picturesque seat, frequently made in the semblance of a bird, and delights all ears with the strains of her instrument. When I say that the performance is voluntary, I mean the word to be taken in the strictest sense. While with you "pressing," as it is called, is an act of politeness, with us it would be a breach of etiquette even to ask a guest to play or sing. It should be observed that none of the guests offer to entertain the rest, unless their skill in musical art has already been formally recognised.

After the lapse of a certain time, the principal lady gives the order, and a musical drum is struck, which resounds through every part of the room. Hereupon the attendants press an electric button; large doors, hitherto invisible, fly open. Before dinner, it will be recollected, each gentleman had the privilege of selecting his neighbour. The right of selection is now on the side of the ladies, each of whom having chosen a partner, the whole company proceed, accompanied by sweet music, to a large hall, magnificently arranged with ottomans, reclining couches, and all things conducive to luxury and ease.

When seated, the ladies are waited on by boys, whose singularly ruddy complexion distinguishes them from the other inhabi-

tants of Montalluyah. They are generally natives of certain mountain districts, and they are employed in this menial capacity simply because, with rare exceptions, they are found unfitted for intellectual acquirements. Among us, distinction in rank is regulated exclusively by moral and intellectual worth. During the evening, following a royal dinner, these boys hand round to the ladies a salver, divided into as many as twenty compartments, which contains various fragrant spices, and revolves on a pivot, that each lady may, without effort, make choice of the odour she prefers.

Some of my readers will perhaps think that a banquet is hardly complete unless it results in a cigar or a meerschaum; but even here, though we never smoke tobacco which is much stronger than yours, we are not behind the terrestrials. We smoke after a fashion peculiar to ourselves, in the presence of the ladies, each of whom, during the evening, is expected to contribute to the comfort of the gentleman whom she has chosen for a partner. Sometimes she will offer him a small cup, which will be found to contain an "inhaling case," accompanied by an assortment of the most fragrant spices. The fumes of the spices are drawn up by means of the case or pipe, and seldom exhaled. Our "inhaling cases" are very valuable, those belonging to the Tootmanyoso and the upper classes being set with precious stones.

Thus commonly ends a dinner in Montalluyah. At particular seasons, however, the company retire into flower gardens, which are very spacious. Here, amidst the warbling of birds, and an atmosphere impregnated with fragrant odours, and beneath our glorious sky, they have recourse to various amusements, a description of which I reserve for another occasion.

CRIMINAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

WE have not yet come to an end of the additions made to the useful applications of photography. Nay, we seem to be still only on the threshold. Portraits—somewhat unmeaningly called *cartes de visite*—small enough to be inserted in an album, continue to be the main production of the art; but the variety in other directions is becoming amazingly large. Landscape, sea, and sky have been brought within the range of the camera, with surprising results; geological stratification and mineral structure are copied with a fidelity never before possible;

leaves, buds, tendrils, bark, and roots have been made to tell their secrets to the colloidionised plate; wings, fur, plumage, skin, hair, are in like manner revealed as to their surface structure. Medical men take photographs of diseased organs and tissues, as among the best modes of comparing one disease with another. Archæologists photograph ancient marbles and inscriptions, ancient bronzes and coins. Ethnologists fix by a similar agency the characteristic portraiture of nations and tribes. Astronomers, by the aid of the camera, have largely increased the knowledge which the telescope and the spectroscope had given them of the sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies; and are preparing to use the same valuable auxiliary in watching the transit of Venus next year. Civil engineers take photographs of broken bridges and embankments, and mechanical engineers of broken boilers and locomotives, that they may have before them a permanent record of each disaster, so far as concerns the actual appearance of the fragments. And now justice steps in to claim her share in the service which photography renders to mankind. She asserts that when a rogue has become well-nigh incorrigible, it is right that the officers of the law should have an eye upon him, and a clue whereby they may know him again when he again transgresses.

During a few years past, a custom has occasionally been adopted of taking photographs of criminals in prison—not, of course, to gratify the criminals themselves, but to obtain permanent means of knowing them again. This was generally decided on by individual magistrates, or jail-governors, who foresaw the value of the system; and evidence has been afforded that they were not wrong in anticipating useful results. In one instance, two men stole some sheep in the north of England, drove them south, and added to the number as they went on. They sold them in London, and got off with the proceeds; but the detectives ferreted them out, and lodged them in Shrewsbury Jail. As a means of obtaining evidence, the police required that the thieves should be identified in the districts through which they had passed. A photographer took their likenesses; copies of these were sent to the several districts; and the clue thus obtained led to the conviction of the offenders. In another instance, where a murder had been committed at Durham, a photograph of a suspected man was sent by the police to the

house of one John Owen, a tailor, in a distant part of England. It was immediately recognised by Owen's daughters, one of whom exclaimed in tears, "Oh, it's our Jack; there is no doubt about it now;" and Owen himself also acknowledged that the photograph was a portrait of his son, against whom suspicion had already been aroused, and who proved to be the murderer.

When it was proposed, about three years ago, to establish this as a regular system, objections were raised to it by some portion of the press. It was urged that there are generally seven or eight thousand convicts in the various convict prisons, besides prisoners in other jails; that to take and keep photographs of them all would produce a criminal album of most portentous bulk; that it would be unfair to photograph a man against his will, and thus render him an object of suspicion for the rest of his life; and that an ingenious rogue might so effectually distort his features, as to render identification difficult, if not impossible. And it was added: "Of what use will the photographs be? Criminal faces are almost all of one type. There is but little individuality about them; and the various photographic portraits, which will compose the new criminal gallery, will have so unusually strong a family likeness as to be of little or no practical value in establishing the identity of a prisoner." These objections were without difficulty removed. As to the number of photographs, this might be lessened to any degree if the results were not found adequate to the expense. As to the unfairness of photographing a man without his own consent, this objection falls to the ground; the photographs are for the police authorities, not for the public; and they are portraits of wrong-doers, concerning whose future proceedings society has a right to be placed on its guard. And as to the family likeness among rogues, every day's experience disproves this; some of the most benevolent-looking hypocrites are to be found among our criminals.

There is more cogency in the objection that a criminal might so twist about his face as to render a photograph wanting in real identity. The authorities have experienced this, and have adopted means for frustrating the cunning. On one occasion, at Shrewsbury, where a convict knew that he was to be photographed, he made such horrible contortions as to spoil the plate, and then a second. At a third attempt,

the photographer only pretended to be at work; he had either no lens in his camera, or no collodionised plate behind the lens. After a few moments, he shut down the apparatus with an expression of annoyance, and went into the dark chamber as if to develop a negative. The convict, thrown off his guard, resumed his ordinary shape of features; and at that moment a second photographer, quietly placed behind a screen, did the work effectually through a small opening. In other instances, by previous concert with the prison warders, the photographs have been taken in the labour-yard, at the instant when a prisoner was standing before a small opening in the wall. In most cases, however, a threat of shortening the rations, or increasing the labour, has been effectual in inducing the rogues to leave their features in their natural form.

Three years ago, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the exercise of power intrusted to him by parliament, issued an order to the magistrates to furnish the Commissioners of Police with photographs of all offenders in county prisons, whose offences brought them within the statutory meaning of the Habitual Criminals' Act; thereby giving systematic effect to a plan which had before been only partially adopted. The Chief Commissioner of Police, reporting on the subject about a year afterwards, stated that the order had not been so well carried out as had been expected, but that the full benefit of the system might eventually be looked for. "It is confidently expected that a more general use of photography, the exercise of greater care in observing and noting any peculiarities in the personal appearance of prisoners respecting whose antecedents information is sought, and the cordial co-operation of the police and prison authorities of the kingdom with the Central Register Office, will lead to the frequent identification of old offenders. Many prisoners have been identified by means of their photographs, and former convictions proved. Occasional use has been made of photography in special cases with good results; and the system recently established of visiting prisons has given the detective officers a good knowledge of thieves."

Two years ago a new Act was passed to give more definite effect to the Home Secretary's order. Registers of convictions are to be kept in a prescribed form at central offices in London, Edinburgh,

and Dublin. The governor, or chief officer of every jail, is to make returns of the persons convicted of crime who come into his custody. Regulations are to be made for photographing all prisoners convicted of crime, confined in any prisons; and refusal to obey any regulation made in this matter is to be deemed an offence against prison discipline. The expenses of keeping the register are to be paid by the Treasury; but the outlay for photographing the convicts is to be deemed a part of the regular expenses of each prison or jail.

An interesting parliamentary paper has recently been issued, giving an account of the results of this system, during the short time that it has been in force in a regular way. Down to the end of last year, more than thirty thousand photographs of criminals had been received by the Commissioners of Metropolitan Police, and deposited in the Habitual Criminals' Office, from the governors of county and borough jails and convict prisons. This was in little more than twelve months. Going back another year, to the date when the Home Secretary's order was issued, the total number amounted to forty-three thousand, forwarded from a hundred and two prisons in England, and thirteen in Wales (the experiences of Scotland and Ireland are not reported in this document). As we know pretty well the cost of photographic album portraits done in the usual way, we may have a pardonable curiosity to learn the cost of those relating to criminals. This information the parliamentary paper gives us; for it appears that the forty-three thousand prison photographs have cost three thousand pounds—about one shilling and fourpence each. The rogues are certainly not worthy of this sixteenpence apiece; but then it is bestowed, not for their benefit, but as a safeguard in the hands of justice.

The House of Commons, in ordering the returns to which the paper relates, requested to be informed in how many cases the photographs had led to the identification and conviction of offenders. Many of the governors of county and borough prisons were unable to furnish information on this point. Some said "not known," some "no record kept," some "not recorded," some "cannot ascertain," many of them plainly said "none," while the rest furnished instances of successful application. The Bedford County Prison reported: "Of the hundred and five county prisoners, twenty have been detected through the aid

of photography." Cornwall said: "In many cases information received from the Habitual Criminals' Register—by photographs sent on jail forms for recognition—has led to the identification of old offenders." Dorset could tell of "six cases known;" while Herefordshire reported that "three who have been in custody here were recognised by the police elsewhere through their photographs." The authorities at the Holloway City Prison had no means of knowing accurately the number of cases in which photographs had led to the identification and detection of criminals; but, "at any rate, they can say that about thirty of the number have since come under their observation, and have been re-dealt with for fresh offences, in most instances receiving a sentence of penal servitude." At Leicester Borough Prison three male prisoners had been detected, before trial, by means of portraits sent round to different counties, of having been previously convicted of felony. At Newgate many prisoners had been identified by means of photographs received from the government convict prisons.

Some of the prisons sent memoranda of the cost that had been incurred in bringing the photographing arrangements into working order. Monmouthshire told of twenty-five pounds spent upon a studio; while at the Liverpool Borough Prison an expense of ninety-five pounds had been incurred for a photographing room, and sixty pounds per annum for the services of a photographer. Here and there the governor of the prison is a tolerably efficient amateur in this art, and has managed the matter without any cost to the county or borough. So far as we can judge from the returns, only one copy of each photograph is usually taken, but in some instances there are evidently more. Thus, of two hundred and twenty-eight photographs sent to the Habitual Criminals' Office from Leicester, twenty-two were duplicate copies. Of five hundred and eighty-two taken at the City Prison, Holloway, two hundred and twenty-four were furnished to the Registry, three hundred and twenty-eight to the City police, and thirty to the magistrate. In all probability there were several triplicates in this instance. The greatest number sent by any one prison to the Criminal Registry were from Newgate, nearly four thousand eight hundred; next to this was Coldbath Fields Prison, about two thousand eight hundred; Liverpool Borough Prison came next, with two thousand

eight hundred; and Westminster County Prison, with two thousand three hundred. From these high numbers we come down to Lincoln County Prison, which sent just one photograph, and only one, for which an outlay of three shillings and sixpence is recorded. It might be supposed that Newgate, with its large brigade of photographs transmitted to Scotland Yard, would be able to point to a goodly number of instances in which these have led to the detection of criminals; but there is one reason why the authorities at Newgate have no means of testing this matter: "The prisoners convicted here are, after trial, removed to various prisons to undergo their respective sentences;" and Newgate sees nothing more of them unless a subsequent conviction, for other crimes, happens to take place within the district of which this prison is the head-quarters.

It is not alone in this country that photography has been brought into requisition as an aid to the administration of justice, nor, indeed, was it with us that the system first began. Every principal police station in the United States of America has for some years past had its "Rogues' Gallery"—a collection of portraits of offenders whose future proceedings require watching, and whose personal identity might clear up some otherwise insoluble puzzlement. It may perchance be only a joke, but the American thieves are said, in self-defence, to have established a "Detectives' Gallery," portraits of such police officers as it might be worth while to avoid. Cunning rogues are more likely, we imagine, to photograph such lineaments on their brains or memories than on collodionised plates of glass.

A DESERTER.

I HAD breathed of the battle, turned face to the foe,
Seen men fight, seen men fall;
In the heat of the struggle I'd striven, and lo!
I had come through it all!
With the sweat on my forehead, the blood on my blade,
I had gained me such ground
As gave place just to pause at, ere yet I essayed
For a crown 'mid the crowned.

A mere lull in my life—for before me, behind,
Surged the hoarse waves of war,
And around me the storm raged, insatiate, blind,
As it strained to the shore.
Though something were won me, though something
were passed
On the road to the goal,
Much remained to be mastered, ere, victor at last,
Were achieved a man's whole!

So, faint with long striving, I halted, took breath,
Thought of deeds still undone,
And my heart to my heart said, "Or glory or death
There is yet to be won!"

Just a moment to rest and recruit, then again
 To the thick o' the fight;
 Mix with men there, and feel a man's passion, man's
 pain,
 Man's fierce pulse of delight!"

Was there aught that could stay me, the while through
 each vein
 So giddily glad
 Thrilled the hot tide of action, and heart, too, and
 brain,
 But one impulse had?
 Was there aught that could turn me aside, bid me yield
 Up my share in the fray,
 And, the laurels of life unattained, quit the field
 Ere the close of the day?

Ah, weak and unworthy! Lost, lost is the prize;
 A man more unmanned
 By the tongue of a woman, her lips, and her eyes,
 And the touch of her hand!
 Far off the great struggle for fame still goes on,
 Though it fades from the sense;
 Say! for purpose abandoned, for glory foregone,
 Will Love recompense?

OUR FORMER WARS WITH THE ASHANTEES.

THE FIRST WAR CONCLUDED, AND THE SECOND.

THE embassy to the King of Ashantee mentioned in a previous article led to a treaty, the king writing a very characteristic letter to the English Governor of the Gold Coast, an abridgment of which we append, as it suggests many reflections applicable to our present difficulties.

"Sai Tootoo Quamina, King of Ashantee and its dependencies, to John Hope Smith, Esquire, Governor-in-Chief of the British Settlements on the Gold Coast of Africa.

"The king sends his compliments to the governor, he thanks the King of England and him very much for the presents sent to him, he thinks them very handsome. The king's sisters and all his friends have seen them, and thank him. The king thanks his God and his fetish that he made the governor send the white men's faces for him to see, like he does now; he likes the English very much, and the governor all the same as his brother.

"The King of England has made war against all the other white people a long time, and killed all the people all about, and taken all the towns, French, Dutch, and Danish, all the towns all about. The King of Ashantee has made war against all the people of the water-side, and all the black men all about, and taken all their towns."

After that the king sent word to the Governor of Cape Coast and the Governor of Annamaboe.

"Well! you know I have killed all the Fantees, and I must have Adocoo's and Amooney's books, and I can make friends

with you, good brother and good heart; but now they send four ackies, that is what makes the king's heart break out when he looks on the book and thinks of four ackies, and his captains swear that the Fantees are rogues, and want to cheat him. When the white men see the Fantees do this, and the English officers bring him this four ackies, it makes him get up very angry, but he has no palaver with white men.

"All Fantee is his, all the black man's country is his; he hears that white men bring all the things that come here. He wonders that they do not fight with the Fantees, for he knows they cheat them. Now he sees white men, and he thanks God and his fetish for it.

"When the English made Appollonia Fort, he fought with the Aowins, the masters of that country, and killed them; then he said to the caboceer, 'I have killed all your people, your book is mine.' The caboceer said, 'True! so long as you take my town, the book belongs to you.' . . . This king, Sai, is young on the stool, but he keeps always in his head what old men say, for it is good, and his great men and linguists tell it him every morning. The King of England makes three great men, and sends one to Cape Coast, one to Annamaboe, and one to Accra. Cape Coast is the same as England. The king gets two ounces from Accra every moon, and the English wish to give him only four ackies for the big fort at Cape Coast, and the same for Annamaboe. Do white men think this proper?

"When the king killed the Dankara caboceer, and got two ounces from Elmina, the Dutch governor said, this is a proper king, we shall not play with him, and made the book four ounces. The king has killed all the people, and all the forts are his. He sent his captains to see white men, now he sees them, and thanks God and his fetish. If the path was good when the captains went, the king would have gone under the forts and seen all the white men. The Ashantees take good gold to Cape Coast, but the Fantees mix it; he sent some of his captains like slaves to see, and they saw it. Ten handkerchiefs are cut to eight, water is put to rum, and charcoal to powder, even for the king. They cheat him, but he thinks the white men give all those things proper to the Fantees.

"The king knows the King of England is his good friend, for he has sent him handsome dashes (presents). He knows his officers are his good friends, for they come

to see him. The king wishes the governor to send to Elmina to see what is paid him there, and to write the King of England how much, as the English say their nation passes the Dutch. He will see by the books given him by both forts. If the King of England does not like that, he may send him himself what he pleases, and then Saï can take it.

"He thanks the king and governor for sending four white men to see him. The old king wished to see some of them, but the Fantees stop it. He is but a young man and sees them, and so again he thanks God and his fetish."

Our second war with this savage nation was much more prolonged, and far more disastrous than the first. Our attack was begun rashly, and with a foolish contempt for the enemy, and ended in defeat and ruin, from the evil effects of which we are still suffering, and probably shall still further suffer. The story is short but sad. In January, 1824, Sir Charles M'Carthy, having declared war on the Ashantees, determined to make a foray into the enemy's country, and strike terror among them by a rapid and sure blow. Accordingly he divided his small army with Major Chisholm, and taking with him only one thousand men and ten officers, pushed forward into the interior. He soon found himself in front of about ten thousand savages. The battle commenced across a small river, about thirty feet wide, at two P.M. on January the 21st. The firing was tremendous on both sides from two P.M. till six; up to that hour no Ashantees had dared to cross the river; but now, to our general's horror, the ammunition fell short, owing to the neglect of some officer whose duty it was to bring it to the front. Our force was small, and the only chance for our men lay in an incessant galling fire at the great host of infuriated enemies howling before them.

To the dismay of Major Ricketts, when he went to open the three last kegs supposed to be filled with ball cartridge, he found—can our readers guess?—only macaroni; although the very next day the Ashantees found in our camp, which they plundered, ten barrels of ammunition. The Ashantees then crossed the river in great numbers. The Fantees in our service never would carry bayonets, but the regulars and militia used their weapons with deadly effect, every one of them bayoneting three or four Ashantees, then snatching the bayonets from the muskets, they

sprang into the thick of the enemy's force, stabbing right and left, and falling at last like heroes. Sir Charles and his staff, on commencing to retreat, were attacked by about two thousand Ashantees, who had been sent round to intercept them. Mr. Williams, the Colonial Secretary, thus describes the death of Sir Charles M'Carthy:

"It was my fortune to be near our lamented chief when he received a wound in the breast by a musket-ball, I believe mortal. Buckle, Wetherell, and myself, conveyed him under shelter of the nearest tree, and there sat to await that fate which appeared inevitable. We had not remained long before we were discovered by the enemy, who immediately rushed on us with their knives. In the struggle, I received a desperate cut on the left side of my neck, and before the stroke could be repeated, a man, who appeared to be of authority among them, fortunately passed, and ordered my executioner to desist, which was immediately complied with. On my being released from their grasp, and turning round, I was horror-struck at seeing my three companions lying headless corpses at my feet. I was now bound as a prisoner, and conveyed towards their camp."

After Mr. Williams was taken prisoner, the Ashantees cut his clothes from his body with their knives, wounding him at every slash. They then placed before him in a row the heads of all the English officers. He was kept for five weeks without clothes, and compelled to sleep in the open air. The jaw-bones of the dead were all removed by the Ashantees, according to their barbarous custom with their enemies. Only two of our officers escaped, and they were both wounded. One English officer, after being shot through both knees, killed two of the enemy with his sword, then, seeing a party of Ashantees running up to cut off his head, he shot himself in the heart. We lost altogether a general, nine officers, one hundred and seventy-nine privates, while ninety men were wounded.

After this terrible defeat at Sicondee (or Assamakou), Mr. Fraser retreated, with the Fantee contingent, across the country to reinforce Major Chisholm, but hearing that he also had been cut to pieces, he fell back to garrison Cape Coast Castle, where an attack was hourly expected.

Many of the dispersed troops followed Captain Ricketts into the thickest part of the woods, led by a Wassaw man, who

enabled them to evade parties of the enemy.

On the 24th the fugitives fell in with Major Chisholm, who had been unable to obey Sir Charles's orders to join him, having had to cross the river Boosom-pra, five miles from Ampensasoo, in a single canoe.

Two other detachments of our forces in this miserably conducted war were scattered over the country, useless apart, when they might have been formidable together. At Yancoomassie, Captain Laing, with the Fantees, was threatening the Asson country. A fourth division of the Royal African Colonial Corps, under Captain Blenkarne, had been sent to Akine to draw the enemy from Western Wassaw. The natives of a village near Sicondee, having fired on our boats and disarmed our fugitives, a force of twelve hundred men was sent to burn the place, which they did, driving out the inhabitants, and four hundred of the Ashantee garrison. The Ashantees remained inactive all February, while Major Chisholm put Cape Coast Castle in a state of defence, and prepared to dispute the passage of the Boosom-pra with the enemy. In March the Ashantees pushed forward, and took up a strong position at Fettua, ten or twelve miles from Cape Coast Castle. On May the 20th Colonel Sutherland, who had taken the command, hearing that the Ashantees were expecting a reinforcement of ten thousand men, resolved on a sudden attack, ordering every able-bodied man into the field, but leaving the sailors and marines of the squadron to garrison the forts.

Major Chisholm now, by dint of hard work and fatigue, cut paths to the enemy's position in the forest, and attacked them on March the 2nd, an hour after noon, a rather trying time for a battle in Africa, even in a wood. The Ashantees fought manfully from behind covert, keeping up a heavy and incessant fire from the bush, where they could only be seen at intervals, and making several skilful attempts to turn the major's flanks. After five hours' fighting, however, finding themselves baffled and repulsed on all points, they retired, with great loss in killed and wounded. Now was the time for the advance, which might have led to a crowning victory; but our Fantee allies, who had had quite enough of the Ashantees at close quarters, and liked them still less when at bay, quietly but firmly refused to move a step, except backward, and about half of them fled altogether. Major Chisholm, thus deserted at

the critical moment, was compelled to retire, and two days after the Ashantees returned to the ground from whence we had driven them. In this bush fighting we lost eight English and eighty-four natives, while seventy-five English, and six hundred and three Fantees were wounded; eighty-eight English were also returned as missing.

During these hostilities the august King Assai Tootoo Quamina, who considered us still his tributaries, as we once really had been, died at Coomassie, and his brother and successor, Adoo Assai, mustered all his warriors, with the determination that he would raze Cape Coast Castle to the ground, and drive all the white men into the ocean.

After about three weeks' lull, the king advanced to within five miles of the fort, and established his head-quarters at Garden Hill village, spreading a great chain of posts round the settlement, in bush so thick that his strength could only be guessed at by the length of the line and the smoke of the camp fires. On the 23rd the Ashantees drew nearer, and were seen in force from the Hill Tower, and signals were at once passed to the town. The townsmen snatched up their arms, while the women, children, provisions, and valuables were taken into the fort, the seamen and marines were landed from the Victor (a man-of-war in the harbour), and the crews of the merchant ships lying in the roads were sent on board to man the guns.

Colonel Sutherland had long before given strict orders to pull down some houses, within thirty yards of the fort, which commanded the land-side ramparts, but the order had been neglected. There was no time now to pull the houses down, so four of them were set on fire, and unfortunately the wind rose, the flames spread, and about half the town was either consumed or unroofed. During the night the Ashantees occupied Parson's Croom, a village within a mile of the fort, but still delayed the attack. Till the end of the month, indeed, they spent their time in detaching strong parties to lay waste the adjoining country, and burn the villages.

The Cape Coast garrison amounted only to three hundred and sixteen rank and file, chiefly young soldiers, recruits, and boys; of these one hundred and four were in hospital, and twelve sick in quarters. On July the 4th, however, the Thetis arrived from England with a few troops, and on the 6th a body of auxiliaries came from

Accra. The Ashantees, hearing of our reinforcements, called in their foraging parties, and on the 7th were seen defiling over a hill towards their king's tent, on the left of their position. On the 8th, our Accra auxiliaries, who had been supplied with arms and ammunition, were sent with the Cape Coast people to occupy a chain of heights opposite the enemy, covering the town and forts. They spent till the 11th in clearing the forest, fortifying their posts, and skirmishing with the advanced parties of the enemy, who were busy in cutting paths towards our lines.

On the 11th, soon after daybreak, the Ashantees descended in heavy masses, and formed their line across the valley leading to the right of our position, which was about half a mile from the town. About two P.M. they were fired upon by our skirmishers, and a general fight ensued, which terminated at dusk by the Ashantees being driven back, and worsted at all points. Two of their camps, which they weakened to reinforce the left, were burnt and plundered by the Cape Coast men, who, although they had daily to be driven to the front at the point of our bayonets, fought on this occasion with steady courage for four hours. The Ashantees struggled gallantly all day, and made several clever but ineffectual attempts to turn our right wing.

Colonel Sutherland's force on this occasion consisted of one hundred and ninety-three men and fifteen officers of the Royal African Colonial Corps, ninety men and one officer of the Second West India Regiment, three Royal Marine gunners, one hundred and twenty militia, and four thousand six hundred and fifty of our native allies. Of the English regulars two men were killed, and eight wounded, while the Fantees had one hundred and two killed, and four hundred and forty wounded. The Ashantees numbered sixteen thousand men, and left numbers of dead, including many chiefs, upon the field of battle.

On the 12th the Ashantees drew up in the valley, as if again resolved to try their fortune. To test their temper Colonel Sutherland sent out a body of skirmishers, who opened fire, and then retired through the bush. The enemy replied hotly for half an hour after the skirmishers had returned, and then withdrew, when a field-piece opened on them. On the 14th they retreated by Elmina and Fettue towards Doonguah, on the direct route to Ashantee. On the 19th they again showed within

five miles from Cape Coast, but on the 20th finally retreated. It afterwards appeared that disease and famine had produced mutiny and desertion in the Ashantee army, and on the 11th whole bands had turned homeward. The savage king in his fury had beheaded four out of six of the captains he had recaptured, and had chained the remaining two to heavy logs, yet the desertions still continued, and compelled him to march raging home.

The misery of this great Ashantee foray did not end here. The savage army had trodden under foot every plantation of Indian corn, yams, plantains, or bananas they had passed, and the Fantees narrowly escaped total destruction by famine. Beef rose to sixteen guineas a tierce at Cape Coast, and flour or bread could scarcely be obtained for gold.

Although the unwise division of forces, coupled with the hindrances of swamps and almost impassable woods, had given the Ashantees a momentary advantage, as we have seen, in 1824, in the year 1826 we took a bloody revenge. The Ashantees again threatening our settlements and making inroads on the Fantees, we gave them battle on a wooded plain, about twenty-four miles north-east of British Accra, or nearly four miles south of a village called Dodowah, which gave its name to the fight, the King of Ashantee having pitched his tent there. The attack was expected on the Monday, as that is a day considered fortunate by the Ashantees. About eight A.M. the enemy were in motion, and the king's drum was heard. Our line, which was rendered picturesque by the varied flags, arms, and dresses of British, Danish, Dutch, and Fantee, extended four miles from east to west. The Fantees and other native allies wore large sea-shells hung from their necks, before and behind, to distinguish them, and had strips of white calico tied to the barrels of their muskets. Our native auxiliaries were led on by the Queen of Akim and the Kings of Akimboo and Dinkara, who squabbled as to which was to specially attack the King of Ashantee. This Queen of Akim said, unconsciously parodying Queen Elizabeth:

"Osay has driven me from my country because he thinks me weak; but though I am a woman, I have the heart of a man."

It was at last settled that this black Boadicea should lead the extreme right and the two kings the extreme left. But as it fortunately, perhaps, happened, the

King of Ashantee, hearing there were white men in the centre of the enemy, chose that place in his own army as the point of special danger and special honour.

Our force was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Pardon. Several English and Danish merchants led on their own men. Our centre was formed of the Cape Coast volunteers and artificers, with the townspeople, and Bynia, the native chief, the Royal African Corps acting as a reserve. The attack commenced about half-past nine, when some of our allies, in their excitement, abusing and insulting our centre as cowards for not advancing, the word was given. We moved on about four hundred yards, and then opened a heavy and effective fire. The enemy sullenly retreated before us. No prisoners were taken, but all were killed as they fell, the English imploring our allies not to torture the fallen. "Suddenly," says an eye-witness, "a cry arose that the Ashantees were getting between the centre and the right, which, in fact, was the case, as one party from the Dutch town, who supported the right of the Cape Coast people, had given way, and the enemy had walked into their place. Besides this, the whole of the Danish natives, with their caboceer at their head, had fled early in the action, and 'the swallow-tailed banners of Denmark' were seen safely flying in the rear. The centre was now obliged to fall back, and relinquish every advantage, sustaining a galling fire in flank, and closely pressed with the mass of the enemy, who evidently were making a bold push to seize or bring down the whites. Captain Rogers, who was advancing with a small piece of artillery, would have been taken, had he not very promptly distinguished the real enemy. This was the crisis of the battle. Colonel Pardon advanced with the reserve and the rockets, a few of which, thrown among the Ashantees, occasioned the most dire terror and confusion. Another party of Ashantees had attacked the left of King Cheboo, of Dinkara, the Winneboks having fled at the first fire, and never stopped till they reached Accra. But a few rounds of grape thrown over the heads of our people restored the battle there also, Cheboo being already in advance with part of his people, driving back his opponents. On the right the battle was for a moment doubtful.

"The King of Akimboo drove all before him, and penetrating to the King of Ashantee's camp, he took the enemy in flank. The Danish natives, seeing the enemy driven

back by the rockets and grape, now advanced, and took possession of the plunder, which was immense, and deliberately walked off the field with it. They sent to request more ammunition, saying, they had only received twenty rounds each from their own government; and when upbraided with their conduct, said 'It was against their fetish to fire on a Monday.' It was justly said, at Accra afterwards, that one part of the army fought and the other got the spoil. When the death of any of his chiefs was reported to the King of Ashantee, he performed human sacrifices to their manes in the heat of battle. Among the sad trophies of the day is the head of Sir Charles M'Carthy, which was taken by the Aquanum chief. The whole of the Ashantee camp are taken, with their baggage and gold, and until it was dark parties were coming in with plunder from every quarter. The troops lay on their arms all night, as it was not known but that the king, with his surviving friends, might make an attack, in despair, on us, as he was seen in front, wandering over the scene of his fallen ambition. Through the night, at intervals, some of our chiefs struck their drums to some recitation, which was repeated along the line, and as it died away had a pleasing effect; but was generally succeeded by deep wailings from the glades in front of us, apparently from some unhappy Ashantee women looking for their friends among the fallen."

One of our friendly chiefs was slain in the act of dragging the King of Ashantee from his basket palanquin.

Our force in this battle amounted to eleven thousand three hundred and eighty muskets. The enemy were about ten thousand. Our army lost above eight hundred men, and some sixteen hundred were wounded, chiefly by knives. The Ashantees lost five thousand men, and many chiefs. The king himself was wounded. The next day our native allies returned to Accra groaning under their booty. "Had the Ashantees," says a local writer of the day, "delayed the battle for some time, our coalition, like all other holy alliances, would have fallen to pieces, being more discordant than the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's statue; left to themselves they would never have stood half an hour before the Ashantees." To show what resources and contrivances this singular people have, it may be mentioned that in the wallets of some of the Ashantees who fell, were found the hard scales of the bangolin, or ant-eater,

scorched with fire, for food, while for shot, among other things, they had cownie shells loaded with lead.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XLII. MY TRAGEDY.

I COULD not resist mentioning to Vickery that I had seen my relation, Sir George Nightingale, and discovered in him the defendant in the action brought by Messrs. Dicker Brothers. "Ay, ay," he said, going on with his writing, and declining to manifest the slightest surprise. By-and-bye he added, as he paused to take snuff, "It's always as well to make sure of the name of the party whom you serve with a writ. It's often necessary to make an affidavit on the subject. You'll remember that another time, Mr. Nightingale. There's nothing like picking up learning in a practical way." And thereupon he dismissed the subject. Whether, at the time he instructed me how to serve a writ upon Sir George, he was aware of the relationship existing between us, I failed to ascertain.

I had called again in Harley-street, but had been unable to see Sir George. I left a select number of my drawings for his inspection. Mole charged himself with their safe keeping, and promised to submit them to his superior at a convenient opportunity. Mole was hearty in his applause of my works, and congratulated me on my marked improvement since those past times when I had received at his hands my earliest lessons in art. It was agreed between us, however, that for the present, at any rate, it should not be revealed that he was Fane Mauleverer, my first master. He had conceived, I think, a curious tenderness for his reputation as Mr. Mauleverer, and desired that it should be based solely upon his theatrical career, and disconnected from his other occasional pursuits. The world in general was not to know that he had ever cut out black shades, or taught drawing, or been employed in the studio of a portrait-painter; still less, that he had ever figured as clown to a dancer on the "tight-jeff."

Tony had been much entertained with my account of Mole, and had expressed great desire to make his acquaintance. It was arranged, with this view, that Mole should be invited to an entertainment I was to give at Tony's chambers. These were preferred to my lodgings, because it

was thought possible the festivities of the occasion might be prolonged to a late hour, and might be of a boisterous character. There was a project that my tragedy should be forthcoming, and that elocutionary efforts connected therewith should be freely ventured upon. In Featherstone-buildings, as I have stated, the declamation of my blank verse had already been the occasion of some unpleasantness. My fellow-lodgers had complained, and my landlady had charged me with disappointing the expectations she had formed on the subject of my steadiness. As Tony explained, nothing of this kind was possible in regard to any proceedings that might take place in his chambers.

"It's a humble abode," he said, "small, confined, and the ceiling is uncommonly near one's head. But it has this great advantage: one can kick up a row in it if one wants to; and it seems to me that most people take chambers because they do want to kick up a row in them. No one hereabout has any right to complain of any occasional excess of noise. We've no landladies here; nor fellow-lodgers. I'm not a lodger at all; I'm the tenant of a distinct leasehold dwelling-place, of which I am absolute proprietor so long as I pay my rent. And I've done that hitherto pretty regularly. The benchers, or ancients, or whatever they're called, of the inn assemble every quarter to discharge their sole function—so far as I can ascertain—the receipt of rent. Every tenant paying his rent is entitled, in addition to a formal receipt, to a large slice of plum cake and a glass of brown sherry. I have taken the plum cake on several occasions; it has not agreed with me. The sherry I have never declined. But this is all apart from the main question: the right of kicking up a row. To that we possess an indefeasible title. My neighbour below plays the French horn, and distresses me very much. A tenant next door thinks he can sing; he can't, and I find his efforts very trying. But I feel that these are not matters with which I can in any way interfere. So that if I choose to have in my rooms a row taking the form of blank verse, I should like to see the man who will gainsay me."

It was hard, I thought, that my tragedy, or any declamation that might arise from it, should be unhesitatingly classed with that vulgar form of disturbance described as "kicking up a row;" but experience was against me. The complaints in Fea-

therstone-buildings in regard to my reading of my work had been couched precisely in that form of words.

I was pleased to see the interest Tony took in the proposed entertainment. He had of late denied himself recreation of almost every kind, partly because of the expense involved, and partly because of his desire to devote himself to the task of colouring the plates of the *Milliner's Magazine*. We had not visited the theatre for some time past. I did not care to go without him; and I did not wish to appear less thrifty than he was. I took up, therefore, with his economical humour. He rarely dined in Rupert-street now. He had discovered a ham and beef shop in Gray's-inn-lane, remarkable, as he alleged, for the moderation of its charges, and the excellence of its wares. He was eloquent on the subject of its large sixpenny plates of beef. But he grew thinner, I perceived.

It was Tony's proposition that Vickery should be invited to meet Mole. It did not, however, appear to me that this was a very promising arrangement.

"Depend upon it there's more in Vickery than you're prepared for," said Tony. "He wants stirring up, that's all; like tea, you know, when the sugar's at the bottom of the cup."

I remembered how highly Rachel had spoken of the old clerk. I felt that I had perhaps regarded him unjustly. He was invited accordingly to Tony's chambers. Somewhat to my surprise he consented to appear. He seemed even pleased, and his manner was irreproachably polite, if in rather a dry old-fashioned way. There was certainly a gleam as of pleasure in his watchful, cat-like eyes.

I made liberal provision for the entertainment. Bottles of wine and spirits were obtained from a neighbouring tavern. Supper was to be served at a given hour with the assistance of the same establishment, and was to be of a plentiful character. A bowl of punch was to be brewed. There was no lack of pipes, tobacco, and cigars; meanwhile, these articles were arranged in a decorative manner upon the mantelpiece, inasmuch that it looked like the window of a tobacconist's shop on a small scale, only wanting the figure of a Highlander taking snuff, or a negro smoking, to make the resemblance complete.

Tony had arranged his rooms to the best advantage, fixing lighted candles in unusual places, and decking the walls with his most striking drawings. With a line of flower-pots he contrived to mask the

fact that the window looked on to a gutter. He even procured laurel boughs, and with a view to greater picturesqueness of effect, introduced oranges here and there amongst the foliage. He surveyed these artifices with great satisfaction.

"Now, if the moon will only rise properly above the chimney-pots opposite we shall really have a most charming effect. Anybody might think we were in Verona. I'll pack away the easel in this corner, and then, with four chairs—we shall only want four—we shall just have room to circumnavigate the table. I'll take this chair myself, because I know one of its legs is in an unsettled state, and is liable to come off; it only wants a little humouring, and I understand its ways. Now I think all is really in readiness for the reception of our guests. There's a knock at the door!"

"Proud to know the young friend of my young friend," said Mole in his grandest manner as I introduced him to Tony, and they cordially shook hands. "Youth and friendship, and the fine arts, and—and supper"—his eye had rested for a second upon the knives and plates, and his speech had irresistibly been influenced by their significance—"has life greater gifts to bestow? I'm a trifle winded—if I may employ the term—by the number of your stairs. An asthma troubles me at times, and my voice fails me. It was the same, you may have heard, with Kemble."

Indeed, Mole was very hoarse. His tones struggled for issue and escape, as from thick bandages of blankets. He was clean shaven and wore a protuberant shirt-frill, in honour of the occasion: his thin hair being neatly arranged in lines across his pate so that it looked something like a sheet of ruled paper, or a page from a copy-book.

"Yes, many flights of stairs, but as in the case of mountain-tops, the pains of ascent are repaid by the prospect obtained. An attic, a really charming attic. I am partial to attics. I have made my home in them, I may say, nearly all my life. I adore an attic. I can breathe in an attic." He was breathing in rather a troubled way at the moment, however. "I find space to move and to turn round in." This was saying a good deal for Tony's apartment; for when Mole waved his arms in his redundant, gesticulatory way, he could almost touch the wall on either side. "There is freedom in the very atmosphere. Yes, seek tyranny and despotism in gilded halls and marble palaces; but for Liberty, you will find her ever at home, happy and glorious in the humility of her garret!"

The delivery of this sentiment seemed to afford him great gratification. He shook hands with us both again. "And here, if I mistake not," he continued, pointing to the pictures on the walls, "are achievements of promise, at any rate. The germs of greatness, it may be. Why not? Yes, I observe dexterity of design, not always unerring, perhaps, yet of worth, and a sense of colour, so far as I may judge by this candlelight, immature, but really powerful."

Another knock. Vickery, of course. Tony hastened to admit him.

"He wants work," I said to Mole. "I wish much to get him work. Does he paint well enough, do you think, to help in Sir George's studio?"

"It was one of my flourishes," whispered Mole, huskily. "To tell the honest truth, I haven't really looked at his work. But it's my way always to entertain my audience; with the true text if possible; if not—without. How do you do, sir? I am gratified to meet you again?"

This was to Vickery, who, wearing a prodigiously stiff black satin stock, but not otherwise altered in appearance, now entered the room, accompanied by Tony.

"We have met——" said Vickery, eyeing his interlocutor doubtfully.

"At Mr. Monck's office. You may remember, I discharged an account there, one day. I don't do such things so often, that I can forget them. And it was not a claim upon myself, I may add. In such case the result might have been different. It was upon Sir George Nightingale—the relative, as it proved, of my young friend here. You recollect?"

"Precisely. But—we're out of office hours now." And Vickery proffered his tin snuff-box with a grin upon his face of a not disagreeably subacid kind.

"Capital face and figure for Marrall or Wormwood," Mole whispered to me. "Strange," he mused, "that now I've quitted the stage, I am constantly struck with the notion that there's a good deal yet to be done in the way of 'making up.' The public hasn't found it out, but both painters and players might, with advantage, study more than they do from the living model. Your friend's capital. What a hit he'd make in village lawyers! With a dab of rouge here and there, and a trifle of yellow ochre, I could go on for him, and secure a round on my entrance. I could have done it at one time with my own hair, brushed forward and touched with powder; but that's all over now."

To do Vickery justice, he certainly strove

to make himself agreeable, and fairly succeeded. He seemed to put from him much of his customary demeanour as Mr. Monck's managing clerk, and to assume an air of pleasantness that, if somewhat staid and stiff, was yet most commendable. A certain legal flavour pertained to his conversation, as though his powers of speech had been long buried amongst parchments, and had caught something of their dry and musty nature. He was politely deferential in manner, and his studied "Mr. Nightingale" contrasted with the free "my dear Duke" of my earlier friend Mole. Tony he invariably addressed as "Sir," in recognition, possibly, of his being the nephew of Mr. Monck. He really proved a likeable elderly gentleman. He looked about him now and then in his wonted cautious and scrutinising way; but he made himself at home in Tony's room, seemed thoroughly at ease, and most willing to play his part in the entertainments of the evening. He sat rubbing his knees, giving utterance to some dry speech lightly tinged with drollery; he took snuff liberally, and, as the night advanced, he smoked a pipe, and looked very comfortable indeed. As I noted his grave wary face, and the little jets of smoke slowly permitted to issue from his lips, as though it was of value, in the nature of a fund in court, and not to be expended without much deliberation and pause, it occurred to me that if ever a judge on the bench indulged in a pipe, he must have looked the while much as did Vickery thus occupied.

Moreover, he disclosed a curious interest in the stage. This took us all by surprise, and greatly delighted Tony. It really seemed that just as some people rejoice in sly dram-drinking, so Vickery was addicted to furtive playgoing.

"Why, I never saw you at the theatre, Vickery," said Tony.

"I've seen you there, and Mr. Nightingale also. I usually sit in the two-shilling gallery. But I don't go so often as I did. The stage is not now what I can remember it. The drama is not what it was."

"I quite agree with you, sir. Will you permit me the pleasure of shaking hands with you again?" said Mole, coming forward. He had been sitting apart, turning over the leaves of my manuscript tragedy.

"Mrs. Siddons! ah! she *was* a woman!" cried Vickery, with strange effusiveness.

"Say a divinity, rather!"

"Precisely," said Vickery.

CHAPTER XLIII. THE DAUGHTER OF THE DOGE.

"I FIND that our young friend here has been writing a tragedy," observed Mole.

"In blank verse. One of the finest works in the language, I venture to state," said Tony, stoutly.

"Indeed! I had no idea of anything of the kind. Permit me to congratulate you, Mr. Nightingale." And Vickery bowed to me, with difficulty, for his stock was very stiff. "I should much like to hear it read; or select passages from it," he added, warily.

In justice to myself I must say that I would willingly have kept my tragedy in the background; that I did not at all desire its production. We were getting on capitally without it. The entertainment was proceeding most successfully. An unexpected fraternisation on the subject of the theatre had arisen between my two guests, who had not, in the first instance, promised any cordiality of union. And the cue, so to speak, for the entrance of my play was certainly unfortunate. Both Mole and Vickery were agreed as to the fallen state of the modern stage. Now they could hardly look for its up-lifting at my hands. Mole had known me in a schoolboy's round jacket, Vickery knew me as an articled clerk in Mr. Monck's office. To neither was I a person of much consequence.

Still, it was a friendly audience. We were all on good terms with each other, and with ourselves. The punch (compounded by Mole) had freely circulated, and had won hearty approval. The supper (over which Mole presided) had been unexceptionable: the lobster salad, I remember (Mole had dressed it), obtaining especial applause. I may say that Mole had greatly assisted me in enacting the character of host; indeed, like a too powerful ally, he almost overcame and effaced my efforts altogether. I was but a young performer, and, as he explained to me, he was accustomed to play "leading parts" in situations of the kind. The excessive zeal of his aid in no way dissatisfied me, however. I felt, indeed, grateful to him for his exertions in furtherance of the evening's pleasures. Both Tony and I were conscious, I think, of our juvenility as hosts in the presence of Mole and Vickery. Still, we did all we could in the way of producing bottles, filling glasses, and handing pipe-lights. Nevertheless, Mole seemed to be the absolute manager, and wore all the airs of giver of the feast.

My manuscript, neatly covered with

brown paper, was laid upon the table. But it was soon made clear to me that Mole, and not the author, was to be the interpreter of the work.

"Leave it to me, my dear Duke," he said. "I'm accustomed to this sort of thing. I think I can give it better effect. Authors are invariably bad readers. I never knew an exception."

I consented. Not very reluctantly, for I felt nervous and diffident, and distrustful of my elocutionary powers. And it was true, no doubt, that authors were, as a rule, indifferent readers of their own works. I had forgotten, at the moment, Mole's asthmatic condition. He was terribly husky, and the supper he had consumed seemed to oppress and veil his tones more than ever.

"Kemble had a 'foggy throat,' you remember," he said to me, apologetically; "it did not prevent his doing great things, however." He cleared his voice—so far as it could be cleared—which, indeed, was not very far.

He had sat down and arranged two candles in front of him, after the manner of a public lecturer. A glass of hot punch, however, was substituted for the conventional tumbler of cold water. He opened the manuscript, smoothing it with his hands very deliberately, and carefully curling the corners of the leaves so that he might turn them over promptly. He stretched out his arms, until I plainly heard sundry stitches in his coat give way; he was anxious to have sufficient room and freedom for whatever gesticulation might be necessary to give effect to his reading. He was evidently desirous to impress and gratify his audience, though more I think on his own account than on mine. I noticed that he particularly addressed himself to Vickery. As the author, I was out of court, so to say; Tony was a young man from whom critical opinion was hardly to be expected; moreover, he was clearly a fast friend of the writer's, a partisan bound to applaud under any circumstances. But Vickery could be considered in the light of an unprejudiced spectator; an experienced playgoer who had seen Mrs. Siddons, and who entertained sound opinions as to the fallen state of the stage.

"Our young friend's work," began Mole, turning to Vickery, "is entitled the Daughter of the Doge. It is a poetic tragedy in five acts of very considerable length. I may say at once, before I read a line of it, that it will want cutting—a good deal of

cutting indeed, to suit it for representation. And in any case I much fear that the public taste is at present somewhat opposed to productions of this class."

"I fear so too," said Vickery. "People, now-a-days, only care for such things as Timour the Tartar. Is it at all in the style of Timour the Tartar, Mr. Nightingale?"

"Not in the least." I felt hurt at the question.

"You could introduce real horses, perhaps?" suggested Mole. "Real horses would greatly assist the play."

"The scene is laid in Venice you will find," I explained.

"I see; but I'm not sure that the audience would object to real horses on that account. Venice? Then you might certainly bring on real water. I think the house would quite expect real water, and feel disappointed if none was forthcoming."

"The best place for real water is Sadler's Wells. They've the New River close at hand, you know," said Vickery. "If you really thought of sending the play to the Wells, Mr. Nightingale, I've some little acquaintance with the manager, and I might possibly be able to help you in that quarter."

"Vickery lives at Islington, somewhere near the theatre," Tony whispered to me.

I said that I was quite satisfied that the play was unsuited to Sadler's Wells. Already I felt that enough real cold water had been thrown upon the Daughter of the Doge.

The reading then began. Mole certainly took pains; he was deliberate and emphatic, but he often met with difficulties in the manuscript, and made random guesses at the words of the text, occasionally with ludicrous results. Moreover, his command over his voice was very uncertain. The husky cooing tone he adopted for the heroine, Bianca, was very disagreeable to me; and the ventral bass he employed for the villain Ludovico, had quite a burlesque air about it. He was altogether unconscious of this, however; he proceeded assiduously with much movement of his arms and varied play of his eyebrows. Now and then his hand descended upon the table with a heavy thump that imperilled all the glasses in the room; his gasps were very forcible, and his sudden starts ended in his breaking the back of his chair. Still, I was dissatisfied with his reading. He was, I thought, far too pompous and ponderous, too "stagey"

in fact. He understood the delivery of blank verse, but he had a staccato, syllabic style of utterance that seemed to me distressingly artificial. It was as though he were addressing himself to a vast auditory, and was determined that all should hear and comprehend him, even to the last man cracking nuts on the back bench of the gallery. Somehow I felt that all the poetry and tenderness with which I had laboured to invest my verse had been beaten out of it by Mole's strained and prodigious method of dealing with it. I thought I could really have done more justice to the work if I had read it myself. I was acquainted with its strong points. Mole seemed striving to give prominence to every line. I began to understand how much authors must inevitably suffer at the hands of actors—even the most zealous and anxious to content their dramatist. And I perceived, too, that the performance fully justified the opinion pronounced on a previous occasion in Featherstone-buildings. We were decidedly chargeable with "kicking up a row."

The reading was, to my thinking, a failure altogether; and yet it had its moments of triumph. Tony was good enough to applaud at every possible opportunity, and even old Vickery now and then permitted himself to murmur approval. At the close of every act Mole paused for refreshment, to dab his moist forehead, and to drain his glass. His exertions had undoubtedly been arduous. His face was streaming by the time he had arrived at the third act. He had found it necessary to remove his cravat and shirt-collar; he had unbuttoned his waistcoat at an early period of the evening; the last act he read in his shirt-sleeves, and without his boots. Indeed, if the tragedy had been of any greater length, he would, I believe, have divested himself of every article of clothing.

"I do like that poisoning scene in the third act," said Tony.

"Yes, it's effective," said Mole. "But you know we've had that business of changing the goblets on the stage before."

Vickery remembered its being done, in a play at the Haymarket, twenty years back.

I protested, what was perfectly true at the time, that I was not acquainted with any work in which such an incident had occurred.

Vickery, I think, but I could not be sure, muttered a quotation from Sheridan. "And then that description of Bianca strikes me as exquisite," said Tony.

"Yes, it's pretty," said Mole. "I think it would tell with the pit."

Tony began a quotation, but Mole would not permit him to finish it. He seemed determined that no one should recite but himself.

"Look where she stands, lit by the setting sun!
The rays seem o'er her golden head to dance,
As though they'd found a playground that they loved.
Whilst from her lambent eyes what gleams outshine!
Sweet summer lightning on an azure sky,
Flashes to love, not fear!"

"And further on," said Tony, "when Lorenzo relates how Bianca won his love."

Mole continued:

"Not hers those gaudy gifts, passion's excuse,
Those charms particular which men can count
Upon their fingers, reckon off by heart,
And know as coins which bought of them their love.
She strikes not, yet she captures; for she weaves
Round the heartstrings, oh such a tender net
Of fond endearments, gentlest kindnesses,
But cobweb threads at first, but which, in time,
Expand to cable's strength! Like some soft bird,
On tree she builds a house within the breast,
And closely nestling there, all unsuspect,
Makes it her home for aye."

But the most admired passage was in the speech of the dying Doge in the last act. Mole certainly spared no effort to give due effect to the scene in which this occurred. He even quitted his chair, stretched himself upon the floor, and rolled to and fro in great apparent agony, still keeping fast hold of my manuscript the while.

"If I were sure of the words," he said, "I feel that I could do a great deal with the dying Doge."

His writhings and contortions of face and limb were extreme. No doubt we were too near to them. He was still aiming at the edification and the applause of the man on the back bench of the gallery. I must say that he seemed to me to be grimacing extravagantly. In broken spasmodic accents he moaned:

"Here let me rest—where the sad solemn stars
Gleam down so wanly on me, Bianca!
Give me thine hand—wreath round me thy white arms.
Let my last knowledge be that thou art near,
My parting words and glances all be thine.
I'd much to say—but my mind wanders far
From earth. How dark it grows! Forgive me, child.
The day is gone; there's twilight on my soul!
As blind men walk I grope my way to death.
My life is ebbing from me, as the land
Fades from the vision of a drifting ship
Launched on a black and unknown sea!"

And at last he fell back heavily, closing his eyes, and dropping his jaw in a very awful manner. Indeed, he had so far surrendered himself to the cunning of the scene, that it was with some difficulty he could be persuaded that he still lived. Upon Tony's proffering him a glass of punch he revived, however, and quaffed it in the attitude of the dying gladiator. For

some time his voice was reduced to a mere whisper, his exertions had been so severe.

"I can see," he said, as he rose from the floor, "that your play contains a good deal of what we call 'fat' for a heavy tragedian. But it drags terribly in places. I don't see that your first act is wanted at all. The Doge doesn't come on, and Bianca is only talked about. Indeed, she's too much talked about all through. She really does very little. Ludovico, the villain, has got some good lines to deliver, and his scene with the bravos should be effective. I could do something with Ludovico. There's a touch of Mephistopheles about him that I rather like. But, really, Lorenzo is little better than a walking gentleman: a nice pair of legs in tights—there's nothing more needed for the part. The first and second senators are simply bores, and I should omit all that about the Adriatic. It's poetical, but the audience never care for mere poetry, they prefer to be without it. After all, you know they come to the theatre to see and not to hear."

"If I may say so," remarked Vickery, "I think the work is rather calculated for perusal than performance."

I knew that he would utter some terribly cut and dried opinion of that kind. There are always people willing to give you the very thing you don't want. My tragedy was expressly devised for representation. To praise it on other grounds was, in truth, to censure it.

"I think it beautiful, simply beautiful," said Tony. "It's the only word I can employ to describe it. I congratulate you heartily, my dear Duke."

"Pray accept my congratulations also, Mr. Nightingale." Vickery allowed himself to be affected by Tony's ardour. "A most promising work, I'm sure; and containing much eloquent and poetic matter."

"And we're really greatly indebted to Mr. Mole for the admirable reading of the play. It was quite an intellectual treat of a high order—that's my view of it. Thank you, Mr. Mole." And Tony helped him on with his coat.

I, too, hastened to thank Mole for his labours. They had not altogether contented me, but they merited recognition.

Mole accepted our thanks. He was thoroughly pleased with himself; but applause was agreeable to him. He sat apart for a little while to grow cool, to recover his breath and his voice—so far as that was possible.

"It reminds me of old times," he whis-

pered to me. "I feel as though I'd been playing Richard. The finest character in the whole range of the drama for promoting perspiration. I used to do it upon barley-water. You haven't such a thing here, perhaps. I'll make beer do as well."

Gradually he resumed his clothes and his chair at the table. Another bowl of punch was mixed. The conversation became general, and of a more convivial tone. My work was occasionally referred to, but it had ceased to be a leading topic. We entered upon a course of speech-making. I proposed the health of Mole. He replied in moving, in husky terms, referring affectionately to our long and firm friendship, and predicting for me a career of great distinction, though he indicated its direction but vaguely. The healths of Tony and Vickery were afterwards duly drunk. Subsequently I think we went through the list of toasts usually proposed at public banquets. Much was said, chiefly by Mole, on the subjects of "The Drama," coupling with it the name of our host; "The Fine Arts," with which Tony was connected; and "Literature," which was somehow made to embrace Law, and thus to involve Vickery. Certain loyal toasts were acknowledged by Mole, probably on the score of his being assistant to the king's serjeant-painter, and in such wise brought into obscure association with the crown. He could have had no better or more explicable reason for his returning thanks for "The Church," except that he had once, I remembered, been desirous of playing the part of a bishop; but he executed that self-imposed task with much appropriate gravity and dignity.

There was the pale light of coming day in the sky when Vickery volunteered the song of Post Meridian, and rendered that composition with unexpected skill, especially in regard to its more florid passages. Mole, thereupon, attempted the ballad of Black Eyed Susan with but indifferent success—he had forgotten the words, and his voice could not compass the music. It was soon after Vickery had expressed his regret that he had omitted to bring his flute with him—I was quite unaware that he ever performed upon that instrument, and I did not, I own, deplore its absence—that our little party separated.

Mole's legs seemed to fail him somewhat as he went down the stairs, but with Vickery's help he accomplished the descent in safety. Their voices sounded noisily in the silent quadrangle of the inn. As I looked from the window I could see them standing in the grey morning twilight with a somewhat disreputable air of revelry about them. They were very jocose together. Surely they were not laughing over my tragedy? It could not be.

Mole, in his effusive way, was promising Vickery orders for any London theatre he might elect to visit. He was expressing the pleasure he had experienced in meeting with Vickery—he hoped they might come together on many subsequent occasions. He had been delighted with Mr.—he forgot the name for a moment—yes—of course—thank you—Vickery—Mr. Vickery's intellectual conversation—with his very sound sentiments regarding the present condition of the stage. Then there was more jesting between them, and Vickery laughed—laughed out more boisterously than I could have conceived possible.

They were rousing the night porter of the inn, asleep in his lodge. They had some difficulty, apparently. They were crowing like cocks! Vickery's imitation was much the better of the two. Then came the noise of the porter unlocking the wicket door; its slamming behind them; the pattering of their steps on the pavement without; and all was still.

"It's been capital fun altogether," said Tony, leaning back languidly in his chair. "I never enjoyed anything so much in my life. But—it's the heat—the smoke—the excitement, I suppose: I never felt so tired before."

His face was flushed, and his eyes were bright; yet he looked thoroughly jaded, and his hand, I noticed, as I parted from him, was tremulous and burning hot.

How well I remember that evening! I date from it my abandonment of my hopes as a dramatist. I locked up my tragedy in my desk and did not look at it, scarce thought of it, again, for many years; and—a far more important matter—I also date from it my first perception of the gravely declining health of my friend Tony. The poor boy was really very ill.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR HASHINGTON," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER VIII. IN WHICH MR. ANGELO HULET IS "UPSET."

The public dinner at Lucullus Mansion was a very different affair from English tables d'hôte in general, where folks converse in cliques, and glare at their vis-à-vis, or, silent as fishes, preserve a severe, but sad decorum, befitting a Cæsar when making his arrangements for perishing decently. After the company was seated, each person was here introduced to his or her neighbour, by either the master or the mistress of the ceremonies, and the character of an ordinary dinner-party was imparted to the affair as much as possible. Mr. Hodlin Barmby did the honours at the bottom of the table, and looked the genial host to perfection; he was not eloquent—unless you got him on a horse—but was always ready to come to the rescue of the conversation with the weather and the crops; and if it needed a dead lift, had only to look towards his better half for the required assistance. He had his orders to refer to "my father, Sir Hesketh," when any new-comer was present, but in other respects was very wisely permitted to take his own line; if any exceptional people were present—whom a reference to the prospects for the next Derby was likely to shock—Mrs. Barmby took care to place them in her own neighbourhood. Under these circumstances the host had generally the pick of the company about him, while the hostess was surrounded with the feebler sort, who required colloquial manipulation.

On the present occasion, however, there

were none of what Mrs. Barmby was wont to term her "delicate cases" at table; and only one pair of "lay figures"—a banker from the City, said to be worth half a million, and his consort, who was said to have money of her own in the concern, and who maintained a financially phlegmatic air upon the strength of it. These sat on Mrs. Barmby's right, and next to them Mr. Paragon, an Australian colonist, who had come to England to spend in horseflesh what he had amassed by sheep, and who would have given his horse-shoe scarf-pin to have been sitting beside Mr. Barmby, instead of between prim Mrs. Bullion and Mrs. General Storks, of the United States army, who made up for the silence of her other neighbour by a constant stream of inquiries concerning the progress of civilisation in the antipodes, to which he was very far from being in a position, either from personal experience or otherwise, to reply.

Mrs. General Storks was a rich widow, by no means without good looks, and though, as Mr. Barmby characteristically observed, "her voice was a little high up, and her dress a little low down, had her heart in the right place," as, perhaps, we may have some opportunities of observing for ourselves. On Mrs. Barmby's left was Mr. Hulet, who had himself placed his niece upon his other hand, in order, as he said, not to destroy the symmetry of the table by putting two ladies together; but also, as I shrewdly suspect, with a view to taking his dinner medicines with the greater secrecy; for Mrs. Barmby, he reasoned, would naturally endeavour to screen the peculiarities of a guest from observation, while a male stranger might sniff at the elixir, and ask what on earth it was. So, after all, Evy found herself next to Mr. De Coney.

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He was a man of at least three score, but still handsome and upright, and though dressed in sober black, like a clergyman, had an unmistakably soldier-like appearance; indeed, in his youth he had served, and not without distinction, in the Austrian army, which he had quitted upon the demise of a relative who had left him a considerable fortune; his manner and speech were courtly to excess, and on one thin white finger, which he had a habit of laying on his cheek, in order, perhaps, to attract public attention, glittered an emerald gem of about two thousand years old.

"You are looking at my ring," he would say, if his neighbour omitted to take any notice of it, "and, indeed, it is somewhat worthy of your attention." And then he would go on to state, at considerable length, how it had been engraved by Pyrgoteles for Alexander.

Beyond him sat Mrs. Sophia Mercer, a washed-out but lady-like looking personage, evidently come to Balcombe for the "aspects," and Miss Judith Mercer, a girl of eighteen. A petite gipsy of great beauty, and with no more resemblance to her aunt than a carnation has to a daffodil.

"What a very beautiful girl you have for your neighbour," whispered Evy, with reference to this young lady, after the ice had been broken between Mr. De Coucy and herself, by a little talk about Balcombe.

"It is certain you can afford to say so, Miss Carthew," returned the old gentleman, gallantly; "but do you really think her good-looking? I have got into quite a hornet's nest here for asserting as much."

The gay old Lothario forgot to add what was the fact (though, to do him justice, he bore her no malice on that account), that Miss Judith herself had stung him by a refusal of his hand and gem.

"I think her charming," said Evy, frankly; "is that her mam—"

Here Mrs. Sophia Mercer, who with her niece had been engaged in conversation with some folks on the other side of them, leaned forward and looked round towards Evy; doubtless somebody had passed a similar admiring observation respecting the latter to that which she herself had made upon Miss Judith, and the old lady was curious to behold the newly-arrived belle. She was very near-sighted, and had to adjust a pair of gold eye-glasses before making

the desired reconnaissance, which gave Evy, on the other hand, an opportunity of observing her. A pale-faced, and rather freckled female, with dollish blue eyes, was Mrs. Sophia, but she had a gentle and pleasant expression, too, which rayed out into downright admiration as she gazed on Eva's blush-tinged cheeks and down-drooped eyes.

"Heaven have mercy upon us!" gasped Mr. Hulet, softly.

"What is the matter, uncle?" inquired Evy, in alarm; for that gentleman had fallen back in his chair, with a scarlet countenance, and was pressing his hand to his heart.

"One of my spasms, dear, that's all; don't take any notice," replied Mr. Hulet, in a hurried whisper. "What a mercy it was that I brought my elixir." Then there was a faint pop of a cork under the table, and an odour, unhappily not so faint, began to pervade his neighbourhood, as though a chemist's shop had been suddenly opened.

"No, that is not Miss Judith's mamma," returned Mr. De Coucy, in answer to Evy's unfinished inquiry; "it's her aunt, and they are the very antipodes of one another. The one is, so to speak, faded and washed out, while the other is a very fast colour. How demure is the elder lady, how audacious the younger! A herald would call one a pelican in her piety and the other a peacock in his pride—affronts you know—but perhaps you have not studied heraldry."

"No, indeed," answered Evy, a little distracted with anxiety upon her uncle's account; "it always seems to me very foolish."

"Foolish! Heraldry foolish! My dear young lady!" And Mr. De Coucy held both his hands up (palms inwards, so as to keep the gem before the Public Eye), and threw his head back, as though somebody had clapped an ice-bag to his spine.

"My uncle always says there's nothing in it," explained Evy, apologetically; "he defines a crest to be 'a couple of jackasses fighting for a piece of gilt gingerbread,' and declares all the mottoes are made by the pastrycooks."

"My dear young lady," continued Mr. De Coucy, repeating that form of address with considerable unction, for it was his ingenious plan when bent on conquest, to use his years as a stalking-horse; the "young lady" was first made accustomed to his paternally affectionate manner, and then, on that agreeable foundation, he

made his approaches as a lover. "My dear young lady, your uncle deserves to be erased, as the king-at-arms would call it—cut off from society with a jagged edge; but it is terrible to think that an innocent"—he was going to say "angel," but he darst not—"young creature like yourself should grow up in such heresy. If you would do me the honour of being my pupil for half an hour per diem, for the next fortnight, I would answer for bringing you round to a very different opinion. As for heraldry being a useless science, nothing can be a greater mistake. Take up that spoon for instance, and tell me what you see in it? No, no, not in the bowl, for that would only show you a caricature of beauty, but in the handle."

"I see a stag walking," said Evy, quite unable to avoid a smile at the old gentleman's compliment, which was accompanied by a little bow in case it should have escaped her attention.

"Nay, pardon me, a stag is never walking in heraldry, but trippant. Moreover, it is not a stag but an antelope."

"But antelopes have not got double tails, and a taak at the top of their nose?" said Evy, sily.

"Yes, they have—in heraldry. Now, I should know that that was Barmby's spoon if I met with it in Otaheite. The cognizance has its origin in a circumstance that occurred in the family about 1480, and—"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Evy, gently, "but I think the ladies are going." And, indeed, that stiffening of silk and rustling of muslin were very audible, which betoken the preening of the female wing for flight.

"You are coming to the ladies' drawing-room, I hope, Miss Carthew," said Mrs. Barmby, as she rose from her chair.

"Thank you," replied she, with a hesitating look towards her uncle, "I don't think I will to-day."

"Yes, yes, go by all means," said Mr. Hulet, hurriedly. "It is well you should begin to make acquaintances. I will join you when I have finished my—hem"—he tapped his little bottle of elixir—"my *Madeira*."

This was one of the most powerful restoratives in her uncle's medicine list, and she had never known him take more than a single dose of it before, save once, upon the occasion of Lord Dirleton's visit. What could have happened to have upset

him to such an extent that he was about to drink a bottle!

CHAPTER IX. IN THE LADIES' DRAWING-ROOM.

THE ladies' drawing-room at Lucullus Mansion, though a large and handsome apartment, had not that stiff and formal air which belongs to its congener at a fashionable hotel. It was intended not only for show but for use, and thanks to Mrs. Hodlin Barmby's tact, even more than to the books and photographs, the besique boxes and chess-boards, the comfortable ottomans and sofas, with which she had provided it, it *was* used. A hostess may provide conversation-chairs, but cannot make her company talk—especially if it is a mixed one, and mostly strangers to one another—without some address; no, nor even sit in them, or else we should not find so many public drawing-rooms not only silent but empty.

At most hotels in England, those who have private sitting-rooms prefer to make use of them in place of joining the general company, and those who have not that expensive luxury, often endeavour, by their absence from the evening gathering, to persuade people that they have; but at Lucullus Mansion there were very few ladies who did not spend at least the period during which their lords were sipping their wine, in the drawing-room, and to none did Mrs. Hodlin Barmby omit to say "something civil." Those whom she saw evidently getting on well together, she wisely left to themselves after a passing word of courtesy, but where she saw "a hitch" she sat down, and smoothed the knot away, and set the skein going. More especially did she give her attention to the new-comers, whom it was her mission first to put at their ease, and then to introduce to such companions as she imagined would be to their taste. She brought her ducklings to the water, and set them swimming; and what mother duck could have done more?

On the present occasion, she naturally took Evy under her wing.

"Your uncle is somewhat of an invalid, I hear," said she, as they crossed the hall together in the rear of the cloud of muslin. "I noticed that he took Vichy water."

She must have also noticed that he had taken something very much worse; but to look at her, when she spoke those words of sympathy, you would have thought that she had had no nose.

"Yes, indeed, he is never very strong," said Evy, "but to-day he is unusually un-

well, I think. I dare say the fatigues of our journey have been a little too much for him."

"Very likely, my dear. Else, being unaccustomed to him, I was rather frightened, do you know, to see him change colour so at dinner."

"Did you see that? I was in hopes nobody had observed him but myself."

"Well, nobody else did, dear, except you and me, I have no doubt," returned Mrs. Barmby, smiling; "but it is my duty, you know, to see everything—and to hold my tongue in most cases. I should have been careful of speaking of such a thing as this, for instance, to most young ladies in your position, but I did you the compliment of supposing you had common sense. It could not make your uncle any worse to mention the fact; while in case it had escaped your observation, it was only right to call your attention to it."

There was a certain seriousness in Mrs. Barmby's air that belied her careless words, and did not escape her companion's observation.

"You did quite right, I'm sure, and I am much obliged to you," replied Evy, gratefully. "To say the truth, I wanted my uncle to go up-stairs at once, but he seemed to wish me to come into the drawing-room. It was not like one of his usual attacks at all. It seemed to me to be a sort of spasm."

"I think it was," said Mrs. Barmby; "but there is nothing to be alarmed at in that. They are common enough with all of us—I have them myself when anything puts me out—and especially with nervous subjects, such as I judge your uncle to be. You must tell me what is good for him, and he shall never be without a wholesome dish at table, I promise you."

"Oh, thank you. I have no doubt he will do very well. He told me that the Balcombe air seemed to have done him good already."

"Indeed! Well that is very strange, for I understood him to say, not five minutes ago, that he was very doubtful whether it would suit him, and that I must not be surprised if he started off all in a hurry."

"Oh, you don't know my uncle," laughed Evy. "He threatened to leave Dunwich at least once a week, and yet we lived on there for three years."

Mrs. Barmby laughed with her young friend; but she did not share her apparently careless view of the matter.

'Mr. Hulet has got heart disease,' was

her private reflection, "and for half a minute at dinner to-day was, I am certain, in agony. It is just as well, however, that this poor girl should not be made aware of it—Mrs. Storks, let me introduce my young friend, Miss Carthew."

"I am very pleased to make her acquaintance," said that lady, frankly, "and I wish, for both our sakes, it had been made earlier; I mean before dinner. I would then have talked to my vis-à-vis instead of my neighbour—oh dear, what a dreadful man that Mr. Paragon is, Mrs. Barmby—I flatter myself also that Miss Carthew would have got on with me better than with that heraldic old griffin, Mr. De Coucy."

"It is very ungrateful of you to say so, considering the terms in which Mr. De Coucy used to speak of you, Mrs. Storks," returned the hostess, smiling.

"Yes, used to," returned the widow, laughing heartily; "but now, I fear, I am no more in favour with him than is our fair friend yonder." She motioned with her hand to where Judith Mercer was sitting by her aunt's elbow with a huge photograph book between them; then added, as her hostess slipped away to make herself pleasant elsewhere, "Are you good at character-guessing, Miss Carthew? If so, do tell me what you think of that young lady."

"Well, I never saw a more beautiful face," began Evy.

"Or a better figure," put in Mrs. Storks. "There can be no two opinions about her good looks. But are there not 'slumbering fires,' as the novelists say—'temper,' I call it—in those down-drooped eyes?—she knows we are talking of her at this instant, and therefore seems as meek as a dove—is there not impatience, too, in those taper fingers with which she is pointing out 'objects of interest' to that exacting old lady?"

"I did not know fingers were so significant," said Evy, smiling.

"What, don't you believe in chiromancy? Of course I don't mean the divination part of it, but in the indications that the hand affords. Well, at all events, you know what sort of tempers people have who bite their nails. That girl would bite her nails to the quick if it wasn't for spoiling the look of them. She is obliged to be all dutiful submission to her relative, who snubs her dreadfully; but she little knows she is sitting upon a volcano. Miss Judith will strangle that old lady some day, mark my words."

"Let us hope not," said Evy, a little shocked at the other's vigorous language, accompanied though it was with a smiling air.

"Well, I don't know about 'hoping not.' You have no idea how trying Mrs. Mercer is with her fainting fits (she has one a day) and her footstool, which is indispensable to her wherever she moves; it must be a dreadful thing to live with a hypochondriac. By-the-bye, why does your uncle always take paregoric with his meals?"

"I did not know he did," said Evy, attempting a stiff manner, though very much inclined to laugh.

"But it was paregoric, wasn't it?" returned her unabashed companion. "Well, at all events it smelt very like it. I hope he doesn't worry you, as Mrs. Mercer worries her niece."

"Indeed he doesn't, Mrs. Storcks; my uncle is the kindest of men."

"Ah, that's very nice, and particularly as I see you mean it. Not like that girl yonder who will come up and thank you for your kind attention to her dear aunt if you happen to thread her needle for her, and at the same time will wish you dead. He's very susceptible though, isn't he? Kind old gentlemen generally are."

"Susceptible? How do you mean?"

"Falls in love, like Mr. De Coucy, with every young woman he meets, does he not?"

"Oh dear no," said Evy, laughing, this time outright. "I never knew him do anything of the sort."

"Did you not? Well, I may be wrong, but it struck me more than once at dinner that he gave a very peculiar glance towards Miss Judith Mercer. Tried to look at her unobserved (which he didn't I'll answer for it); you know what I mean?"

"I can't say I do," returned Evy, frankly. "And I am quite sure that Uncle Angelo never——"

"Hush!" interrupted Mrs. Storcks. "Here is Mrs. Barmby coming on an embassy from the malade imaginaire. If I am not mistaken, you are going to be introduced to her Transparency."

And, indeed, the mistress of the house here came over from Mrs. Mercer, with a polite request from that lady, that Evy would be so good as to grant her the great pleasure of an introduction.

"A very well meaning person indeed, my dear," whispered Mrs. Barmby, as she escorted her young friend across the room, "but a little peculiar."

"How good of you, I'm sure," lisped Mrs. Mercer, "I would have come over to you, Miss Hartopp, if it were not for my legs, which Doctor Carambole says I am not to venture upon for at least an hour after dinner. Judith—this is my niece Judith; you are just about of an age, and must, I insist upon it, be great friends—go and take Miss Hartopp's place on yonder sofa, and let her sit by me awhile."

Judith, who had risen at Evy's approach, and saluted her with a curtsy so low that it almost suggested a mock humility, bowed her head, and obeyed her aunt's behest, not, however, without shooting one lightning glance of jealous disfavour at the new-comer.

"I hope you don't think it a liberty," commenced Mrs. Mercer, "that I should have asked Mrs. Barmby to play the ambassador for me; but the fact is, I was so struck by a resemblance in your face—only you are prettier than ever *she* was—to a connexion of my own, that I felt irresistibly drawn towards you. Would you mind just pushing my footstool about two inches, or say an inch and a half. Thank you—that's just right. Judith herself couldn't have done it better. What a contrast, by-the-bye, you and my niece afford. The Rose of Sharon and the Lily of—what's the name of the place? My memory is utterly useless; as for names, my dear Miss Hartopp, they go in at one ear and out of the other, though after all that is of no great consequence, for Somebody very rightly observes, "What is in a name?"

Evy bowed adhesion; if Mrs. Mercer did not care about accuracy in names, why should she trouble her with the fact that her own name was not Hartopp?

"One often forgets names and dates," remarked she, wishing to say something comforting, "though one remembers other things well enough."

"Yes, but I don't remember other things, child," answered Mrs. Mercer, peevishly; "and when you get to my age, especially if you have had bad health—there, I've lost my knitting-needle. You don't happen to be sitting upon it do you? Doctor Carambole knew a poor girl who did that once—no, by-the-bye, she swallowed a packet of them, or perhaps it was only two of them, but at all events they increased and multiplied in quite a remarkable manner, and shot about all over her, and came out at her joints, her elbow joints particularly. You've found it on the floor? How good of you. Where was I?"

"You were speaking of the poor young lady who swallowed the needles."

"Just so; she wasn't a young lady, by-the-bye, being only a milliner, but of course the principle is the same. Persons in her own rank who chanced to shake hands with her, used to have their fingers pricked most dreadfully. However, they cured her at last by mesmerism. They got a mesmer—no, I'm wrong, it was magnetism—they got a magnet, one of the things you buy at the toy-shops with metal fishes, you know, only larger, and all the needles leapt out at once, like a shower of rain. Talking of showers, are you going to stay at Balcombe long? You'll find it dreadfully wet."

"I cannot say; that will depend upon how it agrees with my uncle, who is an invalid."

"Dear me. Well, now, that's very nice—very interesting, I mean, of course. I wonder whether his symptoms are likemine. Would you mind describing them?"

"I believe my uncle's ailment is chiefly connected with the nerves," remarked Evy, evasively.

"Ah, then he will derive no benefit from being here, nor anywhere else. My dear Miss Hartopp, I've been everywhere for nerves, and never lost them, though I have acquired several new diseases. Balcombe is neither better nor worse for me than other places."

"You find it pleasant, however, do you not? The scenery seems exceedingly picturesque."

"I believe it is; but I am too near-sighted to see scenery. I am obliged to look at everything through these double glasses, which is very fatiguing to a person in my delicate state of health. I can't hold them up for more than half a minute at a time. Doctor Carambole says, 'Let your niece hold them up for you, then,' but that looks so ridiculous, you know. Most near-sighted persons have some natural advantage in this respect. People who wear these double things have often a little knob on the bridge of their nose; but my knob"—and here Mrs. Sophia Mercer ran her finger along her own nose, which was retroussée—"is at the very end of it, you see, and quite useless. How old are you?"

The abruptness of this inquiry was accompanied by no change of tone; gentle regret at the shape of her most prominent feature gave place to tepid interest in her companion's age, and that was all.

"I am eighteen," said Evy.

"I should have thought you younger. Now Judith, who is one-and-twenty, looks fully her years. Blondes and brunettes are so different in that respect. You will keep your youth for a certain time, my dear miss Hartopp, and then fall suddenly—just as I did—all to pieces."

"I hope not," said Evy, laughing; "and, indeed, Mrs. Mercer, I don't see that; you have done so."

"It is very good of you to say so, I'm sure, my dear; but I'm a wreck. Sitting as I am now, with a footstool nicely adjusted—by-the-bye, could you push it just half an inch nearer, thanks—and with a hard cushion—soft ones are worse than nothing—to support the small of my back, I present a tolerable appearance. But you should see me, when I am getting up in the morning—I wish you would some day, for it's a long business, and I should like to have somebody to talk to besides Judith. That's what I admire so much in reading of the French kings. They received society in their bedrooms. I dare say you have read all about their great levées and their little levées, and so on, while their wigs were being curled, though there is nothing of that kind, thank goodness, about me. It's all my own hair, such as it is. You would never guess it to have been once a beautiful brown, just like your own, and so long that I could sit upon it. Can you sit upon yours?"

"Well, really," laughed Evy, "I never tried."

"Did you not? I could just do it by throwing my head back as though I were taking a pill. By-the-bye, it must be nearly time for me to take one now; but there, Judith never forgets to remind me to the moment. She has such a good head. I dare say you look after your uncle in the same way. You must introduce me to him presently, for I am sure we shall have many topics in common. Who is that gentleman coming into the room? I can't find my glasses. Doctor Carambole says—God bless my soul and body!"

"Miss Mercer, your aunt is ill," cried Evy, terrified by the sudden change in her companion's appearance, even more than by her ejaculation. To sink back in her chair was an impossibility for Mrs. Mercer, because of the supplemental cushion, but her colourless face had turned to a livid white, and was drooping, with shut eyes, upon one side, in a very alarming manner. Before Evy had finished her sentence Judith had crossed the room,

and snatching up a bottle of smelling-salts that lay on the table, applied it to her relative's nostrils.

"Good Heavens, what is the matter?" shrieked a chorus of female voices.

"It is a fainting fit," observed Mrs. Storke, quietly, more with the object of reassuring the trembling Evy, than of allaying the general anxiety.

"It is not," answered Judith, decisively, "or at least it is not one of those to which my aunt is subject."

One good soul ran for water, another kindled a wax light, and seized a quill feather, and Mrs. Hodlin Barmby threw wide the glass door, that opened on the garden terrace, to give the patient air.

Even these sovereign remedies failed of their effect for several minutes, at the expiration of which Mrs. Sophia Mercer opened her eyes, and glanced around her in an apprehensive manner, while at the same time the colour rushed to her cheeks.

"The gentlemen are all gone, my dear," observed Mrs. Barmby, rightly translating the poor lady's look of distress. "You feel better now, don't you?"

"Yes, Mrs. Barmby, thank you; there's nothing, as Doctor Carambole says, like salts"—here the patient sniffed at it vigorously—"except senna. Who is that holding my head?"

"It is Miss Carthew," said Mrs. Barmby.

"Ah," sighed Mrs. Mercer. "Why did you tell me her name was Hartopp? Now I understand it all."

A remark containing an enigma so pregnant and profound that its solution must not be disclosed until our next chapter, and perhaps not even then.

OUR FORMER WARS WITH THE ASHANTEES.

THE LAST WAR.

OUR last war with these bloodthirsty savages took place in 1864, and was attended with great loss of life. Almost the moment the news reached England, that the Governor of Cape Coast Castle was intending to exact retribution from the King of Ashantee, for an outrage committed by him upon British territory, the prophets raised their voices and warned our ministers that the pestilential climate would too surely fight for the enemy. Insufficient precautions, they said, had been taken to protect our forces, and the inevitable result would be serious loss and suffering. The cost of the petty war both

in men and money, they also proclaimed, would greatly exceed any advantage to be gained from it. And the forebodings of the political prophets in this case turned out only too true.

The news of these unfortunate hostilities had scarcely reached England, when questions were addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, by Sir John Pakington, as to the causes which had led to the war with the King of Ashantee, and what prospect there was of our troops being relieved from the destructive effects of that climate. Statements had reached him that our governor at Cape Coast Castle intended to invade the Ashantee territory, and to take possession of the capital. If this were true, it would be a most visionary scheme, at once hopeless and impossible. He had heard that the King of Ashantee had at his disposal a considerable army; but whether he had or had not, his natural position would repel an attack, for no army could be so strong, no fortress so impregnable, as the dreadful climate and pernicious atmosphere which prevailed over the hundred and fifty miles which lay between the capital and the sea-coast. The effects of this on the European constitution rendered life not worth three weeks' purchase, and those Europeans who escaped death from the climate were, in many cases afflicted with idiotcy. Another peculiar fact was, that negroes appeared to suffer as much from the climate as Europeans; he had been lately informed that a wing of a West India regiment, brought over from the West Indies in order to aid in the prosecution of the war—numbering seven hundred negroes strong—was landed on the Gold Coast, and five days afterwards no fewer than a hundred and twenty of these seven hundred negroes were placed hors de combat. It had been stated that the military expense for this absurd enterprise reached a thousand pounds a day; but he found from more reliable information that it very far exceeded that. He earnestly hoped that this folly—he might say this worse than folly—would be put a stop to.

Mr. Cardwell stated that the origin of the war was the flight of two slaves, subjects of the King of Ashantee, into our settlement on the Gold Coast, and the refusal of the governor to deliver them up, on the ground that if he did so their death would be inevitable. The conduct of the governor in that case had received the approval of the Duke of Newcastle. In the spring of 1863, the Ashantee forces

made an incursion into the territory of neighbouring chiefs, and advanced within forty miles of the English possessions, destroying in their progress upwards of thirty towns and villages, sacrificing many lives, and carrying off much property. In the succeeding autumn, the governor, finding that the King of Ashantee intended a renewal of hostilities, and an attack upon our settlements, determined to anticipate him by sending a force into his territories. Having mentioned the further progress of events, the right honourable gentleman concluded by stating that Her Majesty's government had determined at once to send transports to remove our forces from the Gold Coast, so as to bring the troops within the number that could be accommodated there by the ordinary means, with due regard to their health and comfort; that the troops should be withdrawn altogether from the interior; that the stockades should be given over to the native chiefs who were friendly to the British, to protect their own territory; and that the stores should be removed so far as the circumstances of the case would render it practicable, while those which could not be removed would be made a present of to the friendly chiefs. With regard to the future, he could only say that he entirely sympathised in the feeling that it was not our duty to make expeditions at a distance from the sea-coast into the interior of Africa; and as there was no desire or intention to extend our territory, and the rains had put an end to all warlike operations, it was not intended to renew them.

The discussion was not, for the present, carried further; but those who had taken up the case, and felt strongly the impolicy of the steps taken by the colonial authorities, were not disposed to let the matter rest here. Accordingly, Sir John Hay, who had previously manifested much interest in the case, gave notice of a resolution expressing the regret of the House at the proceedings in Ashantee, and moving a censure upon the government upon that account. In introducing this motion Sir John Hay inculpated those who had authorised this unfortunate expedition, without, as he alleged, the requisite precautionary measures, in rather strong terms. He said that the climate of Cape Coast Castle was most deadly, and, except in the rainy season, there was an insufficient supply of water for the soldiers, and no cattle could exist. In such a state of things every necessary comfort should have been pro-

vided for the troops. Transports should have been moored off Cape Coast Castle as a base of operations, and to convey supplies from Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Hospital ships should also have been stationed there, and steamers provided to convey the sick to more healthy places. These precautionary measures had not been taken. In this war, carried on without the knowledge of the House, the arrangements for the comfort and subsistence of the troops were made in the most nigardly spirit, totally disregarding the health of the men; and frightful mortality ensued alike amongst officers and men. Who was to blame for this? He readily acquitted the Colonial Office, and as to Mr. Pine, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, he had only obeyed the instructions of his superiors. The War Office was no doubt to blame for ordering the additional troops to go there, and providing an insufficient commissariat; and the Admiralty was to blame for having delayed to send out transports to remove the rest of the force, and having at length sent them without proper orders. The actual responsibility lay, in fact, on the Cabinet. In conclusion, he moved, "That the government, in landing forces on the Gold Coast for the purpose of waging war against the King of Ashantee, without making sufficient provision for preserving the health of the troops to be employed there, had incurred a grave responsibility, and that the House lamented the want of foresight which had caused so large a loss of life."

The Marquis of Hartington opposed the motion, and defended the War Office from the charges made. The only troops sent by the order of the government to Cape Coast Castle were seven companies, and they landed there from the Tamar in April. They were despatched thither on the representations of Governor Pine; as to the accommodation provided for the troops, an officer was specially sent out to make the requisite arrangements. The noble marquis then entered into details at considerable length, describing the measures taken to provide the troops with provisions, including fresh meat, and also wholesome water, for which filters were sent out calculated to supply twelve hundred gallons of pure water per day. The number of surgeons at the station for the fourteen hundred men had never been less than six; it was generally eight, and for the last five months it was eleven and

twelve. As to medical stores and comforts there was an abundance, and with regard to the provision of hospitals, if anything whatever had been omitted, they must have heard of it through the communications received from the Gold Coast. But he had looked over all the despatches, and he could not find a single complaint of the officer in command of the troops, the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, the officer in charge of the commissariat, or the senior naval officer on the station, with regard to that or any other subject connected with the comfort and welfare of the troops. If there had been delay in sending out transports for the removal of the troops, at all events there had been none in despatching instructions for the withdrawal of the force from the interior. He also referred to the deaths which had been said to have been caused by this expedition, and he showed that they were in many cases wholly unconnected with that event. . . . The honourable gentleman had stated that the deaths of thirteen officers were all owing to the criminal incapacity of Her Majesty's government. He (Lord Hartington) had shown how many of those officers' deaths were not owing to the expedition, and how many officers annually died on the coast of Africa when not engaged in warlike operations at all. He had shown that the annual proportion of those who died or were invalided was almost fifty per cent, and he maintained that the facts which he had been enabled to state to the House had entirely disproved the assertions made. . . .

General Peel said his impression was that there had been the grossest neglect, and that the events of Cape Coast Castle were, on a minor scale, a repetition of all that had taken place in the Crimea. . . . Had he been Secretary for War, no Governor Pine or Secretary for the Colonies should have induced him to send troops to the Gold Coast in the rainy season.

After Lord Palmerston and Mr. Disraeli had made bitter party speeches, the House proceeded to a division, which proved to be a very close one. There voted for Sir J. Hay's resolution, two hundred and twenty-six, and against it, two hundred and thirty-three. The debate was marked by considerable excitement, and the demonstrations usually attending a keen party struggle.

The result of the war only too faithfully fulfilled the predictions of the political prophets. In vain our scanty forces struggled with the fatal climate, till at last,

worn out and hopeless, the war terminated with an inglorious treaty. The King of Ashantee gloried in an imaginary victory, and we were left on the extreme edge of the Gold Coast, shorn of prestige, and, in the opinion of our enemies, ripe for destruction whenever the fitting moment arrived.

Having now completed a brief summary of our former wars with the Ashantees, the savage customs of this strange people are the next subject for us to consider. It will quickly be seen that we have come into contact with a people wealthy and powerful as the ancient Mexicans, and equally bloodthirsty. The great annual festival of the Ashantees, called "the Yam Custom," is held in the early part of September, when the yams become ripe. The yam, the potato of the Africans of the Gold Coast, is planted in December, and dug up in the September following, but not eaten till the conclusion of the "custom." To this feast all the native caboceers, or petty governors, and the vassals of the king, are invited. The only exceptions, in Bowditch's time, were the Kings of Inka and Dagwumba (who sent deputations of their principal captains). The only officers of the king who are excused are those absent on government business, such as ambassadors, &c. This festival is an uncomfortable time for the cabinet ministers of Ashantee; for if the fidelity of a chief has been suspected, or he has committed any offence, he is generally punished at this time. The yam custom resembles the Roman saturnalia in its license, for neither theft, intrigue, or assault can then be punished, and every one abandons himself to vice without restraint.

On the 5th of September the paths leading to Coomassie, the capital of Ashantee, are crowded by nobles, who vie with each other in the splendour and variety of their retinues. It is the cruel custom of these caboceers or captains to increase the dignity of their entries by sacrificing a slave at each quarter of the town. On the afternoon of the next day, the king receives all the caboceers in the large area where, in Bowditch's time, the cannons captured at Dunkara used to be placed. The crush was tremendous, and the chief objects of attraction were the heads of kings and chiefs whom the kings of Ashantee had conquered from the reign of Sai Tootoo to that of the reigning sovereign. The dried heads of chiefs who had been punished for revolt were also displayed by

two parties of executioners. These wretches formed two bands of upwards of one hundred each, who defiled before the king in a wild dance. Some of these men made the most irresistible grimaces, others used the most frightful gestures, clashing their knives on the skulls, in which sprigs of thyme were inserted as charms to keep their spirits from troubling the king. Firing off guns and drinking palm wine were the only amusements of the people during these ceremonies, while the caboceers and the executioners were defiling before the king. Each of the chiefs was announced with his full titles, like a guest at a London evening party, and passed round the royal circle, saluting every umbrella that canopied a grandee. In the evening, when the torches were lit, the effect of the incessant musketry and clamour, says the traveller whose account we abridge, was terrific and unearthly. The umbrellas of the chiefs could be seen crowding up all the by-streets. The scene resembled one vast fair, and, between every interval of the musket firing, there came the blare of distant horns and the beat of countless drums. This satanic carnival lasted till four in the morning, just before which hour the king retired.

An English artist, who sketched one of these yam customs, has depicted one of the native chiefs of importance under his umbrella, borne on the shoulders of his chief slave. He is saluting friends as he goes along, and is preceded and surrounded by boys, who wave elephants' tails and feathers. His captains are lifting their swords in the air, and hallooing out the deeds of their chief's forefathers. His stool of honour, which is borne close to him, is ornamented with a large brass bell. Another chief is preceded by a standard-bearer, and followed by numerous attendants. He is supported round the waist by a confidential slave. One wrist of the chief is so heavily laden that the African dignitary is obliged to support it on the head of a small slave boy, who seems proud of the honour. As the chiefs are carried along they salute their fellow peers by a peculiar horizontal sawing motion of the hand. Their umbrellas are waved up and down to raise a breeze, and large grass fans are also kept playing round their august heads.

In another group the artist has drawn, the chief is followed by his handsomest slave girl, who bears on her head a small red leather trunk full of gold ornaments and rich cloths. Behind follow soldiers and

drummers, the latter grimacing as they throw their drums in the air and catch them with agility. The boys in front carry elephants' tails and fly-flappers, while the captains, with raised swords, are hastening forward the musicians and soldiers. Some of these attendants carry the chief's stool, or execution block, which is so soaked with blood, that it is always usual to cover it with red silk. One of the chiefs is represented as being carried in a state hammock bound with red taffeta. He is smoking calmly under his umbrella, the top of which is crowned by a stuffed leopard. On one side of the picture is a pinioned slave, one of the intended victims, who has knives thrust through his cheeks and mouth to prevent his uttering curses against the king and his subjects. He is carried as a show, preceded by two of the king's messengers, who clear a way for him. In another corner the artist has introduced the king's four linguists seated in conversation under an umbrella, while a chief is administering the sacred oath to a king's messenger who is to be sent to fetch an absent caboceer, by placing a gold handled sword between his teeth.

At a yam custom which Bowditch witnessed, the public oriers were all deformed men, who wore caps of monkey skin. The king sat in a chair of ebony and gold, and held up his two fingers whenever a chief came to him to vow fealty, and pointing to a distant country with his sword, swore to conquer it. The throne and everything round it was glittering with gold. The royal stool was thickly cased with gold, and near it lay gold pipes and fans of ostrich-wing feathers, while from the captains' swords hang golden wolves' and snakes' heads as large as life. The attendant girls carried silver bowls for palm wine. The executioners, whose bodies were grotesquely painted, kept dancing up to him, beating on human skulls with the knives they carried. The children of the nobility who attended the king carried elephants' tails spangled with gold, and fly-flaps. The musicians sat or stood near the king, playing on instruments plated with gold. On the right and left of the king's umbrella were placed the flags of Great Britain, Holland, and Denmark, countries which the Ashantees, no doubt, considered as mere petty dependencies of their own.

At the top of the umbrella of old Quatchie Quofie, one of the chiefs, was a small black wooden doll, with a bunch of rusty hair on its head, intended to represent the famous caboceer of Akim, whom Quat-

chie had killed in battle. He kept dancing before this figure, deriding his dead enemy, while his captains bawled out his glorious deeds. In one group the artist has sketched some Ashantees drinking palm wine; a boy kneels beneath those who drink, holding a second bowl to catch the liquor which the luxurious purposely, as a great luxury, allow to flow over their beards, the attendants all the while blowing on horns, and shouting the deeds of the revellers. Many Moors were present at these rejoicings that Bowditch witnessed, and were distinguishable by the huge size of their turbans. One of them pronounced blessings on the passing horsemen, who rode by on steeds which were covered with fetishes and bells, flourishing their lances, and followed by musicians who played on rude violins. The whole assembly round the king was surrounded by lines of soldiers, with here and there a group of musicians, some of whom wore old cocked-hats and soldiers' jackets, and presented a grotesque appearance.

The next morning, the king, with royal generosity, ordered large brass pans full of rum to be placed in various parts of the town for the refreshment of the populace.

Vast crowds of slaves, freemen, women, and children, instantly collected round the pans, and fought and trampled each other under foot in their eagerness to drink. In less than an hour, excepting a few chiefs, there was not a sober person left in Coomassie. Parties of four Ashantees would be seen staggering under the weight of a friend whom they affected to be carrying home. Strings of women, who were covered with red paint, and walked hand in hand, fell down like rows of cards. Slaves and mechanics passed furiously declaiming on state policy. The drunken musicians clashed out tipsy music, and even the children of both sexes were lying drunk in the streets. The men and women, who at this annual feast usually wear their best clothes, trailed their robes through the mud in drunken emulation.

Towards evening the mob grows partially sober again, and the caboceers again display their retinues in a great procession from the palace to the south part of the town, the king and his dignitaries being carried on rude palanquins amid a continuous blaze of musketry. The next day is occupied in state palavers; the day after the diet breaks up, and the caboceers formally take leave.

At the yam customs about one hundred persons, chiefly slaves or culprits, are sacri-

ficed in different parts of the town. Several victims are also sacrificed at Banhama over a large brass pan full of fresh and decayed vegetable matter. This is done to avert evil and to produce invincible fetish. Every chief also puts some slaves to death, and pours their blood into the holes from whence the ripe yams have just been dug. Those who cannot afford to kill slaves take the heads of those already sacrificed and place them in the yam ground. It is customary also at the yam feast to melt all the king's ornaments into new forms—a sight which is very attractive to the populace and the chiefs from a distance, and spreads the fame of the King of Ashantee's wealth and power.

"About ten days after the custom," says an African traveller, "the whole of the royal household eat new yam for the first time, in the market-place, the king standing by. The next day he and the captains set off for Sarrasoo before sunrise, to perform their annual ablutions in the river Prah. Almost all the inhabitants follow him, and the capital appears deserted; the following day the king washes in the marsh at the south-east end of the town, the captains lining the streets leading to it on each side. He is attended by his suite, but he leaves the water with his own hands over himself, his chairs, stools, gold and silver plate, and the various articles of furniture used especially by him. Several brass pans are covered with white cloth, with various fetish under them. About twenty sheep are dipped (one sheep and one goat only are sacrificed at the time), to be killed in the palace in the afternoon, that their blood may be poured on the stools and door-posts. All the doors, windows, and arcades of the palace are plentifully besmeared with a mixture of eggs and palm-oil; as also the stools of the different tribes and families. After the ceremony of washing is over, the principal captains precede the king to the palace, where, contrary to usual custom, none but those of the first rank are allowed to enter to see the procession pass. The king's fetish men walk first, with attendants holding basins of sacred water, which they sprinkle plentifully over the chiefs with branches, the more superstitious running to have a little poured on their heads, and even on their tongues. The king and his attendants all wear white cloths on this occasion. Three white lambs are led before him, intended for sacrifice at his bed-chamber. All his wives follow, with a guard of archers."

A former traveller in Ashantee describes the native captains as wearing robes of great value, woven from costly foreign silks, which had been unravelled by native workmen. They were of all sizes and patterns, of incredible size and weight, and were thrown over the shoulder in the manner of the Roman toga. The men wear small silk fillets round their foreheads, and many gold necklaces intricately wrought. They are fond of Moorish charms, which they enclose in small square cases of gold and silver or curious embroidery. They wear long necklaces of aggr'y beads, and strings of the same round the knee, while round their ankles they wear small gold coins, rings, and figures of animals in gold. Their sandals are of green, white, and red leather. Rude lumps of rock gold hang from their left wrists. At their great festivals they carry gold and silver pipes and canes, while they hang from their gold-handed swords, wolves' and rams' heads of gold. The curious-shaped blades of these state swords are kept encrusted with enemies' blood; the sword sheaths are made of leopard or fish skins. Their large war drums are supported on the head of one man and beaten by two others. They brace them with the thigh bones of their enemies, and ornament them with circles of enemies' skulls. Their kettle-drums are covered with leopard skin, the wrists of the drummers being hung with bells and iron ornaments, which jingle loudly when they are playing. The smaller drums are suspended from the neck by scarves of red cloth. The war horns, made of the teeth of young elephants, have gold mouthpieces, and are ornamented with the jaw-bones of enemies slain in battle. The Ashantee war-caps are adorned with eagles' feathers. The king's body-guard, in Bowditch's time, wore corselets of leopard's skin covered with shell ornaments of gold.

These corselets they stick full of small knives, which have sheaths of gold and silver, and handles of blue agate. Their bullet-boxes are of elephant's hide, also studded with gold, while the warriors hang from their arms and waist-cloths white horse-tails and silk scarves. Their long muskets are banded with gold, and the stocks are ornamented with shells. The soldiers wear caps of pangolin and leopard skin, with the tails left to hang down behind. Their cartouch-boxes are small gourds, covered with leopard or pig skin, embossed with red shells and small brass bells. Many of the soldiers wear

strings of knives on their hips and shoulders. Iron chains and collars are given to the most daring champions, who prize them, it is said, far above those of gold.

THE DYING YEAR.

RIPPLES the sun-gold o'er the western sky,
And island cloudlets, rose and amethyst,
Gleam in the amber light: the rebin pours,
From the red-berried ash-bough, his full notes,
Sweet, plaintive cadences, whose clear sad hymn
Tells of the waning year; the silver rime
Of the first frosty evens, clusters white
Upon the crisped grass-blades, and the drops
Of diamond-dew congeal amid the bells
Of the last lingering flowers. The Autumn-Queen
Flashes with hectic crimson, for anon
Shall sound the knell that bids her glories cease.

A last faint perfume of the blossom-time
Hangs round the garden lawns, where glimmer still
A few bright scarlet clusters, yet untouched
By scathing kiss of frost; as one may see
Oft 'mid the desolation of a home,
Some genial spirit strive the rest to cheer,
Shining the brighter for surrounding gloom.

Death and decay! Ay, but the amaranth
Is fostered by Death's shadow; and frail man
From out the chill corruption of the tomb
Uprises glorified—the grave the key
That open throws the golden gates of Life!

SIDEBOARD-SQUARE.

UNDER the shadow of St. Paul's cathedral at sunset, not far beyond the jurisdiction of the Dean and Chapter, within earshot of the clank and clamour of the printing machines of the Times newspaper, at no great distance from Stationers' Hall, not above a hundred miles northward of Ludgate-hill, and near enough to Doctors' Commons for people who want a marriage license in a hurry, or require to look at a last will and testament on the spur of the moment, may be discovered Sideboard-square. I say may be discovered advisedly, for Sideboard-square is, and always was, a matter of discovery. Ordinary people—people who know London well—are unaware of its existence. Nobody has any friends there as they have in the old-fashioned squares of Russel, Bedford, Brunswick, Mecklenburgh, or Fitzroy. Nobody has any business there as they might have in the squares of Billiter, Crosby, Jeffery, Devonshire, and Great St. Helen's. Nobody has any political argument, with the chance of a free fight there, as they might have in Trafalgar-square, nor pleasure as they might have in that of Leicester. It is a square that nobody has any occasion to go to unless particular business takes him there, and a square that nobody visits unless he drifts in there by accident. Instances have been known of a wild young gentleman from the country

losing himself in this quiet haven, and knocking at every door in succession, and inquiring where he could get a marriage license. Flushed young fathers, with the glory of their first baby, have insisted upon leaving the announcement of the fact, together with six- and-sixpence in money, at Number One, under the impression that they had discovered Printing 'House-square, and would see the important announcement of their son's birth in the Times the following morning. Unfledged authorlings have rapped boldly at Number Five, and have been very indignant because they were not allowed to register the title of a work that nobody would ever think of publishing, and made uncalled for remarks relative to the law of copyright in England, because a respectable citizen refused to receive their five shillings, and requested them to apply to Stationers' Hall. People who are great in making short cuts have occasionally drifted in here, and generally made it a personal grievance that there was no outlet at the end of the square. A lost child has been known to stray into it for a sanctuary; a postman new to the neighbourhood has delivered letters intended for some other square there by mistake; two or three people have strayed into it during a dense fog, and have wandered round and round without finding any outlet, and have never expected to reach the realms of civilisation again. It is not a square much affected as a playground for children. Occasionally a ball or a tip-cat will fly in from the lane outside, and then the ragged boys will parley with one another for a time, and the most courageous of the band will rush in, secure the toy as quickly as possible, and bolt out again as if he had a policeman after him.

The entrance to the square is under a low broad archway. It is broad enough, but there is no thoroughfare for carriages, though the dwellers in the square all have the aspect of the people who, if it had not been for so-and-so, or such a thing, would have been riding in their carriages by this time. The inhabitants are by no means proud, though they are severely respectable. I am inclined to think that the word "genteel" would precisely describe their status in society. There is the entrance to an office under the archway, and this office is very grand in the matter of subdued brass plates, dim knockers, and capacious looking bell-pulls. You cannot help wondering what business is carried on at this office. There is a legal aspect about the place, chastened with an ecclesiastical

flavour; there is a suspicion that it may be the haven of a litigious parish official in reduced circumstances, if one may judge from certain beadlesque insignia that may occasionally be found about the portal. On week days, about one o'clock, a pleasant odour of Irish stew pervades the neighbourhood, and on Sundays, at two, an appetising savour of roast goose and sage and onions has been wafted half-way round the square, and made the children at Number Ten turn up their noses at the excellent roast leg of mutton and Yorkshire pudding provided for their dinner. It may be argued from these circumstances that this parish official has in his old age fallen upon his feet, and that the wind of winter has been providentially tempered for the shorn beadle. This gentleman is not officially connected with the square: he does not perambulate its area in gold lace, and threaten small children with a large cane, or crack walnuts with the policeman at the corner. No, no. Nothing of the kind. But the very fact of his residing at the entrance to the square, and sallying forth in gorgeous gaberdine every Sunday, strikes terror into the hearts of the lazy 'prentices and dirty little boys of Limpin-lane, and prevents them from entering the sacred precincts. His magnificence awes them; they look upon him as the Bishop of London and the Chief Commissioner of Police rolled into one—the clearest idea of the church militant these young rascals possess.

Passing under the somewhat sombre archway the traveller emerges into Sideboard-square. You have left the narrow crowded thoroughfare of Limpin-lane but a few yards, but you seem to have entered a different world. You have escaped from the swift current, you have drifted out of the stream into a pleasant back-water; you can here move and paddle about to your heart's content, as long as you please, without any strain upon mind or muscle. You would think the great City had suddenly retired from business, and gone down into the country, were it not for the fact that the hum of the traffic and the buzz of multitudes is roaring like a weir in the distance. And ever and anon the clock-bell of St. Paul's comes booming over your head, as if the Dean and Chapter were firing a species of horological gun at distant steeples to remind them that they were somewhat behind the time. A delightful flavour of the City of the past, a delicious savour of behind the time lurks about the atmosphere of Side-

board-square. Progress seems to have turned aside from it, Enterprise has forgotten it, and ruthless Improvement has left it high and dry—a pleasant, ancient, mouldy island, amid a sea of modern stucco. It is paved all over with corn-punishing stones. There is not much traffic, either wheel or foot, over them, you can see by the long blades of bright green grass that are springing up here and there, and which are a source of infinite joy to the plump City sparrows. There is one lamp in the square, and one grand old plane-tree. This tree is looked upon with the utmost veneration. It is regarded as almost sacred. A dowager hamadryad, whose name is Gentility, lodges somewhere in its branches and watches o'er the welfare and shapes the destinies of her worshippers. It puts forth its leaves earlier than any other tree, and they remain upon its branches when the rest of the City trees are utterly bare; it is true the leaves become shrivelled and dusty and hard, but still they are leaves. It has been hinted that there is only one lamp in the square. This is true of the square as a public corporation, but private enterprise is not dead in this behind-the-age little cluster of dwellings. The doctor has a lamp projecting from his lintel of a very magnificent nature. It has a blood-red pane on one side of it, which at night glares like an inflamed eye at the harmless passers-by in Limpin-lane. It also sheds ensanguined reflections upon various parts of the square, which are very terrible to nervous old ladies from the country, when they wake up suddenly in the middle of the night, and find these reflections flickering on their bed curtains. The doctor, however, has not contrived his lamp well. He only has the crimson pane on one side of it. The consequence is, if you are running for a doctor at the top of your speed in the middle of the night, you see the lamp in the distance, and you steer for it; probably overshoot the mark, and then look up and see a white light. The "danger" signal has suddenly changed to "all right," so you hark back, go round the square again, and it is just possible in your haste that the same fatality may once more occur, and you may—if you are not careful—keep on at that game all night.

It is, however, the aspect of the square by daylight that must first be treated of. Your first idea of the place is, that it must contain some valuable treasure, that it must be the depository of papers of very

great worth. You notice many of the windows are barred, most of the upper windows are fitted with strong little balconies—which seem more like defences than ornaments—and all the lower windows are provided with massive green shutters, rivetted and plated with most elaborate contrivances in the way of bolts, bars, hasps, latches, staples, and rings, for keeping them fast. Whatever may have been the original condition of the place, it may be easily seen that the present inhabitants have no gold nor silver nor important documents that they wish to guard, for many of the shutters are never closed from one year's end to the other, and the balconies are gay with geraniums in pots, Virginian creepers, mignonette, or any popular and inexpensive plants that happen to be in season. All the houses are somewhat ancient. Most of them are of the Queen Anne period. They were originally of good, honest, healthy red brick, but more than a century and a half of London smoke and dirt has so smirched their faces with grime, that at the present time they have rather a mouldy appearance. You may notice two houses, however, which seem to have attempted to infuse some novelty amongst their neighbours; they have wrenched the shutters from their hinges, they have hearthstoned their steps, and also a little crescent-like oasis on the pavement, to snowy whiteness, and have assumed an air of mild joviality, an aspect of pale conviviality. These are the two—let it be whispered softly—the two inns of the place. The inhabitants do not acknowledge them as inns, nor do their proprietors, but still inns they are to all intents and purposes. They look like inns pretending to be private houses, or private houses playing at innkeeping, you cannot be exactly sure which it is. At any rate the pretence does not take many people in. The first might perhaps deceive any but an expert; the door is closed as in a private house, there are three brass bell-pulls on either side, polished to the last pitch of intensity, and there is a tiny brass plate in which you may see a bilious reflection of your face, and read the word "GRIGGS." It is not easy to read this, for years of friction and unlimited oil and rotten-stone have effectually rubbed all the black out of the name. The establishment facing the mysterious, rusty padlocked pump on the opposite side of the way, which may be known by a quaint carven canopy over its doorway, attempts to assume an aspect of old-fashioned hospitality, and leaves its door wide open as

if it expected so many people to be dropping in all day that it were scarcely worth while to shut it. It also boldly advertises its calling to the world. On a plate large enough to serve as a monumental brass for the proprietor when he retires for ever from innkeeping, may be seen, "PRAWN'S COMMERCIAL BOARDING HOUSE." The difference between the two establishments may be thus described: Griggs's looks like an inn pretending to be a private house, and Prawn's appears like a private house playing at keeping an inn. Prawn is quite a different man from his neighbour. Prawn gives an air of festivity to his lobby by putting on either side of it mealy Portugal laurels, in pots. He may be seen on his door-steps sometimes very early in the morning in his shirt-sleeves. Prawn is very active about his own establishment: he gets up betimes and goes to Covent Garden and buys his vegetables; he knows where the best meat is to be purchased and at the cheapest price; he is not above blacking a pair of boots at a pinch, or carrying a portmanteau to a cab when necessary. Mrs. Prawn does not come much to the front; she is very useful behind the scenes, and knows what cooking ought to be. Her life is made a burden unto her by three mischievous tomboys of girls who are ever and anon running away with the commercial gents' collars, sliding down the banisters, breaking crockery, and stealing choice bits of pastry. The commercial gents are not unfrequently disturbed by yells from below stairs, and on inquiry they will find it is Joey being lectured, Tilly being carried off struggling to bed, or Poppy being whipped. Mrs. Prawn is a Scotch lady, and believes implicitly in Solomonian discipline, and if the Miss Prawns are spoiled it is certainly not by reason of sparing the rod. What with attending to the cooking, looking after her servants, and spanking her daughters, Mrs. Prawn is generally pretty well tired by ten o'clock, and leaves matters to her husband. And when left to himself, over his pipe and rum-and-water, Prawn sometimes is really amusing; he gives the commercial gents to understand that he has been a gay dog in his time, and could divalge a thing or two, if he were so minded. To this house come energetic gentlemen who breakfast punctually at eight o'clock, who sally forth with unaccountably-shaped cases and parcels, who, directly they come in, want to write letters—it does not matter whether they return at eleven or five, they must begin to write

letters at once. If they return at five it becomes an absolute mania, and the scratching of pens in Prawn's parlour is so furious as post time approaches, that it has been likened to a saw-pit in full work, softened by the distance.

At Mrs. Griggs, or Griggs's, as it is more familiarly called, you meet with a very different class of people. The landlady is sad and placid, and the arrangements of her house are sad and placid also. It would be difficult to find a house pervaded with such a dull dead level of harmonious sadness. The curtains hang in a drooping fashion, as if they were sick of the vanities of life; the sofa groans dismally when you sit down, as if its having seen better days were an apology for its hardness. The very feather-beds have an injured appearance. The pillow submits to be punched with a querulous murmur, and the severe, rectangular, ascetic gaseliers look as if they might have been made out of worms that had been trodden on for so long that they had given up turning. There is no springy feel about the carpets; they seem as if they had been ground down by the iron heel of oppression for so long that they had not a particle of softness left in their constitution. There is an air of resignation, an aspect of comfortable despair pervading the whole place; there are a couple of mild martyrs in the shape of waiters, three or four mortified chamber-maids, a cynical cook, and a misanthropic "boots," contained within this extraordinary establishment. And yet, if you are of a sad and placid disposition, you may enjoy yourself very much at Griggs's in a tearful sort of way. If you appreciate a place which "combines all the advantages of an hotel with the comforts of home"—if you can contrive to be happy on a wet Sunday with serious people, and with nothing more lively in literature than the week before last's *Guardian*—you cannot do better than patronise Griggs's. The proprietress has discovered that sadness and placidity are not to be maintained upon pilgrims' fare, so she supplies a very good table, though there is a suspicion of sack-cloth about the serviettes; one looks for ashes in the salt-cellar; the pigeon-pie seems as if it had rent its clothes; and the smoking joints only consent to be comforting under protest. Hither come country clergymen—most of them very Low Churchmen, with a goodly sprinkling of dissenting divines—during the May Meetings. Hither come country cousins by mistake, because they are under the im-

pression that Griggs's is close to St. Paul's, the National Gallery, the Bank of England, all the theatres, and the parks. They make the martyr-waiters think of impaling themselves upon forks, or suspending themselves by their own serviettes; they cause the mortified chamber-maids to have serious thoughts of going into a nunnery, and they nearly drive the misanthropic "boots" into a lunatic asylum by keeping him up to some ungodly hour, on account of their visiting the theatre and coming home in a most hilarious state of mind and clamouring wildly for supper. They cause the clergymen to sigh during the long pre-arranged grace, because they begin crunching a piece of toast to assuage their hunger, and when a couple of bouncing, healthy, fresh-coloured lasses come bounding into the room in the middle of family prayers, the officiating divine looks very grim indeed. Charming little faces, fathomless brown eyes peeping from under a fringe of soft hair, such as Gainsborough might have limned; eloquent grey eyes and delicious dimples, such as Millais would love to paint; round pouting country beauty, such as John Leech might have drawn, have occasionally been seen framed and glazed in the windows of Griggs's.

Law, physic, and divinity are all represented in the square. The beadle is the representative of divinity; then there is the surgeon, and, besides him, we have a proctor. No one in the square has a very clear idea as to what a proctor may be, but it is generally supposed to be an office of an importance little inferior to that of the Lord High Chancellor. This particular proctor, whatever his rank may be, is not at all proud; although he occupies the largest and most comfortable house in the square, he is not above taking notice of his neighbours. He might often be seen chatting affably with the beadle; and it was said that distinguished functionary consulted him upon parish politics and investments—the beadle is reported to be a somewhat "warm" man. It was he who headed the subscription for the ancient Waterloo hero who lodges in the corner house; it was he who went for the doctor when the young lady was so ill at Miss Tank's, the milliner's, and, what is more, paid the doctor's bill; it was he who paid for the crimson lamp when Poppy Prawn threw a stone through it; and it was he who took the tiresome romp home crying, interceded with her mamma, and prevented her receiving the whipping that the young lady knew was in store for her; and it is

he who does many acts of quiet kindness and unobtrusive charity in the square. He is getting somewhat old, his hair is almost white, and they say there is some story of his life being hopelessly broken by the faithlessness of woman in his youth. He is very well to do; he seldom goes out; he amuses himself by playing the violoncello of an evening; and his only dissipation is going to the performances of the Sacred Harmonic Society in the winter. He appears to have no relations whatever; he seldom has any visitors. His place is looked after by a Welsh housekeeper, who is the terror of tradesmen and the bane of butchers' boys. Visitors to Griggs's or Prawn's are often puzzled to know what that crooning noise is that they hear of an evening when the windows are open. It is only the good old proctor, with gold spectacles on nose, trying to master some favourite passage on his violoncello.

Miss Tank's millinery establishment has always been a cause of some trouble to the dwellers in this secluded haven. Miss Tank has been a beauty in her youth; she is good-looking now. She is just one of those persons who seem to focus beauty, and her young ladies are like gleams of sunshine as they pass to and fro. It is pleasant to hear their light laughter amid the clatter of knives and forks at the one o'clock dinner. She looks after her flock in most motherly fashion. Once when she caught an apple-faced boy-curate waving a towel from his bedroom-window at Griggs's, at one of her young ladies, she went over and lectured him till the poor young man blushed all over, stammered, apologised, and protested. She talked to him like a mother, and told him he was a silly boy, and if he did so again she would write and tell his father. But when a long, slimy Dissenter, the Reverend Boanerges Bageye, wrote a note interlarded with texts to her favourite assistant, Cissy Clare, it was a very different matter. She gave the Reverend Boanerges a bit of her mind, and no mistake. She talked to him as no woman had ever talked to him before; she made him give her a most abject written apology, and when he attempted to back out of it threatened to go down to Sniggleby-in-the-Dingle and give all his congregation full particulars of the whole affair. There was some talk about one of Miss Tank's young ladies and a dashing young student who resided for a considerable period at the doctor's. This young man was of decidedly too sportive a tendency for the square; he was given to ring the wrong bells very late

at night; he once brought some of his companions, and they danced a break-down underneath the lamp at three o'clock in the morning. But worst of all, one summer morning, when he felt more light-hearted than usual, he clomb the sacred tree, tapped at Griggs's first-floor window, and when an estimable old lady appeared at the window in a marvellous night-cap, he gibbered at her, and made hideous faces. In his sudden descent from the tree he broke several branches; this was a thing the inhabitants could not possibly stand, and the doctor was obliged to discharge him forthwith, though he was very clever in his profession, and there was much weeping and wailing at Miss Tank's on the day of his departure.

Then on the other side of the way resides a serious stevedore and his stout wife, who gives herself airs because she had an uncle who was a lieutenant in the navy. There are two fat daughters, who also give themselves airs, and decline to "sit under" the awakening exhortations of the Reverend Hezekiah Hotanstrong in some stuffy little chapel down Shad Thames way, but prefer to go to a fashionable church, and may be seen in gorgeous attire "flaunting," as their father would say, out of the square on a Sunday morning. There is also the German gentleman who deals in toys and beads, who has his ground-floor filled with mysterious packages and gigantic brown-paper parcels, who smokes furiously, and has a favourite cat, which is shunned by all the other cats in the square, as its master is by his neighbours. He is currently reported to be a Communist, and affiliated to several secret societies. He has been seen smoking at his window on a Sunday morning and perusing a paper printed in the German character, and which, as his neighbours are unable to read it, they at once put down as a scurrilous and immoral publication. By the children he is looked upon as an ogre; they cannot conceive any one having a room full of toys and beads and never giving one away. Hard by the German toy-merchant lives a bank clerk with a bonny wife and half a dozen bonny children. The children have all been born in the square, and they are about the only ones who dare to play and romp under the shadow of the plane-tree, and they do this in a subdued fashion. There is something about the whole place that lends itself to the suppression of noise. The butcher-boy shouts less stridently, the baker puts down his basket softly, the milkman ejaculates "Mee-yaw!" in con-

fidence, as if it were a profound secret, and subdues the clank of his pails. No German bands or niggers would dream of invading this quiet retreat. Occasionally an organ may drift into the square, but the grinder always keeps it covered with a green baize cloth, so that it sounds as if the performer were playing in bed with all the clothes over his head. If a policeman ventures to walk round, he shows a strong disposition to go on tiptoe, and the muffin-man muffles his bell and murmurs "Muffins, O, crumpets," in a soft unctuous voice, which is really quite suggestive of melted butter. If there is one thing the inhabitants of the square are agreed upon, it is muffins and crumpets. Even the grim toy-merchant's features relax visibly when he sticks his teeth into what he is pleased to call a "grompette."

Perhaps the best time for a stranger to make the tour of the square is about nine o'clock at night. They are not particular about pulling down the blinds, so the chances are you will be able to see a good deal of its internal economy. You will doubtless make an especial pause in front of the largest house in the square. You may hear some charming old melody being lovingly interpreted, and you will fancy to yourself that it is the proctor, the beadle, the doctor, and the stevedore—law, physic and divinity, with the stevedore thrown in for ballast—executing a stringed quartette for their own especial amusement. You will wander up and down and listen to the pleasant harmony, as it comes floating out of the red-curtained open window from the cosy old-fashioned room; you will fancy that they will have something hot for supper afterwards, concerning which the Welsh housekeeper is troubling herself mightily—they are great believers in hot suppers in Sideboard-square—and there will be a quiet rubber and a bowl of punch. You feel certain the proctor is just the man to brew exquisite punch and to keep the secret of making it locked up in his heart of hearts; you can imagine him filling long-stommed glasses from a choice china bowl, with a ladle, in which a Queen Anne guinea glitters ever and anon through the generous liquor. You walk up and down and notice the queer radiation of shadows cast by the one lamp in the centre, the ensanguined reflections flung here and there by the doctor's danger-signal; you note the point where the yellow and red rays and the unaccountable shadows seem to meet in a tangle and have a fight for supremacy, in which the

yellow rays generally somehow or another seem to have the best of it. Probably you will meet no one but Mrs. Griggs's tom-cat, who glares at you with its green eyes, but treads softly and mysteriously as if it were shod with velvet. It does not scream or spit. Even the very cats partake of the subdued gentility of the place. It is said they caterwaul in a whisper, and use spittoons. Later on in the evening, if you choose to stay, you will see queer little shadow pantomimes behind the down-pulled blinds of the upper windows. After the proctor's music has ceased and his guests have quitted, and doors have been softly closed—people seldom bang doors in Sideboard-square—you will notice lights one by one extinguished in the windows, and in a short time there is nothing left but the centre lamp, and the doctor's danger-signal. The doctor's light is at last somewhat turned down, and the centre lamp seems to burn paler. There is no sound to be heard but the rustle of the leaves of the plane-tree, mingled with the persistent snort of a serious snorer at Griggs's. Faintly may be heard when the snorer pauses or the wind ceases to rustle the leaves, the hum of the everlasting London traffic in the distance. And ever and anon do the Dean and Chapter continue to fire horological guns over your head to remind the backward steeples of their slothfulness, and ever and anon do the slothful churches reply and quarrel with each other and keep up a tintinnabulatory fusillade among themselves. So quiet is the little square, so strange, so quaint, so behind the age, that you take your departure doubting very much that this is the nineteenth century, and that you have been wandering in the very heart of the busiest part of the busiest city in the world.

MARRIED LIFE IN CHINA.

VERY little is known in this country of the married life of the Chinese, but nevertheless their habits and customs in this respect are very minute, and by no means devoid of interest. The patriarchal system of the country is exhibited, on a small scale, in all Chinese households; for as the emperor claims to be, and theoretically is, the absolute and despotic ruler of his subjects, so every father exercises a similar power over his family, even claiming the right to sell his children as slaves.

A woman in China, when once she is married, and has assumed her husband's

clan-name, becomes part and parcel of his family, and henceforward she has but a slight connexion with her own relations, her duty and obedience being entirely transferred to her husband and his parents, the latter of whom, sad to relate, frequently treat her with great cruelty, and more as a slave than a daughter-in-law.

The Chinese wife's great hope and ambition are that she may have male offspring to perpetuate her husband's name, to care for and support him in old age, and, after death, to watch over and offer sacrifices at his grave, and at stated periods to burn incense before his tablet. If she chance to be so unfortunate as to have no children, or only daughters, there is rarely any happiness in store for her in her married life, and her husband is very likely to take to himself a concubine, if he can afford to do so, hoping thereby to attain the darling wish of his heart.

When women have no children they supplicate the goddess Hui-fa Fu-jên to aid them and send them sons, for, if possible, they would rather not have daughters. If a man have no sons he is thought to "live without honour and die unhappy;" and so eager is a Chinaman for a male heir, that, failing a son of his own, he will adopt one from his brothers' families, if he can get one. Occasionally, too, from this all-absorbing desire for a son, parents will bribe a nurse to get some poor man's boy and substitute him for a newly-born daughter. In the exaggerated phraseology common to the Chinese, those who do this are said "Tou lung, huan fêng," that is, to steal a dragon and exchange it for a phoenix.

The following customs, related in the Social Life of the Chinese, are rather amusing, and show what devices women in the Celestial Empire will resort to in the hope that they may thereby be blessed with children. Every year, between the eleventh and fifteenth day of the first and eighth Chinese moons, several of the most popular temples devoted to the worship of a goddess of children, commonly called "Mother," are frequented by married, but childless, women, for the purpose of procuring one of a kind of shoe belonging to her. Those who come for a shoe burn incense and candles before the image of "Mother," and vow that they will offer a thanksgiving, if she will aid them in bearing a male child. The shoe is taken home and placed in the niche, which holds the family image of the goddess, where it is worshipped in connexion with "Mother," though not separately, on the first and fifteenth days of

each moon; fresh flowers are then offered up, and incense, candles, and mock-money are burned. When the child thus prayed for is born, should such a fortunate event take place, the happy mother, in accordance with her vow, causes two shoes to be made like the one obtained from the temple. These two and the original one are brought to the temple with her thank-offering, which generally consists of several plates of food. Some women, instead of asking for a shoe of the goddess, beg some of the flowers which she usually has in her hands or in a flower-vase near by. The shoe is lent, but the flowers are given. On reaching home some women fasten the flowers thus obtained in their hair, whilst others place them in a vase near the niche mentioned above. Should the supplicants not become mothers, no thanksgiving would be expected by the goddess whose aid had been invoked.

When a son is born there are great rejoicings in a family, and shortly afterwards what is termed the "milk name" is given, which answers to "pet names" amongst ourselves. Later on the boy receives a regular name, usually of two characters, corresponding to what we call the "Christian name;" when written it is placed after the clan or surname. When grown up even, boys are often called, not by their proper names, but by their number in the family—for example, A-size or A-woo, that is, Number Four or Number Five.

On the third day after its birth the nurse washes the child for the first time, before the family image of the goddess "Mother," who is currently believed to watch over all children till they reach their sixteenth year, and at the same time a thank-offering of meat, cakes, fruit, wine, flowers, &c., is placed before her, in recognition of her aid in the character of Lucina. As is always the case with such like oblations in China, they are afterwards consumed by the family.

The important ceremony of "binding the wrists" is now observed, and the practice in this matter differs considerably. A common plan is to tie a piece of red cotton loosely round the wrists; another is to fasten some ancient copper coins on the wrists for several days by means of red cotton. In some families this is not finally removed from the infant's wrists for several months, though it is more usual to take it off after fourteen days. The idea is that this binding of the wrists together will prevent the baby from being wicked and disobedient, not only in childhood, but also

in after-life. In allusion to this singular custom, when children are troublesome or naughty, they are asked if their mothers neglected to bind their wrists.

When the baby is a month old the head is shaved for the first time, and in the case of a boy this ceremony is performed before the Ancestral Tablets. A feast is also given, to which the relatives and intimate friends are invited, and it is customary for them to bring presents of toys, food, money, &c.; they also frequently club together and send the infant a silver plate, on which they inscribe three characters, meaning Longevity, Honour, and Happiness. Shortly after this, the parents make their acknowledgments to their various friends for their congratulations and for the presents which they have sent; this is commonly done by sending a small present of cakes in return. At a subsequent entertainment, which sometimes takes place when the child is four months old, the "happy father," it is said, "bows down before the goddess ('Mother'), and begs that the child may be good-natured and easy to take care of, that it may grow fat, that it may sleep well at night, and that it may not be given to crying," &c. From this we may naturally infer that the habits of Chinese babies are much the same as those of our own, and that distracted parents in China, as elsewhere, know what it is to have wakeful nights and squalling babies.

The maternal grandmother, when a boy is a year old, sends him a present of a cap and a pair of shoes, as well as some other garments, and on this occasion another family feast is held to celebrate the birthday.

English mothers, whose children are backward in walking, will be amused at the following piece of Chinese nursery superstition: "It is the custom in many families, when the child is just beginning to walk alone, for a member of the family to take a large knife, often such as is used in the kitchen to cut up vegetables, and, approaching him from behind as he is toddling along, to put it between his legs, or hold it a little way off him, with the edge downwards, and then to bring it to the ground, as if in the act of cutting something. This is called 'cutting the cords of his feet,' and the motion is repeated two or three times. It is done in order to facilitate his learning to walk, and is supposed to be of great use in keeping the child from stumbling and falling down."

After the shaving of the head at the end of the first month, it is a common practice to allow a patch of hair to grow on the

top, if the child be a boy, and on both sides, if a girl; the hair is braided into tight little queues, which stick out, and give the children a very comical look in their earlier years. When a girl, however, reaches womanhood, she ceases to wear these queues, which have latterly hung down her back in glossy braids, and her hair is done up on her head in the peculiar Chinese style, which, we believe, varies but little all over the empire, and report says—though we cannot vouch for the accuracy of the story—that the singular edifice is very rarely taken to pieces, and that the women use a curious little cane pillow to prevent the disarrangement of their hair at night.

On the fifteenth day of the first moon of the year, the birthday of the goddess "Mother" occurs, and, as we have remarked in a previous article,* married women then repair to the temples, and worship her, burning incense, and having crackers let off in her honour. Of this fact we can speak from personal experience, having lived for upwards of two years within a few yards of such a temple, and having been often nearly suffocated with the smell and fumes of the burning joss-sticks; the firework part of the performance, too, was always carried on *con amore*, as we know to our cost. The din and clamour raised by the crowds of women frequenting the small temple of which we speak, on "Mother's" high festivals, will never fade from our memory, for they were truly awful, and could hardly be said to savour much of real devotion.

When a boy goes to school for the first time, he is expected to take with him two small candles, some incense-sticks, and mock-money, all of which are burned in honour of Confucius before a slip of paper bearing some such inscription as "the Teacher, a pattern for ten thousand ages," or one of the great sage's other numerous titles, the new pupil bowing down and making his prostrations the while. About the end of spring in each year, school-masters often give their boys a treat, when very similar, though more elaborate, ceremonies are performed, and it is the custom for the pupils to bring presents of money to defray the expenses.

Children of both sexes are said to "go out of childhood," when they are about sixteen years of age, as in China they are then considered to have become adults, and the event is usually celebrated by

certain family observances. It must, however, be borne in mind that, though a child in China becomes of age at sixteen, he is not thereby emancipated from the control of his parents, for during their lifetime he is bound by law and custom to obey them implicitly, be he ever so old or ever so wealthy. The only exception that is made to this rule is when the child has attained to some office under government, and then he is obliged to render his obedience to the emperor, who, whilst he is in the public service, stands to him in *loco parentis*. When a son has reached his sixteenth year, he commonly assumes the direction of the business matters of the family, if his father be dead, unless, indeed, as sometimes happens, his mother have a very strong will of her own. The doctrine inculcated in the Chinese Classics is that a woman has three stages of obedience: to wit, first, she must obey her father (before she marries); second, her husband (after she is married); and, third, her son (when her husband is dead), provided, of course, that the son have reached the age of manhood. In the last-named case, however, law and custom would never uphold the son in treating his mother in an unkind or unfilial manner. Filial piety is held in the highest esteem in China, even to an exaggerated extent, and it may happen that, in cases of extremely unfilial conduct, parents will bring their offspring before the district magistrate, and invoke the aid of the law in support of their rights; such instances are, however, rare, but they occasionally occur, and the only persons who have any claim to be consulted are the maternal uncles of the accused, who, if these concur with his parents in their view of his misconduct, stands a very bad chance indeed of escaping without some serious mark of indignity, if he be lucky enough to get off without severe punishment.

"Fathers have virtually the power of life and death over their children, for even if they kill them designedly, they are subject to only the chastisement of the bamboo and a year's banishment; if struck by them, to no punishment at all. The penalty of striking parents, or for cursing them, is death, as among the Hebrews. In practice it does not appear that this absolute power bestowed on fathers is productive of evil, the natural feeling being, on the whole, a sufficient security against its abuse."*

If a son be convicted of the murder of either of his parents, Chinese law visits the

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. x. p. 256.

crime with awful severity, for not only is the murderer executed, but his body is cut up into small pieces, and everything possible is done to mark the enormity of the crime. On this point the following extract, from the work quoted before, describes very graphically the course that is pursued: "A man and his wife had beaten and otherwise severely ill-used the mother of the former. This being reported by the viceroy to Peking, it was determined to enforce, in a singular manner, the fundamental principles of the empire. The very place where it occurred was anathematised, as it were, and made accursed. The principal offenders were put to death; the mother of the wife was bamboozed, branded, and exiled for her daughter's crime; the scholars of the district, for three years, were not permitted to attend the public examinations, and their promotion thereby stopped; the magistrates were deprived of their office, and banished. The house in which the offenders dwelt was dug up from the foundations. 'Let the viceroy,' the edict adds, 'make known this proclamation, and let it be dispersed through the whole empire, that the people may all learn it. And if there be any rebellious children who oppose, beat, or degrade their parents, they shall be punished in like manner. If the people, indeed, know the principles of reverence, then they will fear and obey the imperial will, and not look on this as empty declamation. I instruct the magistrates of every province to warn the heads of families and elders of villages, and on the second and sixteenth of every month to read the Sacred Instructions, in order to show the importance of the relations of life, that persons may not rebel against their parents, for I intend to render the empire filial.'" The foregoing paragraph will give a very clear idea of what is universally the theory on the subject in China, but, judging from our own knowledge of their character, we much fear that in this, as well as in very many other matters, the Chinese are more perfect in their theory than in their practice.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," &c

CHAPTER XLIII. HOMEWARDS.

"Yes, they're pretty enough, Mr. Nightingale, and clever, decidedly clever. You possess taste, I think, for this kind of thing."

I was exhibiting a portfolio of my draw-

ings to Sir George. His approval gratified me extremely.

"Show me your original drawings; the copies are of less importance. Yes; fanciful and pleasant, with a delicate sense of colour. There are technical deficiencies, of course; your eye wants training, and your hand is oftentimes unsteady. That leg, for instance, is sadly out of drawing, and the whole figure is deficient in proportion. Still it's graceful and animated. You should be capable of better things."

He was paler even than usual; he spoke languidly, and appeared to be suffering somewhat. But his manner was very kindly and courteous.

"If art were really to be your vocation—but you have decided otherwise, as I understand—I should advise your becoming a probationer in the schools of the Royal Academy." He explained the formal proceedings necessary for the attainment of that end. "There is nothing like skill and correctness as a draughtsman. Students are too apt to fly to the brush before they have well learnt how to ply the crayon. The Antique and Life Schools at Somerset House are most admirably conducted, and of the greatest value to the young artist. I speak from experience when I dwell upon the importance to a painter of a thorough and intimate knowledge of drawing."

I thought of Mole's treasonable whisper to me: "The fact is, Sir George can't draw!"

"However," he continued, with a smile, "you are not to be an artist by profession, it seems, Mr. Nightingale. Happy man! Only an amateur. Still, it's as well to be a good amateur as a bad one."

I was then emboldened to ask if there was any vacancy in his studio for another assistant. He appeared to be surprised at my inquiry, but in no degree offended.

"Are you speaking for yourself or for another? What! you are a patron? You have already a protégé? It's rather soon, is it not? If it was on your own account that you applied I should not hesitate. I don't scruple to say that you could be of service here. In any case I will see what can be done. I will try to count your friend as my friend. Mr. Wray, you say? I don't know the name. A nephew of Mr. Monck's? He didn't like the law, and so— Well, that proves his possession of some taste, at any rate. And you vouch for his ability? Well, I'll speak to Mole about it. If I should forget, don't scruple to remind me. You will

come and see me again shortly, of course. You must remember, however, that the London season is now nearly over. In a little time we shall be nothing like so busy in the painting-room as we are at present; but, later in the year— You are much bent upon this thing? I see you are. I'll take the merits of your friend, Mr. Wray, for granted, then. My dear Duke, I'll see what can be done."

It was the first time he had ever called me "Duke." He shook hands with me cordially as I quitted him, after thanking him again and again for his kindness. He seemed amused at my excessive, and perhaps rather clumsy, expressions of gratitude. There was nothing cynical in his smile this time, however; it seemed to be thoroughly sympathetic. Yet he was in some pain the while, I felt. I noted that there were dark circles round his eyes, and that he once or twice pressed his white hands upon his brow. His lips were colourless, and his eyes without lustre.

With his office coat, Vickery seemed to have resumed the character in which I had first known him. He was no longer the convivial Vickery, the playgoer, the singer of Post Meridian, with a hint at performances on the flute, that he had appeared in Tony's chambers; he was again Mr. Monck's manager, intent upon legal affairs. He seemed anxious that I should forget that I had ever seen him under any other conditions. I found him fixed in his usual place, and hard at work on the morning following that night of excitement and revelry. His aspect bore no trace of the recent festivities. Some brief reference to the event he did permit himself, however.

"A droll man your friend Mr. Mole; yet I should say a man of great abilities, Mr. Nightingale; and very versatile; uncommonly versatile, to be sure. A most pleasant evening. And your tragedy; it quite took me by surprise. Really a very able work, if I am competent to form an opinion. And now, I think, we must really push on with that Supplemental Bill. It's been settled by counsel, and it's considered important that it should be filed before the Long Vacation, which is now—time flies so—close upon us. Precisely."

He did not again speak of our famous symposium of poesy and punch, song and oratory. Yet now and then, I think, thoughts of it recurred to him with a genial warming influence. I observed him unconsciously chuckling over his writings; strange lights gleamed in his cat's-eyes

at intervals, and unaccountable smiles, the uneasy ghosts of departed merriment, for some time haunted his grim old visage.

It had been arranged that the arrival of the Long Vacation should bring me some respite from my professional studies. I was to enjoy a brief holiday, and to visit my relations at Purrington. Vickery did not view this project very favourably. "It seems a pity to lose so much valuable time," he said. "We usually employ the vacation in making out our bills of costs. That's an important practical part of a lawyer's business, Mr. Nightingale. In point of fact we're nothing without our bills of costs. You can't learn too soon how to make them out, Mr. Nightingale. It's really a great thing to know how to charge a client." Notwithstanding, I determined to avail myself of the opportunity of a holiday.

Indeed, I longed to be at home again. I was growing weary of London, its heat, and smoke, and dust. I pined for pure, fresh, exhilarating air, for the cheering sight again of our open wide-stretching down country, with its exquisite wavy lines of far horizon, fading and melting into the soft sweet tints of the distant sky. Chimney-pots and pavement had become odious to me. I reproached myself with having insufficiently prized my home at the farmhouse. I had quitted it with undue eagerness and unaccountable lightness of heart. For months I had almost forgotten it. My letters to my mother had been, if not less frequent, certainly less supplied with information than they should have been. I had sometimes found it rather a task and a tax to write at all. Now all this was changed. I felt that I had much, very much, to say to the dear old home-folk, and I longed, greatly longed, to be with them once more. The Down Farm seemed to me a sort of Paradise, from which I was unfairly excluded. I dreamt of it. Plainly before me appeared its homely red brick face rising from its hollow in the tender green down, like a robin peering from its nest, with the belt of murmuring firs, Orme's Plantation, in the background; the dun-purple old barn with its ragged grey thatch; the corpulent wheat ricks; the verdant water meadows running down towards the silvery Purr; with Reube's fold and thriving flock, and the musical sheep-bells chiming pleasantly about the still landscape bathed in sunlight. I was home sick for awhile; out of simple fickleness it might be. But in truth I was a little

jaded with my town life. As I looked in my glass—I was often thus engaged now—chiefly in search of whiskers I think—I noted that there was quite a London pallor on my face, and something of a London hollowness about my cheeks. At any rate, I could no longer, on the score of my aspect, be accurately described as “a regular yokel.” And to a country-bred youth London was now in its most trying season. The heat was stifling; there was no escape from the glaring, scorching sun; its torrid rays were reflected and multiplied infinitely by windows, roofs, and paving stones; there was not air enough, or there were too many breathing it; the great city in the dog-day weather seemed turned to carrion and corruption, and was most malodorous; even night brought no relief, for the darkness came down oppressively, in thick and heavy folds like a suffocating pall.

I had planned to take Tony with me into the country, in part because I so greatly prized his companionship, but also because I felt the change might greatly benefit his ailing health. At my instance my mother had written to him begging him to journey with me to Purrington. He hesitated a little, for he thought the Milliner’s Magazine had claims upon his presence in town. I then explained to him the good prospect there was of his obtaining employment of a more worthy kind in Sir George’s studio. This greatly delighted him. With characteristic alacrity he gave up colouring the fashion-plates for *La Mode*, and forthwith began to entertain very favourable opinions on the subject of portrait-painting. “Do you know,” he said, “I think I’ve rather underrated it, hitherto. Painters of history, or those aspiring to be painters of history, are rather apt to underrate portrait-painting perhaps. And yet there’s surely a great deal to be said for it. There have been very great portrait-painters. Raffaele, you know, painted portraits, and Titian and Tintoret, and, of course, Rubens and Vandyck, and a score more of really the greatest names in art. I think I could carry the thing beyond Sir George; his method wants elevation; I could supply an element of the grand style that would be of extraordinary advantage to his art. I am sure I could be of very great service to him. I quite look forward to working in his studio, and in a quiet way promoting the regeneration of portrait-painting. It has been great in the past, even here in England; why should it not

be great again in the future? I should be quite content to allow him the credit of my exertions. I am unambitious—humble-minded. It will suffice me to know that one or two, including, of course, yourself, my dear Duke, to whom I never can be sufficiently grateful for this and a thousand other kindnesses—I shall be well satisfied, I say, if but one or two share my secret, and recognise in me the real reformer and benefactor of British portraiture.”

I had seen Rachel Monck again. It was on the eve of my quitting town. I was impressed anew with the winning grace and repose of her aspect and manner. Yet she looked very sad, I thought; her lips and eyelids trembled, and she pressed her hand upon her brow. The action had become habitual with her. I feared that Mr. Monck’s state of health had given her new alarm. But it was not that; he was even better, she said, than he had been for some days past. I was soon to know what had distressed her. She handed me a little packet; it contained five guineas.

“You meant kindly, Mr. Nightingale, I’m sure,” she said, in rather a troubled voice, “when you lent this money to Tony with a pretence that it came from me. But please don’t do so again. You cannot think how deeply you have distressed me. I have seen my cousin. He would not come to me; so last night I took courage and went to find him at his chambers. I learned from him of what you had done. It was not right; it was not fair to him or to me.”

I was much grieved. I could scarcely find a word to say.

“Pray believe I did it for the best, Miss Monck,” I murmured. The thought that I had incurred her displeasure was very painful to me.

“We are too much in your debt already, Mr. Nightingale,” she said, “and this was not really kind. If Tony, poor boy, was in want, the fact should not have been kept from me. I am not so poor but I could have helped him, at least I would have tried my best to help him. He has been hardly used, I know. He has been made to share in our misfortunes when they should, in truth, have been kept far from him. But there was no intention, indeed there was not, to deal unjustly by him. My poor father——”

Her voice trembled, and then seemed to fail her altogether. I was powerless to assist her, and I took shame to myself that I was standing beside her dumb and mo-

tionless, noting the while her crimsoning cheeks, her falling tears, her confusion, and suffering.

"I do trust," she resumed, as presently she grew calmer, "that all will yet be well, and that Tony will receive in full all that is due to him—to the very last farthing. Meanwhile, a little patience is all I ask of him. He will not grudge me that, I know. And you, Mr. Nightingale——"

"Pray forgive me, Miss Monck. I am sensible of my misconduct. I deeply regret it. Pray believe I am sufficiently punished in the thought that I have pained, offended you—merited your anger, indeed."

"No, no, Mr. Nightingale, it is not so bad as that," and she smiled most exquisitely through her tears.

I longed to fall at her feet.

"Indeed, I did not force myself into his confidence."

"I am sure you did not. There could be no need. Poor Tony!"

Her words reproached me; though perhaps she had not meant that they should.

"I knew that he was a little pressed for money. I had some to spare. He would not borrow of me——"

"That was so like him! Of course he would not borrow of you."

"But it seemed so hard that I should not help him, when I could. And so—— Say you forgive me, Miss Monck?"

"There is no need for my saying so."

"But there is, Miss Monck. It will relieve me so much to hear from your own lips——"

"I forgive you with all my heart. And I thank you. You are only charged with being too kind. It is not a grave offence, nor a frequent. Only, there are some kindnesses we must not, I cannot, accept even from you, Mr. Nightingale."

Her words and her manner of speaking them thrilled and rejoiced me indescribably.

"He does not know, even now, that it was you that helped him. It will be better, I think, that he should not know."

"Much better," I said.

"He thinks the money really came from me. I did not deceive him. Somehow, I am jealous of any one's helping my poor boy but myself. It may seem to you a foolish fancy, perhaps; but you cannot know how dear he is to me. As I have told you, I have no living relatives but Tony and my father. Naturally I cannot bear that any one should come between us to part us, or

to seem to part us. You will remember this, I am sure, Mr. Nightingale, and humour my whim, if you like to think it one. He is going with you into the country, he tells me, for some weeks. I am glad of it. It will do him good, I'm sure. He wants change sadly. I was pained to see how pale and thin he looked. He has been working too hard, I fear. Poor boy, it's cruel, it seems to me, that he should have to work at all. You see, I am not really distrustful of you, Mr. Nightingale. My confidence in you is most complete. I surrender my poor boy into your keeping. You are his friend and very dear to him, as he has told me again and again. He is proud of your friendship, and I am glad, indeed, that he has found a friend in you. Only please take care of him, and bring him safe and well back to me."

Her manner was almost playful, yet there was something curiously plaintive about it too. Her lips smiled, but her eyes were tearful, and there were melancholy notes in the animated music of her voice.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

THREE-AND-TWENTY years ago, a story of Australian adventure, called "Two-Handed Dick, the Stockman," was published in the sixth number of *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*. A copy of this paper, exact in every particular, except for two or three words added by the copyist, was recently offered for publication in *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*. Fortunately the Conductor of this Journal at once recognised "Two-Handed Dick" as an old acquaintance, and, after some search, discovered the history of his adventures in its original form.

A letter to the sender of the manuscript, asking him if he had any sort of explanation to offer before the public exposure of the attempted fraud, having remained unanswered for a week, the Conductor of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND* thinks it highly desirable that, without further comment on his part, the public should be made acquainted with the facts above recorded. Furthermore, to put his brother editors on their guard respecting any manuscripts coming from the same source, he begs to call their attention to the name and address of the copyist in question. The manuscript is signed "H. Clifford, Ellesmere Club, Manchester."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST-SIR MASSINGBERD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER X. JUDITH'S LITTLE SUGGESTION.

"My dear Miss Carthew," observed Mrs. General Storks, as they were taking a little stroll on the terrace together, on the third evening after Mrs. Mercer's "seizure"—for everybody was agreed it was not one of her ordinary "goings off"—"does it not strike you that there is a something growing up between your uncle and that hypochondriacal old maid?"

"What, Mrs. Mercer?"

"Mrs. Fiddlestick. She used to be very particular in calling herself Miss Sophia Mercer before Mr. Hulet came. She is an old maid, of course, though she would very much like, if I am not mistaken, to exchange her brevet for substantial rank."

"Indeed, Mrs. Storks, I think you are mistaken," said Evy, gravely. "She told me herself that she was nearly sixty years of age."

"What has that to do with it? I tell you that woman has got her eye on Mr. Hulet. She follows him about wherever he goes."

"Follows him about!" echoed Evy, in grave astonishment.

"Yes—that is, I mean, with her eye. It is true she sometimes looks very lackadaisically at Mr. De Coucy, but that is when she has not her glasses on, and mistakes him for your uncle. Then they are always interchanging prescriptions with one another; a very funny way of making love, it is true, but the only one open to them. People of sixty can't talk of their hearts in a sentimental way, but they can

discourse of them medically, you know, in a very interesting manner. 'I always have a little palpitation when you are near me, my dear Mr. Hulet, and then I find these drops so efficacious!'"

The imitation of poor Mrs. Mercer's faded tone and manner was so perfect, that, notwithstanding Evy felt not a little annoyance at her companion's suggestion, and the more so since the idea had also occurred to her own mind, she could not forbear to smile.

"Doctor Carambole says," continued Mrs. Storks, in mincing accents, "that the very worst thing for a nervous disorder is to live a solitary life."

"You are really too bad, Mrs. Storks; I do not believe Mrs. Mercer ever said such a thing as that to my uncle," said Evy, confidently.

"She doesn't say it for herself, my dear; she makes Doctor Carambole say it for her. And my own opinion is that no such person ever existed as Doctor Carambole. That dyspeptic old lady merely quotes him as an authority for her indulging in anything unwholesome for which she has a mind; and she has a mind for Mr. Angelo Hulet. I don't mean to say your uncle is unwholesome," added the widow, precipitately, "but only unsuitable for her. It is not as if their complaints were different; for then they would get on with great success. But each of them is so 'shattered,' you see, and troubled with 'nerves,' that they would frighten one another to death."

"But I remember, Mrs. Storks, that you once accused my poor uncle of falling in love with Judith," reasoned Evy, whose mind was too fixed upon the main topic under discussion to take much notice of this direful prognostic.

"Very true, my dear; and I was correct in the fact, though wrong as to the person; I caught his eye ranging with an expression it was impossible to mistake towards the Mercers on the first day at dinner, and, of course, I concluded that he was smitten with that horrible girl. *That*, I allow, would be fifty times worse."

"Of course it would have been very—*incongruous*," answered Evy, rather at a loss for a word befitting such a catastrophe; "but I cannot see why you should entertain so great an aversion to Miss Mercer. I confess I did not like her myself at first, but I am beginning to have a much better opinion of her. Her devotion to her aunt is unquestionable, and——" Evy hesitated.

"And disinterested," put in Mrs. Storks, dryly.

"No, I was not going to say that," said Evy; "I was reflecting upon her conduct towards myself, which I think is singularly delicate, and even generous. If I were in Judith's place, and Mrs. Mercer had shown such especial goodwill to her as she has to me, I am almost certain I should have been jealous. Now, on the contrary, the more I am in favour with her aunt, the more cordially Judith behaves towards me. I honestly tell you, dear Mrs. Storks, I think you are unjustly prejudiced against her."

"Perhaps I am; our styles are too much alike for us to be very good friends, you see," said the widow, naïvely; "whereas you and she have nothing in common. I don't mean to say that that ought to have had anything to do with my aversion to her," for Evy had opened her hazel eyes very wide indeed, "though no doubt it did lay the groundwork for it; nor do I assert that if you had been a brunette instead of a blonde, you would have been actuated by my sentiments. I don't think you would. You have the temper of an angel, and I'm the other thing; I know that. But there are degrees of blackness, and Judith is several shades darker than I am, I mean of course in character, for as to complexion, she's a downright creole. She can't appreciate, for instance, a good girl as I can. I am certain of it; and if she seems cordial and friendly towards you—but here she comes, 'playing' her gold fish as usual. If her aunt marries, mark my words, she will strike and land him."

The gold fish was Mr. Paragon, who, along with Miss Judith Mercer, had exchanged the drawing-room for the terrace for a little fresh air, and a flirtation. It

was not often that he had such an opportunity; Judith was generally tied up to her aunt's side as tight as a marriage settlement, not from fear of her being *made* love to, but solely to push the footstool, and to hand the smelling-bottle; but of late that exacting lady had dispensed with her niece's services after dinner, and Mr. Angelo Hulet had occupied her vacant chair.

"Confound it," murmured Mr. Paragon, "here's that North American Indian on the terrace."

His knowledge of geography was so limited, that it may well have been that he thought he was correctly indicating a citizen of the United States by such a term, but, on the other hand, he had an intention to be depreciatory. He feared the tongue of Mrs. General Storks. Nor could he trust Judith to defend him, as she was so well able to do. The widow and herself, if Lucullus Mansion had been an academy for young gentlemen, would have been in the position of those "cocks of the school" who, though hating one another very cordially, are each averse to risk their supremacy in a decisive battle; and were certainly not likely to do so for the sake of Master Paragon. Moreover, had Judith taken up the cudgels for him, it would have been almost tantamount to acknowledging him as her lover, which she had not made up her mind to do. She suffered the slow, dull-witted youth to be bullied as he deserved, and even tormented him herself in public, though when alone together it is probable she patted him on the back. When he beheld Mrs. Storks and Evy, he knew that he would not be patted, but would probably be pinched, and hence his expression of annoyance.

"Mr. Paragon has just been making a proposal to me, ladies," began Judith in a sprightly tone.

"May we congratulate him?" interrupted the widow, "or have you made him wretched for ever?"

"Oh, really," said Mr. Paragon, hurriedly, "you quite mistake."

He liked a flirtation very well, but he had by no means made up his mind to offer his hand to Judith. It was his boast that he had forty thousand sheep in it, and though Mrs. Storks had contemptuously designated it a "mutton fist," he knew its value.

"What a very rude man!" exclaimed that lady; "I hope he is not an example of colonial manners."

"Permit me to explain, madam," stam-

mered Mr. Paragon; "my proposal includes yourself as well as Miss Mercer."

"Good gracious, that's not Australian, that's Asiatic," cried the widow. "This is very shocking, sir; I must really inform Mrs. Barmby."

"I have informed her," persisted the unhappy Paragon, "and if you wouldn't take up a fellow so very sharp——"

"But are you so very sharp, Mr. Paragon?" inquired Judith, enraged at his want of gallantry to herself, exhibited, too, as it had been, in the presence of her enemy.

"Now don't, Miss Mercer, don't," pleaded the poor wretch; "why can't you tell her what I mean? The other men *would* make me their ambassador, because they said I was the youngest; but I knew I should make a mess of it. Look here, I am to make a proposal to all the ladies in the house, for all the gentlemen, you know——"

"Cupid's messenger!" observed Mrs. Storks, parenthetically.

"Well, I may be a stupid messenger, ma'am, but I defy Solomon himself to give a message if he was interrupted at every word. What I was commissioned to say, is—will you all accept an invitation to a pic-nic given by us to-morrow at Birbeck Beeches? Miss Carthew—I know *you* will give me a civil answer, at all events—what do you say? Will you deign to favour us with your company?"

Evy felt a sincere pity for this poor man, who, on hospitable thoughts intent, had been thus made a shuttlecock by her two companions for his pains, and she answered frankly that she would be very pleased to go to the pic-nic, if her uncle should approve thereof.

"Oh, he will certainly approve of it," said Mr. Paragon, "for he was the very one who suggested the idea. We are to have a lottery to settle the articles to be supplied by each of us, and the prize is to be the 'pepper and salt'—but there, I ought not to have told you about that."

"I should think you ought not," exclaimed Mrs. Storks. "And I only hope you may draw 'the wine' for your share. The idea of esteeming it an advantage to have to pay as little as possible for our benefit! The 'pepper and salt' should have been your 'blank,' sir, if you had been a true knight."

"I am sorry I mentioned it," said Mr. Paragon, humbly; "but old Mr. Bullion called it the 'prize.'"

"I have no doubt he did," said Mrs.

Storks, contemptuously; "and I dare say the risk he runs of having to pay for the champagne will keep him awake all night."

"Gad, you are right there," said Paragon, eagerly, delighted to conciliate the widow, "and it shows how uncommon clever you must be to hit on that; for no sooner had the thing been agreed upon, when Bullion inquired of Barmby whether he did not think the champagne he gives us at dinner was not too good for a picnic; he meant too dear of course."

"Pray spare us these terrible details," cried the widow, laughing heartily, "or we shall not be prejudiced in favour of our hosts—and here they come." Under cover of her mirth, and of an irruption of gentlemen from the drawing-room to the terrace that here took place, Judith whispered a few words in Evy's ear and led her down the steps into the garden.

"I want to have a little private talk with you, Miss Carthew, if you will be so good as to give me five minutes."

"As many as you please, Miss Mercer," said Evy, kindly.

"Yes, your time is your own," answered Judith, with a bitterness that she seemed unable to restrain, "whereas I am accountable to another for every minute. However, it is not to bore you with my miseries that I have brought you here; my aunt says she likes all her friends to be prosperous, and it is true she does so; not so much from benevolence, I suspect, as because those who are rich and independent are not troublesome to her."

"I cannot think so ill of Mrs. Mercer as that," said Evy; "she is exacting, it is true, and somewhat thoughtless of others, but I think she has a kind heart, and I am quite sure that she has a sincere affection for yourself."

"If so, she has a strange way of showing it," replied Judith, coldly. "But let that pass. It is not in human nature to expect one in your position to sympathise with a mere hanger-on like myself."

"My dear Miss Mercer," said Evy, quietly, "you are not paying human nature a compliment. I flatter myself that if I were an heiress, as rich as Mrs. Bullion is said to have been, I should sympathise with you all the same, but as a matter of fact, I am just as dependent as yourself."

"Indeed! Is that so?" returned Judith, with interest.

"Yes; I have nothing of my own; whatever I have is given to me by my uncle, and yet I do not consider myself 'a hanger-

on,' as you call it. He is generosity itself, and would be dreadfully distressed if he thought I entertained such an idea. The benefits of a blood relation are not like those of a stranger—and even in that case where there is a genuine mutual affection, there need be no distressing sense of obligation. As for your position, it seems to me to be exactly similar to my own."

"No, it is not. It is very different, Miss Carthew." She hesitated, then added, "I know I can trust you to keep what is to me a most important secret. Mrs. Mercer is not my aunt."

"Not your aunt!"

"Hush! there are people on the terrace above us. No; she is no relation to me whatever. I was an orphan, and she adopted me. Suppose your uncle should take a fancy to a pauper child in Balcombe work-house, and offer to relieve the guardians of all charge of it—well, that was my case."

Evy's astonishment was excessive, but so soon as she recovered from it, her first thought was how to show tenderness and sympathy, for one who had thus made a confession, which it was only too evident, from her bitter tones, was humiliating to an extreme degree.

"Let me say one thing, Judith (if you will let me call you so), in Mrs. Mercer's favour," said Evy, gently passing her arm through that of her companion; "I should never have guessed, from her manner to you, that you two were anything less to one another than you are supposed to be. As for your secret, it is, of course, as safe with me as though you had never revealed it, and I cannot but feel gratified at the trust you have reposed in me. You had probably, however, some object beside that of merely showing confidence—nay, do not misunderstand me"—for Judith's face suddenly became scarlet. "I meant to say I hoped you had, since if I can further it you may be sure that I will do my best to do so. I was an orphan, Judith, and almost a pauper myself, when Uncle Angelo adopted me." Evy's eyes were full of tears, and her voice trembled with tenderness, as she added, "Tell me—what can I do for you?"

"You are very kind, Miss Carthew," began Judith, in low but unfaltering tones.

"Please to call me Evy; that is the name to which I am most accustomed, and it sounds more friendly," interrupted Evy, gently.

"You are very kind, Evy. Much more so than I had any right to expect; and it

is a comfort to me, finding you so, that my intended communication with you is not wholly a selfish one. The matter about which I wished to speak concerns us both, although not in the same degree. I wished to put you on your guard against Mrs. Mercer. She has a fixed design to marry your uncle."

"Do you really think so?" asked Evy, coldly. Not because she had any doubt upon the point; but in order, if possible, to discourage her companion from pursuing the topic. She had been quite sincere in her expressions of sympathy for Judith, but she did not like her as she did the widow, and even with the latter she would willingly have avoided a discussion upon her uncle's affairs.

"I am positively certain of it," answered Judith. "And when my aunt, as she calls herself, sets her will upon anything, great or small, no considerations of propriety or convenience prevent her from going through with it. Her will is now to marry your uncle, in spite of public opinion; you may say, indeed, that in this case there is another's will to be consulted, but Mr. Hulet, if you will pardon me for saying so, is weak and easily led."

Evy shook her head.

"I mean in this particular matter," explained Judith. "It is quite possible that he may be as obstinate as my aunt, when there is no occasion for it. Indeed, I heard him discussing the character of Charles the First yesterday with Mr. De Coucy, in a manner that convinced me that he is so. But there are few men who can withstand a woman's persistent attentions, especially when they are paid by one who is in the habit of exacting them from all the rest of the world. Besides, she has a great advantage to start with in their previous acquaintance."

"You think, then, that they have known one another before?" said Evy, interested in spite of herself.

"Of course. I am convinced of it, and took it for granted that you were aware under what circumstances it happened. Is it possible that you know nothing of this?"

"Nothing; though I don't deny that the idea has suggested itself."

"Suggested itself!" echoed Judith; "when a lady faints away at the sight of a gentleman's face, it must be either a very forbidding one indeed—which is certainly not the case in this instance—or be connected with some association of the past."

It was at the precise moment of Mr. Hulet's entrance into the drawing-room, if you remember, that Mrs. Mercer had her 'seizure,' as they call it."

"I was too frightened to notice that," said Evy, and indeed she thought it strange that Judith herself should have had eyes for aught else than the catastrophe that had happened to her aunt. Yet she was doubtless right. The emotion which Mr. Hulet had exhibited at the table d'hôte, of which however she did not now think it necessary to speak, joined to his subsequent behaviour—his long silences apparently spent in reflection, his unwonted references to the past (her past), and above all his reticence upon the subject of Mrs. Mercer, to whom he had at once attached himself as to an old acquaintance—had already now and again suggested to Evy that her uncle and Judith's aunt had met of old and on a familiar footing, and now viewing it by the stronger light cast by Judith's intelligence, she was convinced of the fact. Still, she did not feel drawn towards her informant, as generally happens in such cases, or inclined to reward her sagacity with confidences. "I was too frightened to notice that," reiterated she; "but it is quite possible you may be right in your surmise."

"You take it very coolly, Miss Carthew," said Judith, scanning her quiet face with impatient eyes; "but it surely concerns us both that this ridiculous 'love affair,' if one can call it so, should if possible be put a stop to. Were you the heiress I supposed you to be, I should request your assistance upon general grounds; those of common sense and good taste, for instance, both of which would surely be violated by such a match as this. I should have appealed to your regard for your uncle who would be made a laughing stock were he to commit such an act of folly as to marry this woman. The united ages of such a bride and bridegroom would be quoted in the comic newspapers. But situated, as it seems you are, this matter becomes of the utmost importance—concerns yourself, indeed, almost as much as it does me."

"To tell you the truth, my dear Miss Mercer," returned Evy, gravely, "I do not see how it concerns either of us."

"Then you must be very dull or—no, I don't mean that—you must be singularly indifferent, my dear Miss Carthew, to your own interests. Being dependent on your uncle, is it of no consequence to you, do you imagine, that he should fall into the

net of this designing woman? Are you aware that marriage invalidates a man's will, and that even if he be persuaded to make a second—itself often a difficult task—he will of course have another's interest to consult as well as, perhaps in place of, your own."

"Indeed, Miss Mercer," said Evy, colouring, "I have never given my consideration to such matters. They have not, indeed, so much as occurred to me; but since you have suggested them, I must confess they will cause me to be more careful, even than I should have otherwise felt it my duty to be, to abstain from the least interference with my uncle's proceedings. Do not imagine that I am blaming you, Miss Mercer," added Evy, perceiving her companion to droop her eyes as if in confusion, "or arrogating to myself an extraordinary delicacy. It is only natural that you should feel anxiety respecting the provision for your future; whereas in my case, I have such confidence in my uncle's generosity and affection, that I can feel no apprehension as to any change he may think proper to make in the future distribution of his property."

"You are fortunate, Miss Carthew," sighed Judith, "and I am sure you deserve to be so. It is not every one who is so trustful as yourself, or so delicate where your own interests are concerned. Still, I would not have you imagine that I am altogether so sordid and selfish as my words, I fear, have led you to imagine."

"My dear Miss Mercer, pray believe me——" began Evy, in great distress.

"Yes, yes, I know you meant nothing harsh," interrupted Judith; "and it is most kind of you, I am sure, to feel the inclination to apologise to me. But let me say, in the strictest confidence, that I was not pleading for myself alone. You will not let it go further; you will not tell that odious woman, who is watching us from the terrace even now, and who would only jeer at such a confession; but there is one whose interests are bound up in mine—he is very poor, though he works very hard; a struggling artist——"

"Your brother?" said Evy, tenderly.

"No, Miss Carthew." Judith's voice sank to a whisper, and she cast her beautiful eyes upon the ground. "Some one even dearer than a brother. Oh, think if you were in my case" (if the speaker had looked up at that moment she would have had her secret reciprocated in her companion's blushing face and dewy eyes), "and felt your hopes of love—of this

world's heaven—dependent upon a few pieces of gold, would not the vile dross itself acquire a certain sacredness in your sight, and excuse you for a prudance that otherwise, I own, seems so ill to befit my age and sex?"

"Indeed, indeed, it would," said Evy, tenderly. "Forgive me if for a moment I misjudged you, Judith. My uncle must see this young painter, and——"

"Oh pray don't speak of Augustus to Mr. Hulet," interposed Judith, hastily; "my aunt detests the very mention of his name, poor fellow."

"Well, then, some other plan must be hit upon for the present, and as for the future, in case this marriage should take place, and if my influence can serve you with my uncle, with respect to the provision that will doubtless be arranged for your future interests, rest assured it will be exerted to the utmost."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," answered Judith, her handkerchief held to her eyes to conceal her emotion, while her hand met that of her companion with a grateful pressure.

As for Evy, the thought of her beloved Jack separated from herself by disparity of fortune (though not, indeed, by the absence of it) even now, and possibly to be debarred from her for ever, melted her heart within her.

"I will do my best for this poor girl in her sad strait," thought she, "and Heaven help us both."

At the same moment, Mrs. General Storks, who, from her post of 'vantage on the terrace, had caught sight of Judith's handkerchief-hidden face, might have been heard to murmur to herself, "I wonder what piece of sentimental knavery that abominable girl is practising upon poor Evy." And when Mr. Paragon inquired at what object in the garden she was gazing so fixedly, she pushed that gentleman's credulity to its extreme limit by replying with gravity, "A crocodile."

WEST RIDING SKETCHES.

WOOLBOROUGH.

WOOLBOROUGH is a grand surprise. Everybody who visits it feels it his bounden duty to express profound astonishment at its sudden leap from humble obscurity to the dignity of a trade metropolis; and it is worthy of note that the native Woolboroughite is quite as much surprised at the rapid transformation as the stranger is.

Three-quarters of a century ago, Woolborough did not own more than ten thousand inhabitants, and had not a public building larger than a third-rate hotel; in the present year of grace it has a population of about sixteen times ten thousand, and an array of public buildings which, to quote the familiar language of the Woolboroughite, "would do honour to any city in the world." Woolborough is treated much in the same way as a great overgrown boy, with whose growth the tailors are unable to keep pace. Year by year its old streets are found too small to admit of a proper display of its strength and vigour; consequently the said streets are constantly being let out, patched up, and renovated. The corporation is perpetually rushing up to Parliament to obtain extended powers, and coming back and cutting and slicing the town in all directions, rooting out of existence every remnant of antiquity that can possibly be found, and a very few decades constitute antiquity in Woolborough. Now and then, a miserable ratepayer, with a deeper respect for his pocket than for the reputation of his native town, will give vent to a protesting groan, but he will be quickly silenced, by citizens who possess a juster idea of the town's importance.

There is hardly any distinction to which Woolborough, in its present flush of prosperity, does not lay claim. First and foremost, it claims to be one of the chief industrial centres of the world. The visitor will be told that its manufactures are dispersed over all the ends of the earth. From Nova Zembla to Ceylon, from Canton to San Francisco, it matters not what point of the compass you may explore, the products of the Woolborough looms will be found hanging in graceful folds on supple female forms, heightening beauty and toning down ugliness. The belle of Patagonia no less than the donna of Madrid, the light of the Eastern harem as well as the squaw of the Indian savage, rejoice to wear the many-coloured robes which the Woolborough factory-girls are employed in weaving. All this, and more, the Woolboroughite will dwell on with pride when commerce is spoken of. And if you try to humiliate him by suggesting that although the town may be great in a manufacturing sense, it still has no fine historical associations, he will point to the ancient parish church, and ask you to remember that it dates from Tudor times, and that it was hung round with wool-

packs when the town was besieged during the Civil War.

There are three historical events which the youth of Woolborough are taught to bear in mind above all that the school-books may tell them of the glories of classic Greece or Rome, and these are: that in the time of the Normans a desperate wild boar was killed in a neighbouring wood, which is now renowned for stone; that a ghost appeared to the Earl of Newcastle in an old suburban hall, and got him to "pity poor Woolborough," instead of putting the inhabitants to the sword for the honour and glory of King Charles, as he had intended; and that the first factory in Woolborough was erected in 1798. To be unaware of these three events is to be altogether dead to local knowledge, and to be dead to local knowledge, in the eyes of a true Woolboroughite, argues nothing short of imbecility.

Having been made aware of all these circumstances of greatness, the envious stranger will next bethink him, probably, that he may depreciate the town by saying that it has not produced any of those great men who, as Longfellow tells us, leave their "footprints on the sands of time." But even to this the proud Woolboroughite will have a ready answer. He will remind you that Woolborough is the birthplace of an archbishop, of a celebrated mathematician, of a famous botanist, and of Parkgate, the local Whittington, who has been thrice mayor of, and once M.P. for, the borough. Greater men than these Woolborough does not wish for.

At this point the stranger may haply suggest that, admitting all these elements of greatness to be existing in Woolborough, there are still one or two other places on the globe which can vie with it in point of size; indeed, not to go far away, that there is the town of Allwool, only ten miles distant, with a population larger by a hundred thousand than Woolborough. But this reminder will be scorned more vigorously than any of the others. Census tables are a delusion and a snare, you will be told; and Allwool gets its vast population only by incorporating within its borough boundaries half a dozen distant suburban villages, while modest Woolborough is content with a radius of about a mile. And thus the Woolboroughite will run on.

I made the acquaintance of Woolborough "many and many a year ago," when "I was a child and it was a child;" we grew together, but, although I long since at-

tained the fulness of my stature, Woolborough has continued to expand, and now seems to possess greater growing power than ever. The town is situated in the heart of the manufacturing district of West Yorkshire, and is more full of tall chimney-towers than an Eastern city is of minarets. These commercial beacons stud the landscape as closely as masts in a harbour, and give the town quite a monumental aspect, and an air of funereal gloom is imparted to the place by the smoke-clouds which are emitted from these chimneys, and which hang sullenly over the factory tops. "Sweetness and light" are not consistent with commercial greatness, hence Woolborough sees but very little of those elements of extreme civilisation. White is an unknown colour in Woolborough, having long since ceased to be used by local painters and decorators. The atmosphere, considered as an element of food, is excellent. It has been asserted that on some days in the year it can be cut with a knife, but this is probably an exaggeration. Most newspaper correspondents who visit Woolborough declare that the town is built of brick. Whether or not this is due to the fact that the smoke gives the buildings that dingy appearance which is only associated in the popular mind with the appearance of brick tenements, it is difficult to say; but I am in a position positively to affirm that Woolborough is built wholly of stone. Its giant mills are stone, its hundreds of chimneys are stone, its mansions are stone, its warehouses and public buildings are stone, its cottages are stone, and (let it be spoken in a whisper) the hearts of many of its inhabitants are stone. In Woolborough it is the rule that if you are not going up you are going down. You may wish as you like to be able to say with the celebrated commander that when you are up you are up, and when you are down you are down, but you are generally compelled to rest content with being "neither up nor down." There are certainly three or four level streets in the town, but they are altogether of modern invention. Local historians unite in saying that Woolborough lies in a basin, and whosoever walks along the streets of Woolborough, be it on pleasure or on business, never gets far without climbing up or sliding down some portions of this basin. The horses have a worse time of it in Woolborough than pedestrians, woolpacks being heavy articles to drag up steep hills; but the town does not fret very much at these

drawbacks, believing in the wisdom of the old proverb, that "money makes the mare to go whether she's got a will or no." In truth, the genuine Woolboroughite believes that money is the root of all good, whether it has any connexion with evil or not.

Though exceedingly grimy, the town has a sturdy and defiant look about it. It would take nothing less than an earthquake to upset the foundations of some of the many-storied, substantial stone mills and warehouses which form so prominent a feature of the town. During the last twenty years Woolborough has been a fine field for the exercise of architectural ingenuity. Merchants and manufacturers have been continually requiring new warehouses and new factories, and village Christopher Wrens and mute inglorious Inigo Joneses have had no occasion to "waste their sweetness on the desert air." Perhaps it would have been better if some of them had; for, although several of the public buildings and warehouses are really fine specimens of architecture, in many instances the passion for novelty of design, and the love of meaningless ornamentation, have produced such mongrel structures as were never before seen. Thus it happens that amongst the Woolborough warehouses we find now an Italian prison-house, now a Doge's palace, now a Norman keep, now a Grecian temple, now a Gothic chapel, and now—and this "now" comes the most often of all—an edifice which combines each of these styles. In point of size, however, these warehouses are matchless; tall as an Edinburgh house, and often covering as much ground as a royal palace. After dark, on winter nights, when all the factories and warehouses are lit up, the town looks exceedingly picturesque—prettier, probably, than if the streets had been more regularly built. The factories, except a few of very modern date, have all been erected from a design which probably dates from a period long before the Tower of Babel was projected. They stand "four-square to all the winds that blow," and that is about as much as can be said of them.

Apart from the architectural features I have mentioned, Woolborough shows a good proportion of villa residences, churches, and chapels, and a vast expanse of narrow streets where nothing but two-storied stone cottages are to be met with.

It is time, however, that I should say

something of the people of Woolborough, for a hundred and sixty thousand persons take some little photographing. In the first place, then, there is no aristocracy in Woolborough. True, there is a baronet connected with the town, but he has too much regard for his health to live there. This baronet won distinction in three ways—by discovering a new fibre, by founding the finest industrious colony in the world, and by his bounteous charity. It must not be imagined, though, that because Woolborough does not know much about the "upper ten," or of great county families, that it does not uphold distinctions of grade; for, although the highest and the lowest are alike dependent upon trade, in few places is there to be found a stricter worship of caste. A man's social altitude is generally settled by the length of his purse. In a town like Woolborough, therefore, which abounds with self-made men, the highest society is very variously composed, and is, of course, broken up into political and religious coteries, and is swayed by jealousies and animosities like most other societies. The clergyman, the minister, the lawyer, and the doctor will be admitted into these charmed circles, but a cash reputation is the only "Open Sesame" for any one else. On the next level we make the acquaintance of what is generally termed "respectability," as distinct from wealth. This class is exceedingly numerous in Woolborough, and comprises small tradesmen, managers, salesmen, travellers, shop-keepers, and clerks. Then comes what it used to be the fashion to call "the million," which, in Woolborough, includes an immense army of weavers, spinners, twistors, doffers, overlookers, wool-sorters, combers, and what not. But even these are capable of being variously subdivided. The wool-sorter will think it an act of condescension to associate with the comber, and the overlooker would scorn to rank himself with the spinner. On Sundays, however, when Jemima the weaver, and Harry the twister, are dressed in their best garments, the stranger would have a difficulty (if he did not hear them speak) of distinguishing them from members of some of the richer families. It is often hard, under such circumstances, to tell Jack from his master.

Between the rough exterior of the ancient but still living race of manufacturers, and the veneer of the new race, the difference is exceedingly great, and sometimes the former is put to humiliations in consequence. The

following story may serve as an illustration. A rich Woolborough manufacturer bought a large landed estate, and with it a fine baronial hall. Time was when the manufacturer had gone ragged and shoeless; but a singular capacity for looking after his own interests had helped him up to the position of a millionaire ere yet he had grown wrinkled and grey. He had the old hall fitted up more gorgeously than it had ever been before, even in its palmiest days, and engaged as many retainers as if it had been necessary for him to hold the hall on

The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

He had not been many days in his new home, however, before he began to feel restless, and to long for the old busy life and homely associations which he had exchanged for this "gilded ease." Under the influence of this feeling he walked down to the village inn and was on the point of entering the bar, when the landlord stepped forward and stopped him, saying, "You mustn't go in there, there's some gentlemen in." Without in the least resenting the affront, the rich man betook himself to a humbler apartment and called for a pint of ale. Seeing that the visitor, though evidently poor, was a stranger to the village, the landlord was prompted to put a few questions when he brought the ale in. "Are you thinkin' o' settlin' in the village, then?" he asked. "Ay, I think I am," was the response. "Who're you goin' to work for?" inquired the landlord. "Myself," replied the manufacturer. "Indeed!" said the landlord, with an air of surprise, "have you been takin' a bit o' land then?" "Why," answered the landowner, "I've been buyin' a field or two, and a bit of a house up yonder," pointing to the hall. A sudden light dawned upon the landlord. "Surely it isn't Mr. Bagwick, is it?" asked Boniface, betraying great confusion. "That's my name," replied the visitor, calmly. "My dear Mr. Bagwick, you really must excuse me; I humbly apologise. Pray step into the bar." Mr. Bagwick merely smiled and said, "This room is good enough for me, thank you." And the dumbfounded landlord was obliged to retire, to meditate on the weakness of human judgment.

Generally speaking, the Woolboroughite, whatever his station may be, is industrious. There is little room for idlers in so busy a place. From six o'clock in the morning to

the same hour at night, the mills are buzzing and humming, the looms clattering, the spindles whirling, the steam engines panting and groaning, and the bulk of the population is assisting and guiding the machinery in its great work of furnishing the world with clothes. At half-past five in the morning the steam-engines wake up with a scream, and for the next half-hour the streets echo with the tramp of hurrying feet; children in clogs, men-weavers in "smocks" and caps, women-weavers in shawls and harden skirts, wool-sorters in "chequer brats" (long pinafores), spinners in whitey-brown pinafores, foremen in broadcloth, and masters on foot, on horseback, and in vehicles, haste to the factories. At eight o'clock they rest half an hour for breakfast, and at noon have three-quarters of an hour more for dinner. Then there is no halt until the day's work is concluded, when the workers hurry home, with the dirt and odour of the looms, spindles, warps, weft, oil, and steam clinging to them and scenting the air.

The workpeople are, as a rule, cheerful and healthy. The dialect is pretty generally spoken amongst them, and perhaps they do not care so much as they ought to do for the arts of politeness. They will, however, compare favourably, in point of education and vigour of mind, with any other class of workpeople in the country. Unhealthy work and unhealthy habitations often combine to produce sickness and deformity amongst the workers, but recent restrictions upon the hours of labour, and still more recent sanitary enactments, have done much to improve such matters.

A good deal of the "foreign" element exists in the Woolborough trade. A large proportion of the labouring population are from Ireland, the "bould pisantry" attaching themselves very kindly to factory work and factory wages. There is also a considerable sprinkling of German nationality amongst the Woolborough merchants. The Germans betake themselves to the villas and mansions; the Irish "flock together" in cottages and cellars in the lower quarters of the town. These lower quarters, however, are not wholly given up to the Irish, but are likewise inhabited by a number of English people, who are intimately acquainted with the alehouse and the police cell. In these districts the policemen are seldom far apart—often, indeed, they do their perambulations in couples—for "rows" are frequent and violent amongst these turbulent islanders. The Germans

seem to make themselves content in the town of their adoption, often becoming legally naturalised. There is one instance of a German having been mayor of Woolborough. The Irish, however, well as they thrive under factory rule, never forget that patriotism demands from them that they shall denounce the Saxon tyrant whose yoke they bear. Home rule meetings are frequent, therefore, in Woolborough, and a good deal of Celtic eloquence finds vent on these occasions.

Woolborough amuses itself variously and fitfully. The entertainment which is successful to-day may prove a dead failure to-morrow. There are times when Nillson and Patti combined would hardly "draw," and there are times when mediocrity will carry all before it. The "society" of Woolborough has never yet been able to make up its mind whether it is "proper" to go to the theatre or not, hence the local temple of Thespis generally shows a beggarly array of empty front seats. Now and then a popular London tragedian or comedian will come down to Woolborough "starring it," and perhaps a few of the worshippers of propriety will pay a stealthy visit, but, as a rule, the playhouse is regarded with pious horror, and its frequenters are classed amongst the irretrievably lost. Let the play, the opera, or the comedy, however, be represented in a temple less profane—in the great St. Gorgon's Hall, for instance—and no such timidity, hesitancy, or horror are manifested. The performance, which at the theatre is vitiating and wicked, at St. Gorgon's Hall is exhilarating and improving. Thus it happens that stock companies are never seen in Woolborough, except in the pantomime season, the rest of the year being given up to six nights' engagements of stars and sticks. But if the play is not the thing in Woolborough, the concert is. The concert provides ground upon which propriety and its presumed antithesis can cordially unite. Woolborough has the reputation of being an extremely musical town. It possesses a choral society whose lung-power is not exceeded by any choral organisation in the country. Some of its members are to be met with at all the great musical festivals, and it is on record that they once had the honour of singing "by royal command." In times gone by these lusty choristers used to give more distinctiveness to their singing than now, by strictly following out the rules of local pronunciation. On one remarkable occasion, indeed, at the Crystal

Palace, the chorus singers of Yorkshire and Lancashire introduced some striking features into their vocalism by adhering to their respective local accents. The chorus, "We fly by Night," was finely rendered by the alternations of Yorkshire bass voices and Lancashire altos. "We floy by noight!" volleyed the former, while the latter broke in with their soft, melodious "We flee by neet!" the effect being, as the musical critics say, marvellous. In the winter season the Woolborough merchants and manufacturers get up a series of half a dozen subscription concerts, and these are always successful. There is no hesitation about going to them. Fashion decrees that everybody who claims to be anybody must go to the subscription concerts, and to the subscription concerts, accordingly, everybody goes. They are worth going to, however, and are the means of providing the town with the highest musical talent available. Mr. Warpman, the town councillor, may occasionally nod over Beethoven's Sonatas or Bach's Fugues, as he will nod on a Sunday over the vicar's sermon, and Mr. Noils may privately consider Mendelssohn a nonentity in comparison with the composer of the Rollicking Raras, but they will not on these accounts neglect to attend the subscription concerts. On Saturday nights, during the winter, St. Gorgon's Hall and the Mechanics' Institute are also the scene of "popular" concerts, in which the Great Prance, the Little Alloyed, Herr Presto, the Mumbo Jumbo Minstrels, and the Belle Blanche alternate with song, jugglery, serenade, and dance; almost invariably attracting large audiences. Then there are the Dulluns and Cassandra music-halls, and sundry alehouse concert rooms, all of which absorb their proportion of amusement-seekers.

In summer, Woolborough excursionises, plays cricket, promenades in its parks, and lives very much al fresco. Every summer Saturday sees the panting Woolboroughite hie away on the wings of the railway train to some remote corner of the island, for he always believes in having the longest possible ride which time and money will permit. And as for cricket, there are hardly a dozen yards of green upon which there is not a hotly contested match on a Saturday afternoon. In winter, football takes the place of cricket to a slight extent, and the mystic game of "knurr and spell" is played nearly the year round. Every autumn, too, there is a two days' race meeting on Wool-

borough Moor, when a few of the cab-horses of the town are set to run for the Pig and Whistle Stakes.

The great thing in Woolborough, however, is its trade. In the making of a lady's stuff gown it is marvellous how many interests are involved. It would take a political economist to trace the article through its various stages of production, from the time when, as wool, it leaves the back of the sheep to the time of its being donned as a robe. Shepherds, sorters, combers, spinners, weavers, dressers, overlookers, twistors, scourers, bleachers, dyers, finishers, and a hundred others are all concerned in the matter. Then there are the gigantic industries connected with the providing of tools for the making of the gown. Iron-founders, smelters, boiler makers, engineers, machine makers, shuttle makers, bobbin makers, picking-strap makers, and so on. The mere act of buying and selling the finished goods also engages an immense number of people—manufacturers, commission agents, merchants, book-keepers, carriers, carters, &c.

Perhaps then, after all, the Woolboroughite is justified in his boasts as to the importance and extent of the interests and resources of the town. A trade which allows its merchants to do business to an aggregate value of about fifty million pounds a year, which has a yearly banking account of more than one hundred million pounds, and which can use above twenty million pounds' worth of raw material in a twelvemonth, is at all events worthy of mention.

THE FISHERMAN'S SUMMONS.

The sea is calling, calling,
Wife, is there a log to spare?
Fling it down on the hearth and call them in,
The boys and girls with their merry din,
I am loth to leave you all just yet,
In the light and the noise I might forget,
The voice in the evening air.
The sea is calling, calling,
Along the hollow shore.
I know each nook in the rocky strand,
And the crimson weeds on the golden sand,
And the worn old cliff where the sea-pinks cling,
And the winding caves where the echoes ring.
I shall wake them never more.

How it keeps calling, calling,
It is never a night to sail.
I saw the "sea-dog" over the height,
As I strained through the haze my failing sight,
And the cottage creaks and rocks, well nigh,
As the old "Fox" did in the days gone by,
In the moan of the rising gale.

Yet it is call'ng, calling.
It is hard on a soul I say

To go fluttering out in the cold and the dark,
Like the bird they tell us of, from the ark;
While the foam flies thick on the bitter blast,
And the angry waves roll fierce and fast,
Where the black buoy marks the bay.

Do you hear it calling, calling?
And yet, I am none so old.
At the herring fishery, but last year,
No boat beat mine for tackle and gear,
And I steered the coble past the reef,
When the broad sail shook like a withered leaf,
And the rudder chafed my hold.

Will it never stop calling, calling?
Can't you sing a song by the hearth.
A heartsome stave of a merry glass,
Or a gallant fight, or a bonnie lass,
Don't you care for your grand-dad just so much,
Come near then, give me a hand to touch,
Still warm with the warmth of earth.

You hear it calling, calling?
Ask her why she sits and cries.
She always did when the sea was up,
She would fret, and never take bit or sup
When I and the lads were out at night,
And she saw the breakers cresting white
Beneath the low black skies.

But, then, in its calling, calling,
No summons to soul was sent.
Now—well, fetch the parson, find the book,
It is up on the shelf there if you look,
The sea has been friend, and fire, and bread;
Put me, where it will tell of me, lying dead,
How it called, and I rose and went.

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

III. "CREME DE LA CREME."

Is not Montmorenci-terrace, Regent's Park, the very pink of propriety? Does not its brand-new expanse of frontage seem to wink and glisten with a sense of excellence, a sort of "See, I am not as other men are" appearance, a species of pharisaical hugging of itself aspect combined with unlimited ablution with choice scented soap? Sashes of the very best plate-glass are backed with imitation lace curtains, over which droop bright green wooden blinds that rattle up one by one, as the several inmates take observations of the early morning weather; bakers' men lean gossiping over stone balustrades, philandering with rosy servant-girls who make pretence of scrubbing doorsteps; butcher boys linger in the two square yards of garden, behind which propriety intrrenches itself, plucking a flower and a leaf or two of speckled laurel wherewith to adorn their cerulean garments. An individual of the genus "odd man," may be seen here and there giving an extra polish to the dining-room bow windows, or putting a finishing touch to the balsams and fuchsias that cluster on the sills. You could not find a single speck of smut along the whole line of houses,

for the principles of Montmorenci-terrace are to be as much an evidence as may be, and to court inquiry into the unimpeachable graining of its woodwork or the pointing of its yellow bricks.

The ultimate result of this is a prostration of the wayfarer; a crushing down of the passer-by with a conviction of elegant superiority, while the Terrace warns him at the same time to approach in a humble spirit, by coquettishly withdrawing itself just a few feet from the common road, hinting thereby that though difficult of access, its precincts are not quite unattainable. And how proudly it repudiates the notion of secrecy. Its upright ways are open to the world's scrutiny; its comings and goings are scornfully flaunted in your face. It even places its hall-doors half-way up its front with a long approach of immaculate stone steps, so that there may be no grovelling slinkings in and out. The servants, too, as if by common consent, delay in answering the bell, leaving for a certain space its spotless ladies and gentlemen upon a high impromptu pedestal, held up for the veneration of the world, before they are received in a chaste embrace, and shut in with a loud clang from the admiration of the common herd without. But even Montmorenci-terrace is not perfect; it has one thorn in its side, one blemish, which all the soap and water and perfume in the world cannot wash away. In the very centre of its noble sweep there is a palace, a gorgeous temple rising above the general line, surmounted by a waving flag, and emblazoned with legends in red, and blue, and gold; a magnificent edifice, that might be the shrine of a tutelary deity, the Holy of Holies of Saint Buckram. About its railings hang bright festoons, probably votive offerings of pious worshippers. Yet no, those glittering things are all alike, of a familiar shape—verily, the pewter pot of commerce, and oh! with what sorrow must the word be spoken, the palace is, indeed, a public-house! The dwellings immediately on either side of it are not of brick, but faced with stone, looking, therefore, as though they had turned pale, and all the other houses are so extremely yellow, that they, too, must have suffered from an epidemic of jaundice, the result of rankling shame. The three last houses in the row have been transformed into one, with a central entrance, over which hangs a lamp bearing the device "Plantagenet

Residences," the windows of which are alike set off by red striped blinds, all of them drawn down except those of the middle bow, wherein sundry gentlemen and ladies converse, awaiting the morning meal.

I have engaged an apartment at this establishment, and occupy the pedestal accordingly, bag in hand, while the ladies and gentlemen pause to examine me critically, previous to my introduction to them. An admirable plan, by-the-by, this pedestal, and not unlike the process of "taking your portrait," as practised by turnkeys in the Fleet, years ago. I pose in a becoming attitude, slightly curving the back, and developing one hip in emulation of Hogarth's line of beauty, and feel that I am making a good impression, until, at length, the door is opened. Mrs. Mudie, the landlady, receives me with a bow and a smile; the exquisitely grained portal closes upon me, and I enter on my noviciate just as a loud bell clatters over the house, calling its inhabitants to breakfast. Mrs. Mudie is rather stout, or, let us say, plump—no, buxom—with a hard face, on which has been carved a smile, long ago, for the express benefit of boarders. She speaks very slowly, as though she had a bit in her mouth, at which she was ever champing. That bit is the letter H, a cruel curb that cuts her tongue and lacerates her lips. Occasionally she forgets herself, loses her temper with the servants—her smile never changes to the boarders—and then she flecks herself with metaphorical foam, and the eighth letter slides altogether from her alphabet. Of course she has known better days, and is intimate with all kinds of peers and peeresses with whom her hearers are unacquainted.

"Do you know the Duke of Thanet?" you inquire, as an experiment.

"Do you?" she asks, cautiously.

"No, I haven't the honour."

"Lor bless you!" she riposts, certain now that there are no breakers ahead. "Know him! I've known him ever since I was a gurl. His grace and I used to ride together to 'ounds. I was the best 'orsewoman of my day. I've got a whip upstairs given me by his grace, who presented it as a mark of hadmiration—admiration—when I took a leap his horse refused. And his son the earl, too. A charming fellow. People used to say about us—but never mind."

When her curb is more than usually unruly in her mouth, she puts up her

hand and champs it firmly, repeating the obdurate word with emendations. Thus, when vexed one day, she petulantly exclaimed, "Thank 'eaven, in our heternal 'ome there'll be no 'ousekeeping. Ahem! heaven, eternal home, housekeeping." Her powers of imagination are little less than marvellous. She will commence a story with an evident goal in the distance, "but finding that it might be improved upon, and perceiving fresh vistas on her journey, she will quietly change its object as she goes on, until at length she has landed herself on entirely other ground, very much to her own satisfaction. Before I had known her ten minutes she had improvised a narrative of her early life, according to which her father had been a respectable solicitor in a midland county town, where she kept house for him over his office; but breakfast was scarcely cleared away when, presto! he had become a country squire, "Quite of the old sehool, you know, with his pack of beagle 'ounds—hounds—beautiful old-fashioned gardens, dairy, farm," and all en suite. "Bless you, young Lord Pickleboy, a wild young slip, used to come riding over to us in the morning to take me to the meet, and people did say—well, no matter."

Everything about Plantagenet Residences is bright, new, and creaking. Not a door but closes with a scream, not a step but cries out like a dog when trodden on. The paint on the walls calls out to you, "Look at me, am I not unquestionably spotless?" You can trace your reflected image on every panel, with a polished halo round your head, like some mediæval saint. The curtain rods appear endowed with an unnatural glitter; surely no carpets were ever so red and blue before. Menageries of strange beasts recline in effigy before fenders surrounded by garlands of wondrous flowers—marvels of imaginary vegetation—yellow lions with burnt sienna shadows and red eyes, zebras and tigers, striped green and black and orange by rule of thumb. Alarming paper and tinsel concoscations fill the grates. Groves of roses, each larger than a cabbage, spring up under your feet from the superb double pile floor in the incomparable drawing-room, recalling to your mind some dainty fairy legend thickly incrusting with a veneer of vulgarity. Each time you cross the room you feel like the lady who wore bells on her toes, for you have music wherever you go, in consequence of your tread acting upon the prisms of the desirable chan-

delier, so that whenever the common room is fully occupied, there is a never-ending tinkle, tinkle, accompanying even the most rapid conversation with heavenly strains. There is enough berlin-wool work in the house to stock the Soho Bazaar. Crochet antimacassars festoon every chair, mats of every shape and size and hue lie under photograph books and flower-stands like ornamental buffers, as though the boarders were in the habit of banging things down on tables to the danger of the admirable polish. The polish, moreover, is excessive, and the mats are not quite without their use, for if you put down a book, except on some woolly receptacle, it is sure to slide away, much as little boys, having fallen down, skim across a particularly slippery piece of ice. Talking of ice, what such a house would be like in winter it is difficult to imagine. Fires would be reflected endlessly to the distraction of the mind. The bow windows, which look so fine and ponderous, would be even more difficult to coax into shutting tight than in the halcyon summer days; they would groan and grumble, and refuse to keep out the bitter blast, just as they permit in June light zephyr breezes to play around and lift your hair. Gruel and possets would be your fate, for you would surely always be catching cold, or rather no—having got your cold comfortably in November, it would cling to you lovingly till May.

Mrs. Mudie is as bright, and new, and creaking as her abode. Her face shines with soapy varnish, her hair glistens with pomade. She is pink and white and round, as though just turned out from Nature's lathe undinted, before Time has modified the colours or rubbed the smoothness from the surface. Her smile smacks of newness too; its angles are so precisely marked, the carving is so distinct and vigorously fresh. Her silk gown shines with peculiar lustre, the marks of folding on it proving that it has just come from the emporium, whilst as for her jewellery, the beads, the ormolu buckles, the manacle bracelets, the paraphernalia of pendent gewgaws, nothing could be more bright and glittering. Her voice is terribly new and sharp, not properly oiled as yet, working with abrupt jerks and stops like cordage just issued from its maker's shop.

It must be admitted that Plantagenet Residences is an excellent house, a trifle thin in the walls perhaps, but large as to its apartments, and expensive as to its decorations. Crockery of all kinds bears

the Mudie crest, with the motto, "Facile princeps," in graceful commemoration of the fact that P.R. is the very best boarding-house in town. Over each chimney-piece is a framed placard setting forth the fact that board and lodging is obtained on these unexceptionable premises at the rate of three guineas a week, that breakfast is at nine, luncheon at one, dinner at seven, tea at half-past eight. That dogs, cats, and birds are objected to; that gas is turned off at the meter at eleven P.M.; and finally, that "dressmaking will under no circumstances be permitted in the drawing-room." But the second bell has clattered forth its summons, and twenty-two gentlemen and ladies are making for the dining-room. They are for the most part Americans; mothers with pretty daughters gorgeously attired, whose carriages will presently arrive to waft them westwards, alternately shopping and sight-seeing until luncheon time. Packets of letters and newspapers lie under each napkin, vases of artificial flowers crown the board, whereon are spread the elements of an excellent breakfast. Tea, coffee, cocoa, three or four dishes of hot meat, tea-cakes, muffins, crumpets, fruit, quite a sybaritic feast. There is a crumpled family such as America alone produces; papa, tall, thin, sallow, pointed, and sharp-edged; mamma, with a face like a bag of whity-brown paper crumpled up into a ball; six children in various stages of thinness, edginess, and puckering, with hair that cannot be said to curl, for all its waves are angles, enjoying a repast of cold mutton and water, with a grim satisfaction of asceticism that makes one's fingers itch to administer slaps. There is also a single lady, young and very pretty, who reads a book with downcast eyes during the meal, for she is a Quakeress from Pennsylvania, of the most rigorous order. She hardly ever speaks, and then in a subdued whisper, and one marvels what she can be doing here, friendless and alone, until a glance at the volume before her betrays the fact that she is a tourist, a Rights of Women lady, studying her guide-book as though it were a breviary. Next to her is a young man, who casts quite an ecclesiastical glamour over us by reason of his being one of the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, and next to him again is a spinster of middle age, a public singer of some kind, now become music-mistress, as she sinks into the sere and florid. She discusses choruses and Novello's list with the ecclesiastical gentleman, humming and

nodding refrains at him, performing, the while, imaginary accompaniments on the tablecloth. At the extreme end sit an old man and woman, both of them characters in their way. Doctor M'Ayr is very small and withered, buttoned up to the chin in a well-worn frock-coat, possessed of a countenance in which there is no life, like the medallion on a tomb portraying the dead lineaments of him who lies within. He wears large spectacles tied behind his bald head with an elastic cord, and sits muttering to himself, oblivious of the chattering around. Now and again, a light appears to gleam through the glasses, and he suddenly propounds a question which receives no answer, and then with a murmured "Ay! ay! ay!" and a gurgle like a piece of clockwork running down, retires into himself and dies once more. He is a Scotch professor, at one time much respected at a northern university, where he lived like a spider, coiling and uncoiling some specially technical web, until one day a middle-aged peer's daughter, very poor and lonely, married him, forced him to abandon his studies and his home to vegetate in London. And so, the poor professor's occupation being gone, he glories instead in the possession of the Lady Matilda M'Ayr, and every morning after breakfast unpacks certain shabby old tomes, ranges them lovingly along the dinner-table, gums up their cracks with a little brush, pastes labels on their venerable backs, continually droning a monologue of "Ay! ay! ay!" and its accompanying gurgle until the luncheon bell rings, when his companions will be ruthlessly swept away, he will be furbished up for an afternoon drive, and the next morning will paste, and gurgle, and arrange, again to be swept up and furbished daily until his life's end. Lady Matilda is tall, with a profusion of black hair held down by a black velvet across her noble brow. She appears at breakfast in a weird tartan flowing garment with a great cape, which makes her look like a Gothic Puginian extinguisher, studies the fashionable arrangements in the Morning Post as she mumbles her muffin, occasionally digging up her lord from his abstraction with her sharp elbow, or launching into a passage of arms with Mrs. Mudie about the peerage, should that lady's loquacity induce her to build up apocryphal castles on unsafe ground, without having previously ascertained that her aristocratic puppets are strangers to present company.

"Lor bless you, Lady Matilda, sure-ly you're wrong; why I've known the Hearl of Plymouth these fifteen years, at least—ahem, earl—my father used to take him sailing in his yacht—oh yes, we had a yacht, and a fine one too. The hearl—ahem, earl—doted on yachting, and once gave me a present that I've got up-stairs and will show you some day. His lordship and I were great friends, and some of the busybodies did say—but what's the use of talking about that now?"

"What's the exact amount of poor-rate in the Blairgowrie union, does any one know?" bursts in the doctor. "Ay! ay! ay! gr-r-r—"

The American young ladies wax very loud and nasal, and finally rustle to the drawing-room up-stairs to await their carriages; the crumpled children retire to their lessons, and the doctor is left alone to croon over his cherished library.

But as six o'clock approaches, cabs, carriages, and pedestrians arrive in front of the glass-lamp, the brilliant brass-knocker is continually on the rat-rat, a perfect gallery of statues occupies the pedestal, and the superior grained door is for ever on the move. The bell, which seems never quiet, rings for dressing at half-past six, and the distinguished company troops down at seven, augmented by a few guests, all in the full splendour of evening dress. Lady Matilda is in black silk. She is adorned with miniatures set on velvet on wrist and bosom, besides being otherwise rendered glorious by a sort of coronal of white camellias and lace, which cause her to appear like the typical embodiment of a churchyard watching over a shrunken mortal who flutters on the borders of this world with a spasmodic imitation of life, although his soul has long since taken flight. The crumpled children make a liberal display of skinny shoulder and arm, their countenances having become still further wizened by an additional dose of learning; the ex-professional lady wears a very low gown and a flower in her hair, as though about to warble in a concert-hall; the ecclesiastical gentleman now assumes the appearance of an occasional waiter minus his berlin-gloves; whilst the American young ladies are magnificent with the very newest fashions straight from France. Mrs. Mudie, who has decorated herself with scarlet feathers and jewels straight from the Burlington Arcade, occupies the head of the table, and carves incessantly, her wooden smile being overlaid and

mosaiced, as it were, with a look of anxiety and warmth varied by hissing asides to the servants relative to unsatisfactory handings-round. Truly the dinner at Plantagenet Residences is a grand institution. Low people who may be wandering without, and who are doubtless looking in with awe over the speckled laurels, will consider this a great and exceptional spread, but they will be mistaken, for the fascinating sight may be witnessed nightly gratis by all who choose, until cold weather shall set in, necessitating closed windows and a drawing of comfortable curtains. But even the grandeur of the long table, artificial flowers, and unlimited gas, is eclipsed by the tableau of the drawing-room at tea-time. Although the heavy richness and substantialness of the establishment is not altogether unpleasant, there is an innate lack of beauty in its surroundings, for which even the tasty costumes of the Transatlantic young ladies cannot quite make up. Yet the effect in the drawing-room is mighty fine. People sit in coteries, one group totally independent of another, a circle of chairs shut in, discussing their affairs as though no other group sat near them. The American circle occupies one end of the large room, and fairly drowns all other conversation. One or two of them produce pen and ink to write up their journals; others study the guide to London; one young lady produces all the jewellery she has purchased during her continental travels, spreading it on a table for the others to buzz round like an array of wedding gifts, though the Quakeress keeps her eyes steadily on her book, to show that the dross of this world is naught to her.

"Oh, my!" cries one, "that's bully; may I try them on? Now that's gra-a-nd," spoken with a pulled-out drawl like somebody snoring through a trumpet.

"Oh, I've had enough of travelling," shouts another. "I wanted to see Europe as fast as I could and get home again—just one specimen of each thing, you know. What's the use of piling a parcel of the same things one on t'other like dry goods in a store? So I just said I'd see one specimen of each, and went to Switzerland, where I said to the courier, 'Show me Mount Blanc. I'm told it's the biggest mountain they have, so I want to see it. I don't care about the others.' And he showed me Mount Blanc, and I came away, having liked it very much, without being bothered by the rest. No, I've not

seen St. Paul's, because I saw Notre Dame at Paris, and one cathedral, I suppose, is the same as another all the world over. People do so waste their time in travelling, pottering over the same things. Why, I've done Europe in less than three weeks, and expect to be back in New York in six from the day I started."

"What would be the exact cost of sending two boys under twact to a public school, does any one know?" cried Doctor M'Ayr, waking up.

"Nonsense, my dear," objected Lady Matilda, deigning an answer for once; "you haven't got any, so what's the use of talking rubbish."

"Ay! ay! ay! Gr-r-r——"

Tea being over, some one suggests a little music, and Mrs. Mudie hands the ex-professional lady ceremoniously to the piano, thereby putting to flight the ecclesiastical gentleman who is improving his time by flirting with an American girl behind the window-curtain. "I'm sure," simpers she of the very low dress, "no one wants music. I wouldn't disturb the conversation for the world." Whereupon there's a chorus of "Oh yes, music by all means." The nasal voices become louder still, just as canaries make a point of straining their throats when an instrument is played upon, and the ex-professional lady runs her fat fingers over the keys. Her voice is thin, if her body is not, and remarkably out of tune. As it is not always within her control, running off into unexpected sidings, she invariably selects music of the most ambitious kind, indulging in portentous recitatives, attempting acrobatic feats on her very highest note, in imitation of the "nightingale's trill," and declaring artlessly that she would do wonderful things if only she could "through ether fly," a very unlikely contingency considering her size and weight. At last there is a difference of opinion between herself and her voice as to the exact note on which to shriek "Infelice," and we so fully participate her sentiments as to be heartily glad when she has risen and made way for the gentleman from St. Paul's. After every song Lady Matilda, being of the highest rank, and therefore head of the clacque, bows with a solemn "Thank you," which is gravely re-echoed by everybody, until she is like the clerk saying "Amen" at church. Then the ecclesiastical gentleman favours us with what he is pleased to denominate "bits"—fragments from *Stabat Mater*, solo lines from choruses, and other

choice extracts from his choir music. These are, doubtless, delightful as patterns or samples of his talent, but leave really too much to the imagination with a sense of incompleteness so distressing to the well-regulated mind, that it quite hails with joy the ignominious moment when the parlour-maid appears with flat candlesticks, remarking that it is eleven o'clock, and that the gas will be inexorably and incontinently turned off at the meter as threatened in the glazed placard hanging on every bedroom wall.

ASHANTEE SUPERSTITIONS.

THE great tradition of the Ashantees refers to the Creation, and is called by travellers the Legend of the Calabash and the Book. It is of extreme antiquity, and implies a very early conviction of the intellectual inferiority of the black to the white races. They say that in the beginning of the world God created three white and three black men, with an equal number of women of each colour. He then resolved, according to the best missionary version of the legend, in order that they might be left without complaint, to allow them to fix their own destiny by giving them the choice of good and evil. A large box or calabash was, in consequence, placed upon the ground, together with a sealed paper or letter. The black men had the first choice, and took the calabash, expecting that it contained all that was desirable; but, upon opening it, they found only a piece of gold, some iron, and several other metals, of which they did not know the use. The white men opened the paper or letter, and it told them everything. All this is supposed to have happened in Africa, in which country, it is believed, God left the blacks, with the choice which their avarice had prompted them to make, under the care of inferior or subordinate deities; but conducted the whites to the water-side, where He communicated with them every night, and taught them to build a small vessel, which carried them to another country, whence after a long period, they returned with various kinds of merchandise to barter with the blacks, whose perverse choice of gold, in preference to the knowledge of letters, had doomed them to inferiority.

The debased divinities worshipped by the Ashantees are called by Europeans Fetich, from a Portuguese word for witch-

craft, but the Ashantees themselves call them Bosum, Suman, or Tano, which means sacred. These fetishes seem to be worshipped from terror, and it is to avert their anger that blood is offered them in such terrible abundance. They are supposed to frequently inhabit rivers, like the Scotch kelpie, who, in his desire for victims, evidently betrays his pagan origin. The rivers Tando, Adirai, and the Prah are favourite fetishes of the Ashantees. Thus, in one of those poetical and Homeric rants which the Ashantee warriors deliver when extolling the power of their king, a chieftain, describing the impossibility of any escape for his enemies, cried: "If they run to the Adirai river it is the king's fetish, and will kill them. They cannot either pass the Tando." The Prah, another of these fetishes, is called Bosum-prah, or the sacred river. According to Mr. Beecham, this river gushes from a large gaping rock about half-way up the side of a mountain, near a little town called Samtasu. Here the god is supposed to specially dwell, and show his most potent influences, just as the river gods of the Greeks were worshipped at fountain heads.

It is at such places that the natives offer sacrifices. On the north bank of the Prah, at the ford where it is crossed on the road from Cape Coast Castle, there is a fetish house, where the Ashantee traveller makes oblations to the river god before he dares to plunge into the stream. The Sakum, a small river about four miles westward from Accra, is a great fetish with the inhabitants, who ascribe to it all the blessings they obtain and all the evils they escape. They are always singing its praises, and it is exceedingly dangerous to speak disrespectfully of it anywhere near Accra.

Lakes and pools have also their fetishes. At Coomassie they regard the Lake Echni as the guardian deity of their capital. At Cape Coast Town two ponds, named Papratah and Buakun, are deified, the former especially, as it has so often supplied the Fantee inhabitants with water when besieged by their enemies the Ashantees. Remarkable mountains and rocks are also worshipped by the Ashantees and their neighbours. The cliff on which Cape Coast Castle stands is supposed to be inhabited by a great fetish called Tahbil, and when the sea breaks loudly against the foot of it the natives say "the god is firing." Some kinds of trees are also regarded as

fetishes, and are always left untouched by the axe, when the ground on which they stand is cleared for cultivation.

The animal creation supplies many fetishes. Leopards, panthers, wolves, and serpents, as powers of evil, and hostile to man, are especially venerated, and regarded as messengers and representatives of the gods. At Dix Cove the crocodile obtains divine honours, as it once did in Egypt. There was formerly one kept in a pond near the fort, and any traveller was allowed to see it if he would go to the expense of bringing a white fowl and a bottle of spirits. The fetishman went to the pond, and called the crocodile by a peculiar noise which he made with his mouth. The crocodile instantly ran to the fetishman, who, when the animal came within two or three feet, threw the fowl into the monster's gaping mouth, and then poured a small libation of rum upon the ground. If there was any delay on the part of the fetishman in throwing the fowl, the crocodile would instantly pursue any person present who was dressed in white, till the fowl was tossed to him.

Some years ago, the fowl having escaped into the bush, the crocodile pursued two European gentlemen who were present, and would have attacked them, had not a dog luckily crossed his path, and fallen a sacrifice to his ferocious hunger. He would frequently carry off sheep and dogs, and attack children in the neighbourhood of the pond. The predecessor of this crocodile had grown so tame, that he would leave his pond and visit the houses of the fetishman and the king, to claim his white fowl for dinner.

In Fantee, the country the Ashantees have so long devastated, there is a place called Embrotan, where the inhabitants carefully preserve a number of flies in a small temple, and regard them as a fetish. The Gold Coast people worship rudely-carved idols, with tinsel eyes, and crowns of shells, and also venerate images of birds and beasts, which they smear with red ochre.

Of these fetishes some are tutelary deities of the nation, like the great fetish at Abrah, in the Braffo country. Others protect and favour particular towns. The Cape Coast people, who are peculiarly superstitious, pride themselves on being guarded by seventy-seven fetishes. Every house, indeed, has at least one small temple, built of mud or swish, in round, square, or oblong form. These round fetish houses

are mere huts of poles tied together at the top, and then thatched. Like the idolaters of Canaan, the Gold Coast people never build a fetish house without at the same time planting a grove.

Every fetishman or priest, moreover, has his private fetishes in his own house. "William de Graft," says Mr. Beecham, "describes one of those private collections, which he had the opportunity of examining, as consisting of images of men, one of a bird, stones encircled with strings, large lumps of cinders from an iron furnace, calabashes, and bundles of sticks tied together with strings. All these were stained with red ochre, and rubbed over with eggs. They were placed on a square platform, and shrouded by a curtain from the vulgar gaze. Then there are the domestic fetishes, for, like the Romans, the natives have their penates, or household gods. These are, in some cases, small images; in others a stone, about a foot square, with a bamboo string tied round it, or a calabash containing a string of beads. And, whatever may be the form or the materials, red ochre and eggs are invariably the covering. These household fetishes are sometimes placed on the outside of a house, by the door, but most frequently in the corner of the room within, covered by a curtain."

The natives, according to the missionaries, do not seem to regard these stones and cinders as gods, but only look at them as consecrated objects which spiritual and intelligent beings sometimes condescend to enter. They also believe that the fetishes frequently render themselves visible to mortals. The great fetish of Cape Coast Castle Rock is said to come forth at night in superhuman size, and dressed in white, to chase away the evil spirits. When M. Dupuis showed the King of Ashantee the moving shadows in the magic lantern, the king took them for fetishes, clutched hold of Dupuis, and was afraid to be left alone with them in the dark. How far the higher notions of the more intelligent Ashantees accord with the materialism of their more degraded countrymen we know not, but the latter certainly consider their fetishes to be of both sexes, and to require food.

The notion of a future state universally prevails. It is believed that after death the soul passes into another world, where it exists in a state of consciousness and activity. They say it is like the wind, and can come into a room when the doors are closed, and there is no visible entrance.

They firmly believe that the spirits of dead persons frequently appear to the living. The Reverend Mr. Thompson, a clergyman, who spent some time on the Gold Coast more than a century ago, although evidently not disposed to be over credulous upon the subject, mentions the following circumstance, which he had from good authority: "A caboccer, walking one day to a neighbouring croom or town along the sea-sands, saw a man before him coming forward in great haste, whom he was well acquainted with; and as he drew near, being still intent upon his speed, he called to him to stop a little. The other, making signs that he was in a hurry, ran past him, and continued his pace. When he came to the town, finding a concourse of people in the market-place, he asked the reason of it, and was told that such a man's head had just then been taken off. He said it could not be, for he had met him on the way, and spoken to him. But the answer was made that it was so, and if he questioned the truth of it, he might see the parts of him, and be convinced by his own eyes."

"The people believe that the spirits of their departed relatives exercise a guardian care over them, and they will frequently," says Mr. Beecham, "stand over the graves of their deceased friends, and invoke their spirits to protect them and their children from harm. It is imagined that the spirit lingers about the house some time after death. If the children be ill, the illness is ascribed to the spirit of the deceased mother having embraced them. Elderly women are often heard to offer a kind of prayer to the spirit of a departed parent, begging it either to go to its rest, or at least to protect the family by keeping off evil spirits, instead of injuring the children or other members of the family by its touch. The ghosts of departed enemies are considered by the people as bad spirits, which have power to injure them. The gloom of the forest is supposed to be the haunt or abode of the evil spirits; and travellers into the interior have mentioned that when overtaken on their journey by the night, their native attendants have manifested great fear, and have made the forest resound again with their shouts and yells, uttered with the intent to drive the evil spirits away."

One of the most degraded beliefs of the Ashantees and Fantees is the notion that the future world exactly resembles this, and that the future life is, in fact, merely the

present one over again, with all its sorrows and all its animal wants. This fatal belief leads, on the death of a chief, to the wholesale murder of his wives and attendants, and is productive of ceaseless bloodshed.

The Ashantees and Fantecs firmly believe in the existence of the devil, whom they call Abonsum. This evil being is supposed to be ever at hand for purposes of mischief; so when a person rises from his seat, his attendants are accustomed immediately to lie down upon it, to prevent the devil from slipping into their master's place. Whatever may be the case in other parts of Africa, it does not appear that, says Beecham, the devil is worshipped by the Fantecs and Ashantees; on the contrary, he is annually driven away on the Gold Coast, with great form and ceremony. This custom is observed at Cape Coast Town, about the end of August. Preparation is made for the ceremony in the course of the day; as the hour of eight o'clock in the evening draws nigh, the people are seen collecting in groups in the streets, armed with sticks, muskets, and other weapons; at the instant when the eight o'clock gun is fired from the castle, a tremendous shouting, accompanied with the firing of muskets, breaks forth from all parts of the town, and the people rush into their houses, and beat about with their sticks in every corner, shouting and hallooing with all their strength. This sudden outburst of all kinds of noises often alarms Europeans who have recently arrived, inducing them to suppose that an enemy has attacked the place. When it is imagined that the devil is excluded from all the houses, a simultaneous rush is then made out of the town, and the people in a body pursue the invisible enemy, with lighted flambeaux, shouts, and the firing of muskets, until it is concluded that he is completely routed and put to flight. After this achievement they return, and, in some of the towns, the women proceed to wash and purify their wooden and earthen vessels, to prevent the devil from returning to their houses.

To call another "devil" is a very great insult, and should the person who has thus been abused shortly after die, his death is ascribed to the influence of the evil spirit in the person who insulted him. When such a circumstance occurs, painful results generally follow, for the friends of the deceased do not fail to seek satisfaction.

The Ashantees observe a Sabbatical day, but it is not the same day observed by the neighbouring nations. Along the coast,

and in Ashantee, the regular fetish day is Tuesday. On this day the people wear white garments, and mark their faces, and sometimes their arms, with white clay. They also rest from labour, believing that, if they went to the plantation, the fetish would be sure to send a leopard or panther to punish them.

The Ashantees are great believers in lucky and unlucky days, and our generals would do well to remember this, and to choose ill-omened days on which to give them battle. The number of lucky days in their year they estimate at about one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty. This belief should be turned into great account by our men, as on evil days the Ashantees will not hold councils, march, or engage the enemy. The preparatory religious ceremonials required before a battle can only be celebrated on auspicious days. Some months, such as September, contain more fortunate days than others.

The fetishmen and women (priests and priestesses) are a numerous class. Thus at the chief Ashantee fetish house there are fifty resident priests of the superior class. There are also fetish friars, or itinerant priests, who tramp in search of employment. The priestly office is not necessarily hereditary. Children are often apprenticed to the fetishmen, and educated by them as priests. Sometimes fanatics or rogues declare that the fetish has suddenly seized them, and a series of convulsive fits proclaim them chosen for the priesthood.

The fetishmen depend upon voluntary contributions and on a share of the offerings made to the deities. These offerings are often considerable, the King of Ashantee generally giving two ounces of gold. The priests also obtain large sums, by surrendering to their masters slaves who have fled for sanctuary to the fetish house. By an old custom any slave can desert his master and devote himself to the service of the fetish, and in Ashantee any master who took his runaway slave from the fetish house would consider the death of his whole family as certain. But the mercenary priests, unwilling to interfere with slavery, and greedy for gold, will surrender a slave on the payment of two ounces of gold and four sheep, and absolve the master from all evil consequences.

The Ashantees believe firmly that all evils that afflict men are produced by supernatural means, and can only be removed by

supernatural agency. The fetishes, they say, send misfortunes, and the interposition of the deities must be sought through the medium of the priests, their friends and ministers. To maintain their power the fetishmen exert themselves to obtain information of all kinds. They employ spies and agents in various parts of the country, to collect news and family secrets. When a fetishman, on his travels, enters a new town, he will always shut himself up for a few days in religious seclusion, till by secret inquiries he has discovered who is sick and what is going on among the principal inhabitants. He thus learns to astonish his dupes, and to strengthen his priestly power. The fetishmen work together and supply each other with information. They also study medicine, and their knowledge of herbs and plants tends to increase their repute for wisdom and supernatural power.

The Ashantees are strict in their daily religious observances. Every morning the master of a household takes water in a calabash, and pours it on the ground before the door of his house, praying to the fetish to wash his face that he may be the better prepared to watch over the household on that day. Sometimes an offering of a fowl is made. When Mr. Dupuis was on his journey to Coomassie, he was aroused from sleep one morning at an early hour, at the place where he had stopped for the night, by the entrance of a man, whom he discovered to be the master of the house, with a present for his tutelary god, which in this case happened to be a tree, growing at the door of the apartment where he (Dupuis) lodged. The offering, which consisted of a white and speckled fowl, and a small calabash containing a little corn and plantain, steeped in a fluid looking like blood, was, in the first instance, placed on the ground, close by the tree; but afterwards, the members of the fowl were severed from each other, and suspended by a piece of cotton-yarn upon one of the lowest branches. A blackish fluid, contained in another calabash, was then poured out at the root of the tree as a libation, during the recital of a prayer which Dupuis did not understand. The washing of the stem of the tree, with a colouring made from grey and white clay, concluded the ceremony.

Before eating or drinking by an Ashantee man, a little of the liquid and a portion of the food are thrown on the ground, as offerings to the fetish and the spirits of departed relatives. Application, says Bee-

cham, is made to the fetishes for counsel and aid in every domestic and public emergency. When persons find occasion to consult a private fetishman they take a present of rum and gold dust, and proceed to his house. He receives the present, and either puts a little of the rum on the heads of his various images, or pours a small quantity on the ground before the platform as an offering to the whole pantheon; then taking a brass pan with water in it, he sits down with the pan between himself and the fetishes; and the inquirers also seat themselves to await the result. Having made these preparatory arrangements, looking earnestly into the water, he begins to snap his fingers, and, addressing the fetish, extols his power, saying that people have arrived to consult him, and requesting him to come and give the desired answer. After a time the man is wrought up, like Virgil's Sibyl, into a state of fury; he shakes violently, and foams at the mouth. This is to intimate that the fetish has come upon him, and that he himself (the African spiritualist) is no longer the speaker, but that the fetish uses his mouth, and speaks by him. He growls like a tiger, and asks the worshippers for rum. After drinking he inquires what they have come for. They then tell him their sorrow; a relative is ill. They have done all they could, but in vain, and, knowing he is a great fetish, they have sought his aid. He expresses a hope that he shall be able to help them, and says, "I go up to see." The fetish is then supposed to leave the priest and ascend to Yankumpon, the Supreme Being, to intercede for the sufferer. After a silence of a few minutes the fetishman replies to the inquiries. The popular belief is that fetishes have four eyes, and can therefore see better than mortals, and that they go up into the sky to look round and discover the cause of the disease and the means of cure.

When a great chief is ill or a calamity has fallen on a town, all the inhabitants repair to the principal fetish house to propitiate the fetish, who is supposed to be angry at the non-presentation of offerings, and has therefore either sent the affliction or permitted some evil spirit to inflict it upon them. The priests generally trace most misfortunes to the neglect of some religious ceremonial. On these great occasions the sacred drums are always brought out into the grove of the temple. They are made of large hollow calabashes covered with goat's skin, and are beaten with the

hands. The priest then commences a fetish song, a wild sort of incantation in which the people join, while they beat the fetish drums, and the attendant fetishmen dance frantically. The priests then become excited to frenzy, and are supposed to be inspired and capable of delivering oracles. Previous to his beginning to speak the priest lays his hand upon the drums, and silence ensues. Having ended his communication he commences another song, and the former scene is renewed. After a length of time, perhaps when fatigued, the priest dances very slowly, and delivers his oracle to the people as he passes softly by them. On some of these occasions he will rush out of the circle, and run into the house of a principal person, to tell him what to do in order to avert some evil which he foresees is coming upon the family, and for such intimations he does not fail to receive the usual present.

It has been stated, says a traveller, that some of the fetish houses are built in a conical form, with long sticks or poles placed in the ground, tied together at the top and thatched. When a fetish dance takes place before one of these, a priest places himself at the entrance to prevent the people looking in. They are told that when the fetish comes down to his temple, they will see the hut move. And, sure enough, they do. As the drumming, singing, and dancing proceed, the temple begins to rock backwards and forwards, which the people are led to believe is effected by the fetish, who has descended, and is dancing upon the temple. This palpable trick is managed by a fetishman, who, before the people arrive, hides himself on a cross seat near the top of the building, where he is able to shake the whole hut. The fetishman on guard prevents any discovery of the trick being possible.

Sometimes the priests suddenly announce that the fetish has come upon them, and rush through the town like madmen, eating raw eggs, using insane gestures, and telling the people that the fetish has a communication to make them. On this summons the people hurry to the fetish house with presents, and the oracles are delivered with the usual drumming and dances.

The oracle at Abrah used to be the great resort of the Fantees. Before the last Ashantee war, a number of aged fetishmen, who were believed to be immortal, lived in a deep and almost impervious dell, near

Abrah. These old men were supposed to have intimate converse with the fetish and the departed spirits of the aged and wise. Adóko, the chief of the Braffoes, says a missionary traveller, frequently consulted them, either in his own person, or through his head fetishman; and the Fantees afterwards attributed the success of the Ashantees, and their own defeats and misfortunes, to their disregard of the injunctions of the oracle. Abrah is now in ruins; but the fetish maintains his reputation, partly by the influence of the fetishmen in the country, who advise the people to go thither in cases of great emergency, and partly by means of the information conveyed to Abrah by the agents of the oracle. Frequently, when inquirers go from a distance, they are surprised to find that the fetishmen are already acquainted with many of their own private affairs; and often it happens, that, on the strength of the secret information which they have obtained, the priests send such messages to persons living in remote places as tend to cherish and confirm the popular impression that they possess supernatural means of obtaining information. The people throughout the country would be afraid, were they disposed, to speak disrespectfully of the Abrah fetish.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XLIV. AT THE FARM AGAIN.

I WAS quitting the room when she said: "A moment more, Mr. Nightingale. You are going home to see your friends again. I hope sincerely you may find them well, that you may enjoy thoroughly your brief holiday with them. But it is right that you should consider again a matter upon which I spoke to you some months since. I mean, of course, your position here. I am still painfully conscious that you have not been fairly dealt with; that, owing to my father's unhappy illness, and to the confused state of his affairs, you have not received the attention that was justly your due. Now if you, or your friends acting on your behalf, should decide——"

But I would hear no more. She was merely renewing her former proposition to the effect that my articles should be cancelled or transferred. I could but repeat my assurance that I was perfectly content, that I would not have the existing

arrangement disturbed on any account. I expressed myself with an ardour and promptitude that much surprised me when I came to reflect upon the matter afterwards. I believe I stated that I was devoted to my profession, which certainly was not strictly true. The fact was that my allegiance to the law was, for the time, comprehended in my devotion to Rachel. Her father's articled clerk, I had an excuse for being near her, for seeing her when occasion offered, for serving her if I possibly could. If I quitted his office, I quitted Rachel, condemned myself possibly to part from her for ever. The thought of such a thing was quite unendurable to me.

She was amused, I think, at my display of fervor. Yet it gratified her, and she was grateful for it, I am sure. That it, in truth, signified love, never once occurred to her. Of this I feel persuaded. There seemed no suspicion of coquetry in her nature, no sort of desire to win admiration or move homage. She was distinguished by an exquisite modesty and pure humility of nature. She was content to lead a life of seclusion and laborious duty, perfectly unconscious that aught she did merited the slightest applause or even observation of any kind on the part of any one.

She shook hands with me with great kindness as we parted. The tender sweetness of her smile gladdened my heart strangely. She could never be mine, I knew. Yet how worthy she was of my utmost love!

From old Vickery I received a farewell injunction of a characteristic sort. He bade me return as soon as I could, refreshed and invigorated by my holiday, and prepared to undertake an enormous amount of copying work in readiness for next Michaelmas Term.

I called upon Sir George, but I saw him only for a few minutes. A post-chaise was at the door, and he was about proceeding to the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, as I understood.

He hoped I might enjoy myself, and mentioned that he longed for a holiday himself. His journey was not one of pleasure he gave me to understand.

"You are going home, you say? Well, it's something to have a home."

"Can I do anything for you, Sir George? Can I deliver any message for you?"

He turned upon me rather sharply I thought.

"Message? No, I've no message to

send. I never send messages." He paused musingly. "No, I've no message to send, Duke," he repeated in gentler tones. "I hope, as I said, that you may enjoy yourself. Make the most of your time. You'll come and see me on your return?"

"Certainly, Sir George."

"You promise me? Mind, I count upon you." He fixed his dark eyes intently upon my face. "So, that's well. Good-bye, Duke. Stay—that friend you spoke to me about? I forget his name—I've seen nothing of him."

I explained that Tony was going with me into the country.

"Well, he must come to me on his return. You understand? Bring him with you, and introduce him. Don't forget. Good-bye, again."

He bowed, smiled, and hurried away.

We journeyed down to Dripford by the early coach from the Golden Cross. At the door of that inn I saw again the pimpled waiter. He was yawning to an extent that distorted his features painfully and brought tears into his eyes. Apparently he did not recognise me. The coachman did, however; or pretended to. He nodded in a very friendly way, and observed that it was a niceish day for going down.

"Let's see," he added, "your for——"

"Dripford."

"Dripford, of course. I shall forget my own name next. I knew you wern't going through." He examined his waybill, thrust it into his pocket, and drew on his driving gloves, assuming as he did so a stooping attitude convenient for running his eye over the hocks of his team. "Better put that fish-basket in the front boot, William. All right behind there? Sit fast, gentlemen. Let 'em go, William." And we were off.

It was a pleasant day, with a light west wind blowing; threatening rain, the passengers agreed, but no rain fell. The clouds hung low but in broken masses, allowing cool shadows to mottle the view, while here and there broad shafts of silvery light descended upon favoured places in the landscape. Very remote objects were invested with curious distinctness, and distant weathercocks upon church steeples and country houses were set sparkling like diamonds.

I remember discussing with Tony how such a variegated sky could best be represented upon canvas. Our talk of smalt, indigo, madder, Naples yellow, and warm

glazing, perplexed our neighbours very much.

Tony was pale and wore a fatigued look. Yet he was in capital spirits. He seemed thoroughly to enjoy our journey along the beautiful western road. I could not but notice a certain tremulous movement of his hands, however; as though an involuntary nervous excitement was in excess of his strength to control.

"I did not sleep very well last night," he said, in answer to my inquiring looks. "I was up late packing; and tired myself too much. But I shall soon get well and strong again. Already I feel ever so much better. The sight of the country is wonderfully cheering, especially to one who has seen so little of it as I have."

I had told him all about the Dowa Farm and its inmates. I had prepared him for the simple homely ways of our quiet household, informing him thoroughly of what he was to expect, and what he was not to expect. I assured him, however, of the kindest welcome.

"You need not tell me that," he said, simply. "They'll welcome me on your account, my dear Duke, never fear. By-and-bye I'll try to make them like me a little on my own. For my part I seem to know them well already, and to like them very much indeed. I only hope they won't expect too much from me, and that they quite understand what a very commonplace and insignificant sort of young fellow I really am."

Old Truckle met us at Dripford in charge of a chaise, or rather a light cart, with my uncle's name upon it in thin white letters. In this vehicle we proceeded with our luggage towards Purrington; not very rapidly, so as to spare the horse; not the old chestnut—he, I learned, had gone lame and been turned out to grass with but a remote prospect of his ever resuming work again.

"Maester Duke?" said Truckle, doubtfully, as we met. "Why I should na' ha' known thee. Thee be'st changed so some-hows. I thought it was one of they Lunnon chaps at virst. Thee looks main thin I be thinking, and as yaller as a claut." I may explain that "claut" is our country name for the marsh ranunculus. "Ees I be purely, thankee, and th' old ooman too, and all up at varn."

It was delightful to me to hear once more the ring and twang of the old Purrington speech and accent.

"They'll be main glad to see thee again at

varn, I'll warnd," he continued. "Thee'll be in time for harrest; and as good a crop of wheat we got this year as heart could wish. And there's barley in the ten yacker field out ayont the plantation as is a zight for zore eyes. Ees, sir, Rube be tidy, and Kem. Old Thacker be dead dree (three) months gone. 'Twere drink as killed un volks zay. But I dunno. Thacker were an old man. 'Twere old age moast like; but volks likes to call un drink, shim (it seems). For zartin, one kills as much as t'other un, I be thinking. Ga oot." This was to the horse.

Truckle, I judged, had refreshed himself with a pint of the strong beer at the Ram Inn, or he would hardly have been so liberal of speech. He touched his hat now and then as he spoke, a novel proceeding on his part, which I took to be a tribute to my advance in years and stature. He glanced at Tony, but did not venture to address him. For his part Tony had comprehended little of Truckle's observations. Our dialect was so new and strange to him.

The leisurely way in which he proceeded on the road towards Purrington contrasted forcibly with the rapidity and bustle of our journey to Dripford. We had entered a region in which time seemed of little account, and hurry unknown.

There was the red orange flush of a late summer sunset suffusing the uplands as we drew near to the farm-house. Beacon Mount in the distance seemed bathed in golden light; the fi s of Orme's Plantation, and the woods enshrouding Overbury Hall, were dyed rich crimson and deep purple, while already over the hollows of the down there floated the cool grey haze of early twilight.

Soon I could descry figures standing at the farm-gate looking for our approach. There was my uncle in a black hat; and my mother close beside him, resting upon his arm, as it seemed; and Kem, surely that was Kem, a little in the rear of them, waving a handkerchief or an apron. Now they were advancing to meet us.

"My Duke; my boy!" and my mother's arms were tightly wound round my neck. But for a moment—then she was greeting Tony—still clasping my hand, however. It was long before she seemed able to loosen her hold of it. It was only by touch that she could assure herself, as I judged, of my presence at home again. She said but little. Her eyes expressed the tenderest things however, and her trembling

fingers as they interlaced mine were most eloquent.

"Welcome home, Duke," said my uncle in his composed, kindly way, and he turned to Tony. "I'm very glad to see you, Mr. Wray. I hope we may be able to make your stay with us pleasant to you. Let me bid you welcome to our old farm-house." They shook hands heartily. My uncle went to speak to Truckle about the luggage or the horse.

"Kem!" I said. She was laughing and crying at once, with a shamefaced air, wringing her apron as though she had been washing it. I kissed her hot rough red cheek; there were tears trickling over it. The good soul hadn't a word to say. She stood somehow in awe of me I thought. When she found speech at length it was to address me for the first time in her life as "Mr. Duke." Presently she added: "And a man growed! Blessee, I be terrible glad to see thee again, to be sure!"

"You had a pleasant journey? The day proved most fortunate. But you must be very tired, and very hungry."

And so saying my mother led us into the house.

It was exactly as I quitted it. I went from room to room in quest of change as it were, yet finding none. I seemed to have been absent but for half an hour or so. How well I remembered everything! How all seemed to come back to me! True enough I had been away, after all, but a very few months. Still it was at a period of existence when experiences, hopes, thoughts, and deeds crowd and thicken about one, assuming curious importance and significance; when one seems, so to say, to live long in a little while. Life in its transition stage between boyhood and manhood brims with incidents, is closely packed with events. Memory is then very fresh; hope is abundant. Youth imparts something of its redundant fervor and vitality to all it approaches. Everything I saw was connected with a thousand recollections, was part of my childhood, of myself.

I found myself looking into the mirror in the little room, once devoted to my study

of my lessons preparatory to the coming of Mr. Bygrave, half expecting to see reflected there in the old pantomime way the magnified head of a little boy. It was almost with surprise I found there displayed, still with exaggeration and distortion, a much older face, thinner and graver, with the fluffiness of incipient whiskers just visible on the cheeks and jaw-bone.

"My dear Duke," said my mother, pressing her hand caressingly on my shoulder. "How tall you grow! But it wasn't that I wanted to say. Your friend——"

"Tony? What of him? You'll like him, mother, I'm sure of it."

"Of course, I shall like him. But, do you know, I think he's very ill."

"Poor Tony! He's always pale, and just now he's tired I dare say."

"He's very ill, Duke." And she shook her head sadly.

So she took Tony specially under her protection. It was her way. Her tenderness for the weak and suffering was extreme. I remembered how in times past my childish ailments had moved her to a display of intense affection that otherwise she had endeavoured studiously to suppress. It was enough for her to know that Tony was an orphan, to think him suffering; she took him to her heart at once. I saw that she was bent upon making quite a pet of him.

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AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGERD," "A PERFECT TREASURER," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XL. THE RING AND THE RING GUARD.

THE invitation to the gentlemen's picnic was unanimously accepted by the ladies of Lucullus Mansion, and, late as it was, Mrs. Hodlin Barmby despatched emissaries that very night throughout Balcombe to furnish forth the sylvan board. That admirable woman never waited till the next day to secure what could be bespoken the same evening, and in this case, as in others, she had her reward; many a household in the neighbourhood went without its lobster and its lettuces, on that eventful day, in order that the salad should not fail at Birbeck Beeches. She never gave way to that besetting weakness of her sex—a tendency to "risk" matters—and would rather bring home some coveted article of food, such as a pot of Devonshire cream, or a basket of plover's eggs, in her own hands, than put a respectable tradeswoman in the way of being tempted by a higher bid. Nor was it only with the commissariat that she concerned herself. She marshalled the guests in such order as her sagacity foresaw would be most pleasing to them, and placed in each carriage—well horsed and gaily postillioned under her husband's eye—its due complement of passengers. It had got about that Mr. Angelo Hulet had been the proposer of the entertainment, and therefore the first vehicle was given to him, not a little to Mr. Bullion's indignation, whose vast possessions naturally inclined him to the belief that he had a divine right in everything over everybody. It was necessary to tell him, in order to appease his wrath, that

Mr. Hulet (who was five years his junior) had had the pas of the rest of the company as being obviously the eldest. With the latter, of course, went Evy, and "since the young people would naturally like to be together," said sly Mrs. Barmby to the valetudinarian, "I shall send Miss Judith, and her aunt, along with you two."

The effect of this arrangement was to fill the pockets of the first carriage with so many bottles and phials, and packages of charcoal and digestive biscuits, that it might have been supposed by a casual spectator to be carrying the provisions for the picnic, which had in fact been despatched hours before, in a separate conveyance, to a certain appointed greenwood glade. The two invalids finding themselves thus in each other's company, and with every remedy and restorative at hand, and having nothing to complain of except their ailments—which was their favourite topic—looked eminently well pleased, and conversed with one another in low confidential tones. On the opposite seat sat the girls; Judith, a little incommoded by the irrepressible footstool, but wreathed in smiles as in duty bound, while Evy, though she would rather have had Mrs. Storcks beside her, looked equally happy if not quite so demonstrative.

"I can see that my spirits surprise you," whispered Judith to her companion, "and yet it is to you that I am indebted for them. Ah, you who are so happy, little know what magic a few kind words, such as you spoke to me last night, can effect with one who is so unused to kindness. Perhaps you meant little by them"—here she paused, and Evy answered quickly and earnestly:

"Indeed, dear Miss Mercer, I meant all I said."

"How can I believe that, when you will not call me Judith," returned the other, pathetically. "Oh yes, I know it was an oversight, a slip of the tongue, and that you mean to be friendly with me, whenever you can think of it. It is not your fault, dear Miss Carthew. I have not, alas! the gift of attracting the love of others, as you have. Ah, how I covet it!"

"Indeed, Judith, you do me wrong," pleaded Evy; "and yourself wrong. I did not call you by your christian name because of your aunt's presence, whose suspicions I thought might be aroused by such sudden familiarity."

Oh, Evy, Evy, when the recording angel had to write down that little speech, I am afraid it was not without some celestial hieroglyphic indicating a doubt of its authenticity. My own conviction is that you do not like your new friend so well that terms of endearment for her spring, flower-like, on your lips—that you have in fact told "a white one."

"And as for your not attracting people," she continued, "I am sure the anxiety that Mr. Paragon, for one, showed to hand you to your seat just now, was a sufficient contradiction to such a statement. Don't you think it is a little hard upon the poor man to let him be so very civil in ignorance of the existence of—by-the-bye, you never confided to me the name, which I hope to read of one day among the Royal Academicians."

"I dare not breathe it in this company," returned Judith, with emotion. "My vis-à-vis is not always so deaf as she was the other night when she took Carthew for Hartopp. Yes, I am sorry for Mr. Paragon, but I don't think he is likely to break his heart about me or anybody else; and it is so necessary for dear Augustus's sake that I should dissemble. It was only the other night that my aunt was congratulating me upon what she was pleased to call my 'good sense' in encouraging the attentions of one who could offer me an establishment, instead of listening to 'a beggarly painter.' Was it not cruel of her, dear?"

"I think it was most abominable of her," said Evy, indignantly. "I should never have given her credit for such a speech, did I not hear it from your own mouth. With all her faults she seems so kind and lady-like——"

"My dear Evy," interrupted Judith, compassionately, "your charity leads you to be too credulous. Don't you see that my aunt has now a motive for appearing in her

best-colours, or rather in colours that don't belong to her at all? Only watch how she languishes when she addresses your uncle; whether she is talking of her love, or her liver, it's all one."

Evy could hardly forbear smiling, though she felt ashamed of doing so. Judith's conversation did not please her; it was clever, but too cynical, and even coarse, to suit her taste. Now Mrs. Storke was satirical and outspoken enough, but somehow, she was never vulgar; her geniality of disposition also enabled her to "say things" in a manner that robbed them of their sting, whereas the tone of Judith's talk (when she was not apologising for it) was very hard. At the same time Evy was too just not to admit that the position of this poor girl put her at a great disadvantage; she had heard her uncle say that where dependence does not make a hypocrite, it makes a cynic, and had the lines of Judith's life fallen in more pleasant places, it was only reasonable to suppose that she would have been a more pleasant person.

Upon reaching their destination the hosts of the picnic proclaimed, as it were, their independence, threw off the yoke of Mrs. Hodlia Barmby, and rearranged the party in accordance with their own views. Each gentleman—so far as they went, for they were fewer in number than their fair guests—carried off a lady, and escorted her to the glade where the collation was awaiting them, and as Birbeck Beeches, though but of small extent, was a pathless wilderness, there was no direct route, but every pair took their own way, which, in some cases, was an intentionally prolonged one. Those ladies, on the contrary, who had no cavalier, but were obliged to put up with a substitute (even though it was Mrs. Bullion, who in inches was almost a man, and who had also a very respectable moustache), went as straight to the feeding place as their knowledge of the locality would permit, and Birbeck Beeches was pretty well known to all Balcombe. It was a very beautiful spot, as wild as a primeval forest, though you could scarcely have been lost, or starved to death in it, even if you had not stumbled on the hampers from Lucullus Mansion—and every tree was "a study" for any young woman who could wield a pencil, and had advanced as far as a number three drawing-book. Each mighty bole was mossed and knobbed in some characteristic fashion, and with its gnarled branches presented in numberless instances a grotesque

likeness to the human form. To Monsieur Gustave Doré's eyes, indeed, the wood would have been ready "peopled," even without the presence of the pic-nic party; and the sharp-tongued Judith pointed out so many sylvan likenesses of residents in Lucullus Mansion to her companion, Mr. Paragon, and that so wittily, that that gentleman, albeit not easily moved to mirth (of which he was always somewhat suspicious lest he himself should be concerned in evoking it), had more than once to seat himself on the thick piled moss to have his laugh out; on which occasions Judith very good-naturedly sat down also. "If these little opportunities should occur after our champagne luncheon," was her sagacious reflection, "this man will propose to me to a dead certainty. And what shall I do then?"

Evy was under the sober convey of Mr. De Coucy, who perceived, or pretended to perceive, in the tress, certain heraldic resemblances which enabled him to hold discourse upon his favourite topic, and to commence that course of instruction with which he had already menaced his fair companion. He also sat down on the moss and pressed her to sit beside him, in order that he might more conveniently expatiate upon the Alerion—a neighbouring wood-cut—which he was careful to observe, though modern heralds had degraded it into a monster, was indeed originally no other than our eagle, the cognisance of the House of Lorraine, and an anagram upon its name. When the unconscious tree had done its duty, he passed on to others, nor was he long before he found a beech likeness in profile to Alexander the Great, which gave him the wished-for opportunity of calling attention to his ring by Pyrgoteles; a subject that furnished him with the materials for so long a lecture, that among the crowd of thoughts that fitted across Evy's mind during its progress, the reflection that it was lucky that the collation which was awaiting them could not get cold, found an involuntary place.

"What is that funny creature on that other ring of yours?" inquired Evy presently, not that she cared, poor little soul, what it was, but that Pyrgoteles was wearing away the life within her, and any change of topic seemed acceptable. "I think I have seen something like it before."

"Funny creature! my dear young lady," replied Mr. De Coucy, in a tone that protested against such epithets, as not only

inapplicable but sacrilegious, "that is the tailless gryphon; I wear it on my signet-ring, as being the cognisance of the family to which I have the honour to be not distantly related; the Heytons."

"To be sure," said Evy, with an unexpected interest; "I remember to have seen it sculptured above the great gates leading into Dirleton Park at home."

"Ah, yes; since you have lived at Dunwich, you are doubtless acquainted with my noble relative."

"Very slightly; that is, I have only seen him once," said Evy.

"Well, he is not much to look at," observed Mr. De Coucy, smiling, "though he is a very excellent fellow when you come to know him; but you must have met his nephew, Captain Heyton—or, as we call him, Jack."

"Yes; I have met Captain Heyton—three or four times," answered Evy, with a desperate effort to appear at once indifferent and exact.

"Well, isn't he a capital fellow? All the family, except his cousin Dick, who is no more to be compared with him than that scarabæus," here Mr. De Coucy produced his umbrella viciously at a wandering beetle, "delight in Jack."

Evy blushed with pleasure—she had liked this old gentleman well enough, but had hitherto considered him a little tedious; now she confessed to herself that she had made a mistake, and that he had a very agreeable way of putting things.

"Captain Heyton was a general favourite in Dunwich, I think," assented Evy.

"So I should imagine," said Mr. De Coucy, "or his neighbours must be hard to please. Why, to begin with, he is one of the best-looking fellows in England. Don't you think so?"

"He is certainly good-looking," said Evy, worrying the scarabæus in her turn with the tip of her parasol.

"Yes, indeed, and his face does not belie his heart. The old lord, between ourselves, would be unbearable if it was not for Jack's civilising influence. I never go to the park myself unless Jack is there. His smile irradiates the old house like a perpetual sunbeam."

What a charming old man this was after all, and what a stream of pleasant talk lay in him, when that rubbish of alerions and gryphons did not choke it! Why didn't he go on? She looked up with a radiant face to know the cause of his sudden

silence, and met his keen grey eyes gazing down upon her with curious earnestness.

"Captain Heyton is very much looked up to in our neighbourhood," remarked she, with as great presence of mind as she could assume; "he is the life and soul of the rifle corps, and—and—of the cricket club, and all that."

"I don't doubt it," replied Mr. De Coucy; "'noblesse oblige,' you know; it is—or ought to be—his place to take the lead in everything of that sort. He will be one day Lord Dirleton himself, and in all probability inherit his uncle's wealth as well as title. There is not a better match in the county I should say than Jack. He will probably marry some duke's daughter; indeed, I have heard his name associated with one already, though I forget who it was; perhaps you have happened to hear it."

"No," said Evy, as carelessly as she could. "I don't think I have."

What a dreadful old man this was after all, and how fond of scandal! Even Pyrgoteles was a preferable subject of conversation to that which he had now selected. If the wandering scarabæus had not by this time made a tunnel for himself into the moss he would probably have suffered death by impalement.

"Don't you think that they'll be waiting luncheon for us, Mr. De Coucy?" said Evy, after a long silence.

"No, my dear young lady, I don't think Mrs. Bullion would permit them to wait for anybody. You seem to have taken a fancy to this ring of mine; would you do me the favour to accept it?"

"Oh no, Mr. De Coucy," said Evy, recollecting, for the first time, Mrs. Barmby's warning with reference to her companion's weakness for making proposals of matrimony. "I could not think of doing that. I have heard you say yourself that the gem was two thousand years old, and of priceless value."

"Nay, I didn't mean that ring, Miss—Evy, not but that I would even part with it, on one condition. That is if you would consent to wear beside it— Don't be alarmed my dear young lady," continued he, gravely, for he had taken hold of her hand, in a parental sort of way it might be, but also, perhaps, with a less platonic intention, and she had withdrawn it rather abruptly. "I am not going to ask you to marry me, because I am afraid it would be out of the question; you needn't say so; I see it. It is the gryphon ring I wish you

to accept in token of my—my"—the poor old gentleman gave a little sigh of regret which, notwithstanding her displeasure, touched Evy's tender heart—"in token of my most sincere friendship. It will be acceptable to you, I know, for I have read your secret—upon another's account at least, if not on mine. Keep it for my sake—or Jack's. If it reminds you, when you look at it, of a certain hopeless adorer (which it may do from his likeness to a gryphon—not so?—well, thank you for that at all events), I shall be gratified; for as to Jack—happy dog—you will not need a reminder. What I have said, however, about his being a great match is true—though not about the duke's daughter, which I invented to resolve my suspicions—and I can foresee that the course of true love will run at least no smoother in your case, my dear young lady, than it usually does. Indeed, it must needs meet with greater obstacles than common. If Reginald de Coucy"—here he gallantly placed his hand upon his heart—"can aid at any time in removing them, or in performing any other friendly service for you, you may trust him to do so. The ring"—here he respectfully placed it on Evy's finger—"is twice as large as it should be; which is of the less consequence, since even if it fitted you, you would not probably, at present, care to wear it. I will have it taken in at the jeweller's, and then you will keep it till the day, which I hope to see, when you may wear it as a guard above Jack's wedding-ring. An old man's blessing on your ring, my dear, and"—he hesitated a moment, meditating perhaps a paternal kiss on the forehead, then added cheerfully—"and now let us go to luncheon."

CHAPTER XII. UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE.

THE cold collation was all that could be expected of it, and much more than could have been expected by those who had been used to pic-nics, but not to Mrs. Hodlin Barmby's superintendence of them. It was not necessary to place the champagne "within the cooling brook," because ice had been duly provided for that purpose by her forethought, nor was it incumbent upon the gentlemen to neglect their own wants to minister to those of their fair companions, since the staff of attendants was fully sufficient to "wait on appetite." Whether digestion did so or not is doubtful, since of chairs and table there were none (how those old Romans must have suffered, by-the-bye, who ate their food leaning on

their left elbows!), and twice or thrice did the contents of Mr. Bullion's plate slide off his knees to fertilise the mossy lea. However, what was wanting in comfort was made up for by the charm of novelty, and the beauty of the dining-hall, with its roof of cloudless blue showing through the green rafters that sprang from those pillars of silver beech. It was taken note of at the time, to be remarked upon afterwards with great significance, that Mr. Angelo Hulet forgot to take his usual dinner pill before sitting down to this exceptionally unwholesome repast, and that Mrs. Sophia Mercer, though seated upon a moss-grown stamp considerably higher than her customary chair, omitted to inquire for her footstool.

When the meal had been discussed, and the whole party arose to wander in the wood, while the servants took their places, this dyspeptic pair gradually dropped behind the rest until they were quite alone. It was the first time they had been so since they had met at Lucullus Mansion, though they had contrived, under cover of medicinal discussion, to have many a confidential talk together, and the circumstances seemed not a little embarrassing to them both. At all events, neither spoke until they came to a little pool, overhung by one giant beech, that stood a little apart from its companions, like a monarch attended by his court.

"Do you remember this spot, Sophia?" asked Mr. Hulet, with a tremor in his tone that on this occasion at least might, without any affectation, have been set down to nerves; "and — and — what happened here?"

"Could I ever forget it?" replied she in whispered accents. "I have never been here since, Angelo, yet I have pictured the place ten thousand times."

"And yet it was near forty years ago," sighed he. It was a very genuine sigh, and came from the bottom of his heart; for the moment he felt as deeply as the poet (the most unpractical of us do sometimes), how once in that very wood he had walked with one he loved nine-and-thirty years ago:

*And in the silver beechwood where he walked that day,
The nine-and-thirty years were a mist that rolled
away.*

"What is forty years," answered she, not plumbing the depths of his sad thoughts, but answering to the sentiment upon the surface, "what is forty years or four hundred to a woman who has once loved?"

"Did you know that this was the very

day—the anniversary?" inquired he, touching gently the hand that rested on his arm.

"How can you ask me such a question, Angelo!" remonstrated she.

"I thought you might have forgotten the date, though not the fact. I had done so myself, but was reminded of it, the other day, when looking over an old diary."

"Ah, we women need no diaries for such a purpose," answered she, with a plaintive look—which was, however, a little hypocritical, since, as a matter of fact, she had herself forgotten the date in question altogether until reminded of it by her companion. "Such dates are engraved on the tablets of our hearts."

"I wonder whether we shall find it on the tablet of this beech-tree," returned Mr. Hulet, drily, advancing towards it, and examining carefully its mossy bole. "I remember cutting it out with my penknife, and our initials also—and see, here they are."

About five feet from the ground, much overgrown with lichen, and almost healed by the slow cure of time, could be still discerned certain gashes in the ancient trunk, which might stand for A. H., S. M., with the date in question.

"In twenty years more there will not a trace be left of them," remarked Mr. Hulet; "though, to be sure, that will not affect us, Sophia, will it? We shall be effaced ourselves by that time."

"I shall, Angelo, without doubt," returned his companion despondently. "There is a something here—no it's a little higher" (she took hold of Mr. Hulet's hand, and just as Sir Isaac Newton used his sweet-heart's finger for a tobacco-stopper, applied it like a plaster to her fifth rib or thereabouts), "can't you feel something beating? That tells me I am not long for this world."

For a moment the claims of dyspepsia were paramount; but suddenly recollecting that the occasion was supreme, and Love its master, she added with downcast eyes: "But to be sure it is no wonder that my heart should beat, with one that was once so dear, so near to it—Angelo."

"But even that can't account for its beating on your right side instead of your left," answered her companion, peevishly. "If you really had heart-disease, as I have, you would never make a mistake of that sort, my good woman. By Jove—it's coming on now—how I wish I had not left

those invaluable drops in the pocket of the carriage."

"Take *my* drops," said Mrs. Mercer, eagerly, and proffering a little phial. "There is nothing, as Doctor Carambole says, like an immediate application of a remedy, even if it be not the one most precisely adapted to the case. 'If your salts are not at hand (he used to say in his funny way) take a swig at your sal volatile.' Do you feel better, Angy?—that is, I beg your pardon, Mr. Hulet—oh say you feel a little better."

"Yes; I feel much better. And I don't mind your calling me Angelo (you know I never liked 'Angy') if you prefer it. I don't mean to pretend, Sophia, that I should have sought you out designedly, nor even perhaps should have come to Balcombe had I known you were there; but having found you"—here Mr. Hulet hesitated, and stroked his chest, whether to indicate affection, or to assist the action of the drops he had just swallowed, was not quite clear; Mrs. Mercer, however, took it for the former.

"It seems like a providence, Angelo, does it not," said she, demurely, "that we two should have thus accidentally met together after a separation of forty years?" Here she covered her eyes with her hand though not without regarding her companion between her fingers, and exclaimed pathetically, "Oh why, oh why, did we ever part?"

"You can answer that question yourself better than I can do it for you," answered Mr. Hulet, brusquely.

"Oh, Angelo, how can you say so!" pleaded his companion.

"Because it is necessary, on an occasion of this sort, Sophia," returned he, "above all things to speak the truth. You and I are here, if I mistake not, for the purpose of coming to a mutual understanding—and—and—in hopes to dovetail our present with our past; to bridge over the great gulch that has intervened since we last met; to make reconciliation, and, so far as is possible, atonement with one another. This cannot be effected by false representations on either side; let us allow we were both in the wrong, and have done with it. Perhaps I was irritable and impatient—"

"No, no," remonstrated Mrs. Mercer softly. It was not the least like the "no, no," of the House of Commons, but rather that conjunction of negatives which British grammarians describe as making an affirmative; truly translated, it might have been ren-

dered, "Well, you certainly were all that but don't let us talk about it." It seemed that some few grains of the irritability and impatience referred to still lingered in Mr. Hulet's composition, to judge by the tone in which he replied.

"Very good, then; if I was not, it was certainly your fault—as, indeed, I always maintained it was. You worried me beyond bearing with your caprice and obstinacy, and especially with your depreciation of my respected ancestor."

Mrs. Mercer's mild blue eyes, which had hitherto been quite moist and tender in their expression, here suddenly became, as it were, hard boiled; and the smile upon her lip took an upward curl.

"It was very foolish of me, I allow, Angelo," said she, "to argue with you upon that matter."

"It was not only foolish, madam, but it was unbecoming, and in the worst possible taste. However, let that pass; I should not have alluded to it, if you had not made that idiotic inquiry, 'Why did we ever part?' It is my honest desire that we should forget the past, except so far as it may endear us to one another. I don't want to make a fool of myself at my time of life by talking sentiment, and any unnecessary emotions cannot fail to aggravate our respective symptoms, and be hurtful to us both; but I don't deny that I feel towards you, Sophia, as I little thought—when we parted years ago—ever again to feel. When I met you that day at the table d'hote, it seemed really—if it isn't a bull to say so—like falling in love at first sight for the second time. It put me in such a state that I took nearly a pint of paregoric."

"Did you indeed?" replied Mrs. Mercer, once more all smiles again. "Now that was very touching; and I am sure I wished for my part, when I first saw you enter the drawing-room, that I had had some paregoric to take. You cost me a terrible spasm, Angelo."

"So I understood," replied Mr. Hulet, with the air of a man who is flattered at the sensation he has produced; "and the emotion did you credit. Well, the effect in my case, at least, was not transient. I said to myself, 'Sophia may have had her faults'—as indeed, my dear, you had—'but after all what woman is perfect. Taught by experience, and improved by nine-and-thirty years of solitary reflection, she will doubtless be now another creature.' I found you so, Sophia, while in all that

formerly endeared you to me—ahem—for nearly all—for, Gad, what a beautiful girl you were in those days——”

“Was I?” answered Mrs. Mercer, softly, “and ah, what a handsome fellow were you, dear Angy.”

“Well, yes,” said her companion thoughtfully. “When we looked down into this very pool together as we are looking now, I suppose it did give rather a different reflection of the pair of us. But you are a very fine woman still, Sophia, upon my life you are.”

The tone of the speaker was grave and genuine; that of one who imagines he is speaking the truth, even if it be not the truth; and it thrilled his companion’s ancient frame with grateful tenderness, nay, almost re-kindled the cold embers on the hearth of love.

“You were always a gentleman, Angelo,” rejoined she, humbly. “Incapable of an unkind word, unless provoked, and most sensitive with respect to the feelings of others.”

“But, by Gad, I mean it, Sophia,” continued Mr. Hulet, earnestly. “Some poet—I don’t know who—speaks of some pretty girl—at least, I suppose it must have been that—who was a sight to make an old man young; well, when I first saw you at Balcombe, I swear, I felt like a young man again. ‘If Sophia will forgive me,’ thought I——”

“There was nothing to forgive, Angelo,” whispered his companion.

“Oh yes, there was. I was a cantankerous brute enough, I have no doubt. However, let me finish. I made up my mind, I say, from that moment to ask you to let bygones be bygones. I arranged this pic-nic for that very purpose, and fixed it upon the anniversary of a certain event, with this very identical pool and tree in my mind’s eye. There must have been some sentiment left in me you must allow, to have planned that, eh? and now it has all come to pass so favourably thus far, let me ask you to crown my little plot with success. Underneath this tree, where we first plighted troth, dear Sophy, let us once more renew it. Come, what say you, yes, or no?”

There was no need for her to reply to the question, for the answer was written in her face; its wrinkles had suddenly become smoothed away as if by magic, its look of feverish discontent about the mouth, which habitual ill health had engendered, was exchanged for a graceful smile; the

downcast eyes were lifted up, and met his own with that sunny glance, which a hundred winters cannot so utterly kill, but that it melts their snows, and shines out once again upon some beloved object—though it be from the death-bed. Mr. Hulet bent down his face, and kissed her tenderly; it was the first kiss he had given to woman (save to his niece) since he had parted from this one, nearly two generations ago, and a sacred privacy one would have thought was due to it. The genius loci, however, being probably some satirical character, had deemed otherwise; for scarcely had the salute been administered, and as tenderly reciprocated, when a half-suppressed shriek of laughter rang out through the wood.

“Oh my goodness, somebody has seen us, Angelo; who can it be? Pray give me back my drops,” cried Mrs. Mercer, nervously.

“I don’t care who has seen us,” answered Mr. Hulet, boldly, “though I think I recognise in that idiotic yell the tones of that fellow from the antipodes—Paragon. We must be prepared for the ridicule of fools, and hold ourselves above it. Take my arm, Sophia—the arm that you will lean on so long as I live—and let us rejoice our friends.”

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

IV. A SAILOR’S DEN.

SURELY in all London there is not such another unpicturesque spot as Shadwell. The cheap builder has wrapped it in the winding-sheet of contract; has enclosed it in a coffin of hoardings; has slapped it with his cheap cement; has tapped it with his pitiless trowel, until its old, crazy, asthmatic beauty has departed from it, quite elbowed out of life by a bare, bald, illegitimate offspring, that rears its brazen neck to heaven, arrogantly tumbling and crumbling its venerable ancestor into bone-dust about its feet. Its streets are narrow and rambling, worn into puddles here and there, manured with festering cabbage-stalks, which induce a flourishing crop of oyster-shells, and bounded on either side by miles of blank wall, behind which may be detected, by a particularly tall pedestrian, gaunt rows of warehouses, or regiments of bonded stores, all equally clean and snug, and devoid of eyelids, all equally garnished with creaking cranes, all equally aggressive in their blatant respectability. Now and

again a gap appears in the interminable wall, making way for tightly-packed masses of small houses, like herrings in a barrel, crushed together in some retired corner until the inevitable trowel shall reach the place, and the great yellow uncompromising blocks shall squeeze these poor remnants of old London into the past. The modest little rows try hard to assume a comeliness disdained by their upstart neighbours, polishing up the brass plates on their bowed green waistcoats until they fairly wink like a brand-new watch-chain; adorning themselves with nasturtium and canariensis; sending webs of fluttering garments indiscriminately from here to over the way and back again, and hanging out rakish bits of bunting and dilapidated figure-heads, in token of their seafaring proclivities. Some of the house-doors are open, displaying ladder staircases, rising into darkness almost from the door-step, with twinkling dirty little bare legs coming and going from out of the obscurity, like Jacob's dream adapted to suit the local colour by an application of London soot. There are little gardens, too, in which wooden sailors and young ladies, slightly abraded as to the nose, stand in bowers of hollyhocks, fenced in by preternaturally heavy green palisades—as though a constant contemplation of the docks hard by might, some day, prove too much for their sense of duty, and induce them to abandon an honourable horticultural retirement to brave once more the dangers of the deep on the prow of the *Mary* from Gravesend, or the *Ocean Queen* from Newcastle. Slatternly children play about the courts and alleys, and in and out of the passages that intersect the neighbourhood like the mazy ways of a Moorish town, some in imitation of their mothers, wearing one shoe without a stocking on one foot, and one stocking without a shoe on the other, most of their frocks betraying scarcity of underclothing through gaps down the back, and all of them playfully employing language such as would astonish coal-heavers, and which sounds all the more bizarre and inappropriate in the piping accents of babes and sucklings. After travelling through a labyrinth of by-ways, you come at last upon the principal thoroughfare, or High-street, where cheap building reigns almost supreme, with a wheezy wooden tenement wedged in here and there, only held up from falling by the strong shoulders of its neighbours. A public-house or two, ominously new and glaring, a vessel drawn up in dock until her

bowsprit, cobwebbed with clothes hung out to dry, stretches across the road; shops for the sale of every conceivable want of a sea-going man, from bells of every form to mousetraps of every conceivable pattern; charts of every known or unknown sea; telescopes large and small; bright new sextants, fitted with the most novel appliances; middle-aged sextants, bereft of polish; hoary old veteran sextants, green and mouldy, and therefore cheap, which look as though they had been on their travels for all time with the *Flying Dutchman*, or had but just been raked up from the bottom of the sea; fish, dry and fresh; oilskin hats and trousers, compasses, binnacles, lanterns for port and starboard and masthead; silk handkerchiefs, woollen jerseys, showy shirts, one and all bearing the tempting label "May be paid for by the week." It is quite surprising to notice the number of incongruous and apparently useless articles set up for sale. There are card-racks made of shells. Who makes calls or leaves cards in Shadwell? Violet powder, superfine, can be bought at an outlay of two and sixpence a packet. Ornaments cunningly manufactured from ostrich eggs, engraved with the effigy of the *Nancy brig*, or of a man-of-war in full sail, can be had in Shadwell; nor is there wanting wonderful feminine attire—hats, thickly bestrewn with flowers and bows and feathers, and startling bonnets, combining the hues of a macaw with a particularly pronounced rainbow, after a fashion which would alarm Mayfair. The dearness and badness of articles exposed in the shop-windows is not unworthy of remark. Should Jack, his pocket swelling over with an accumulation of three-years' pay, desire to purchase a pocket-handkerchief, he will be handed one gorgeous as Benjamin's coat, to be sure, but he will be expected to pay double West-end prices for it, and, in his carelessness, will fail to observe that the dye has already more than half rotted its fabric. But what matter after all? His three years' toil have provided him with three weeks of magnificence. He will have bought endless articles, for which he can have no use, and then—to work again, without pocket-handkerchief, bereft of gewgaws, devoid even of decent food, to batten on salt junk, until, his new apprenticeship over, he can luxuriate once more.

Half-way down the chief thoroughfare of Shadwell, between a tobacconist's and a public-house, stands one of the crazy buildings already mentioned, low-browed, lean-

ing on its side, as though to the peril of passers-by. The lower portion of its front is entirely occupied by a door and a long low window made up of little panes, behind which a mass of flowering shrubs screen the interior from vulgar curiosity. Over the window in large letters is written the name of the proprietor, "Karl Offenberger," and a group of sailors, smoking on a bench below, betrays to a practised eye the fact that it is a private boarding-house for seamen. I passed through the group, turned the handle, and walked into a dingy little room, murky with fumes of pigtail, unchallenged. A sailor sat at a table picking tit-bits of potato out of a soup-plate with a clasp-knife, and continued his amusement without further notice of me than a passing stare. I hammered and coughed and banged the benches, but nobody took heed of me, until groping into darkness through a door at the back, I tripped over a mat and fell headlong down a ladder stair, landing, with no further injury than a shaking, at the feet of a dirty old woman employed in what we must by courtesy call "cleaning up" the kitchen. She looked up and laughed, and quietly resumed her work. This was liberty hall indeed. Apparently I might take up my quarters and occupy the premises for an unlimited period, or, if I so willed it, break my neck, without so much as a question being asked.

"Have you got a bed to spare?" I inquired.

"Yes, of course," she said, in broken English. "Lots up-stairs. Four men gone to join their ship. Only twelve in the house now."

Only twelve! and the building looked as though, with packing it might perhaps accommodate four persons.

"Then I will take a bed, if you please."

"Very well. The master's out. You must settle with him. Have you dined?"

"No," I answered, wishing to see of what the meal would be composed.

"Annie," she shouted, "a man come in. Wants dinner. Give him some meat and soup."

And presently a very uncomely lady, with hair rudely caught up into a net, with petticoats dragging down one side, and with unnaturally dark legs showing through holes in a dusky stocking, brought up to the common room above a soup-plate of what looked like onion-peel and cabbage floating in dirty water, and three or four scraps of nondescript cold meat covered and sodden out of recognisable

shape in coagulated dripping. I was left to enjoy this delectable feast alone, and turned to examine my surroundings. A small low room with sanded floor, a long table and a few benches, walls and ceiling covered with a paper which once had a pattern, but had long since been reduced to a neutral tobacco tone, which had indeed equally clouded the numberless ornaments fastened to the wall. An endless quantity of daguerreotypes and photographs of seamen in mufti, all looking like criminals operated on for future detection, and all looking alike in consequence of a common want of expression. Tin effigies of fleets riding on iron waves, in front of cardboard clouds, in square glass cases. Two swords and some cheap German prints, a hoarse eight-day clock and a great label, new and white, over the chimney-piece, bearing the legend "No trust." Before a small window at the end an aquarium full of muddy water, round and round which swam misanthropically a single gold-fish, like some fine lady gyrating in a November fog. Attached by a ring to the ceiling hung a canary, rakish and ruffled, evidently saturated with grog and smoking and late hours, and having given up singing with disgust from inability to compete in piping out All in the Downs or Sally in our Alley. A glass case in the centre of a wall filled with letters long unclaimed, some yellow with age and dust, which set the mind meandering. Where are those poor fellows now for whom the loving words therein contained were written long, long ago? And where the kind hearts and clumsy hands that wrote them? Are those mariners still on their great voyage, doubling capes and breasting tempests; have they settled in some distant clime; do they sit contented beneath the shadow of their own palms surrounded by black piccaninnies, glowing like bronze in the strong sunlight; or have they taken a still longer voyage beyond the awful horizon of eternity, leaving behind their earthly garments stowed away safely far down among the litter of Spanish broad pieces and scattered galleons on those wondrously silent plains, to be watched over for ages yet to come by finny guardians in silver armour, with ever-waking, never-winking eyes? And where is that wife who, by a guttering candle, painfully traced those lines, rocking the while a tiny cradle with her foot? Has she wept her eyes to blindness with weary watching, with the long suspense that wears away the heart; has the owner of that cradle, now grown to

be a man, wandered away in his father's footsteps across the ever-shifting main, leaving the widowed mother to weep and pine alone; or has she perchance consoled herself quickly with the sons of another lord, recking little of the fate of her first choice? But there her letters lie, mile-stones of a vanished life, and probably will lie there unclaimed until her sorrows in this world shall be over, or until the old house falls down, declining any longer to use the stalwart crutches.

The door opened at length, and a tall, burly man of middle age and innocent aspect strode from the street into the gloom.

"Herr Karl Offenberger, I presume?" I asked, with my best bow.

"Yes, I'm the governor. I own a lot of houses, and a little country place, and have been to see it. You are coming to lodge here? You don't look like a seaman. Where do you come from? Can you show me your discharge?"

To which not unnatural request I replied that I had not yet been to sea, but was looking for a place as surgeon on one of Green's or Wigram's boats.

"Oh, an officer, then! There are not many such come here; this is a common seaman's home, pure and simple, board and lodging eighteenpence a night. This is a rougher place than you're accustomed to, but if you're satisfied, of course I am too. It's near supper hour. We sup at six, and go to bed at ten. I lock the doors myself at that time, and unlock them at seven in the morning. Between those hours no soul stirs in or out unless the house catches fire, which Heaven's kindness will avert. See, the clock strikes six. Now, Annie, bustle up, my girl;" and the slipshod maiden, now more unkempt and grimy with hard toil than ever, quickly spreading a ragged apology for a cloth upon the table, and throwing thereon a heap of knives and forks and mugs, put her head out at the open door, and shrieked, "Now, misters, supper time."

From the bench before the door, from the dark crypt below, and down the creaking ladder stair from realms above, there straightway flocked some dozen men, who laid aside their pipes, shook up their shock heads of hair, seized each a mug and knife and fork, and proceeded each to take off his coat, and hang it with his cap upon a peg, the better to cope with the serious business before them. The "governor" occupied a three-legged stool of state, and helping

himself largely to ham and eggs, placed the dish in the centre of the table for general use, where, under diligent manipulation of twelve forks, it was speedily bereft of its contents. Slipshod Annie panted from below with a great kettleful of tea, and stood with her hands spread on her hips, performing coruscations of raillery with the assembled guests.

"You've got a good appetite at all events, Mr. Brown. Where did it come from; in a bottle from Jamaica? I don't believe your name's Brown a bit more nor mine. Last time you cum you was called Wallis. I never see'd any one like sailors for having aliases."

"What can it matter to you what my name is?" retorted the other. "I've got six discharges in my swag up-stairs, each under a different name, and Brown's as good as any."

"I've called myself Brown twice," added another, a ship steward, reflectively, "and don't intend doing so no more."

The shirt-sleeved men around were of every colour and nationality. Two were Swedes, one a Norwegian, three were Germans, two niggers, and the small remainder Englishmen. All were before the mast, save the steward and another, who was sailmaker. All had recently returned from protracted voyages, and were in high glee at prospect of a holiday. Sailors seem to keep no count of time, and to be equally impressed with weeks as with years. While we were at supper two ex-lodgers came to say good-bye.

"By-bye, governor," one of them said. "Just have that baccy-box of mine looked for, will yer, and give it me when I come back. This knife, too, I may as well leave, it wants sharpening."

"Where are they going," I inquired; "to Gravesend for the day?"

"Bless ye, no," laughed the governor; "on a three years' cruise, and possibly never may come back at all. However, I'll have the knife sharpened all the same—all the better for me if he never claims it."

Sundry smart young ladies were now apparent standing on the kerbstone opposite, giggling and ogling the plants in our big window, wearing, moreover, for the most part macaw and rainbow bonnets. As supper progressed, they waxed more and more impatient, until at length one, bolder even than the rest, ran across the road, and putting her head in at the door asked, "Is Mr. Brown in, by chance?" Which speech,

as a comment on our conversation, caused such a burst of merriment as fairly to put to flight and discomfort even the brazen damsel aforesaid.

By-and-bye all paired off to spend the evening in music-hall and public-house, leaving Mr. Offenberger and myself to smoke alone, and so he volunteered to take me for a stroll. Though barely half-past seven o'clock the streets were remarkably quiet and orderly, much to my surprise, who had heard many yarns concerning seafaring neighbourhoods.

"It's on account of the heavy fines lately," said Mr. Offenberger. "The licensing bill, too, works well in this quarter at any rate. Only a few years back you could not go out at night without witnessing several brawls and rows. But this is not the busy season for ships to come in. At those times it's impossible to control them of course, and they scream and sing all night like in a Pandemonium. What do you say? Many German? Oh, yes, there are many Germans here, over five thousand, mostly naturalised British subjects, residents. But of course you'll find of every nation. Here is a popular public house, come in."

The place was crammed, and sounded as Babel must have done. Every language was being bandied to and fro, as men shouted for drink and talked "shipping news."

"Is it true that the Queen Victoria has come in?"

"No, but she's overdue. Bride of the Ocean came this morning disabled, and Evening Star and Lady Fanny."

Every one in Shadwell seemed to know and to esteem Mr. Offenberger, and indeed he appeared to be a thoroughly estimable man. He patted little children on the heads, chaffed young ladies benignantly through shop window-panes, and had a salute or word of banter for almost every one he met. We inspected one or two of his houses, for the most part lodging-houses after the stamp of the first one. Here he planned a new door, there a larger window, rated sundry noisy sailors, and all in the same breath told me that he was originally himself a seaman, had worked up by little and little, that all which had come under his hand had prospered, until he had become owner of many houses, and had bought three acres of garden land intending to build a cottage for the delectation of the fading years of self and frau. And how that suddenly the sunshine had departed from his

life; that his wife having gone incurably insane, was immured hopelessly at Colney Hatch, and that he was left childless to end his days without an object, adding, simply, with a true touch of nature:

"And you know it's worse than if she were dead. For though I loved her dearly, I might have come to love somebody else equally as well, and built the cottage for her."

But ten o'clock, our curfew, was at hand, and we hurried home, to find most of our men already returned, exceedingly jovial, but not drunk, and many of them adorned with little bouquets. Cheery fellows all, and simple, wonderfully communicative about their affairs, and inquisitive in return. Annie, like a grimy and dishevelled Fate, put up the shutters, gave the key a double turn in the lock, and handed it to the governor, who deposited it irreclaimably in his capacious pocket. All lit up their pipes, three or four went through a cat's concert on accordions, while the rest prematurely snored or told ancient fo'castle yarns. The governor soon subsided into uneasy slumbers on a worn-out horse-hair sofa, waking every now and again with a gurgle and a gasp, as though in the agonies of death, kicking out his legs the while as if for the especial amusement of a little dog settled at his feet, which accordingly howled and barked for full three minutes every time, whilst the dissipated canary, wakened into energy by the variety of uproar, added his tithes to the chorus by a renewed attempt to accomplish Sally in our Alley, failing in which attempt he ruffled up his feathers, sulkily pretending to be asleep. Not so the stony gold-fish, which pursued its monotonous round of fog without variety, but with a dreadful stolid relentlessness, more than ever like to the London lady performing unflinchingly her annual season. Little taps came pattering on the door into the street, accompanied by muffled speeches through the medium of the keyhole, which gave an unearthly spectral character to the flippant sentiments conveyed. Parting speeches that had been forgotten, appointments for the morrow, sentiments of appropriation, such as "I'll have your bonnet," or "I'll have your nose-gay," perfectly innocent and harmless, as a strong oaken impediment prevented the scuffling which might otherwise have ensued. The governor's mucous membrane here underwent a crisis such as fairly woke him up, and shaking his keys with a cheery "Now, boys, to bed," he turned half his

flock into some cellar dormitory in the crypt, whilst I with the others creaked upstairs. A room some five yards square, containing seven blankets, seven pillows, seven pallets on the floor, none of them over clean. A window mercifully wide open. No washing apparatus of any kind. "We take our turn at the pump in the morning," some one said.

Our Swedish sailmaker, being flush of money, had purchased six shillings' worth of sarsaparilla, which he sipped out of a cracked teacup, with many a lip-smack. "As good as sweetstuff," he remarked, casually. "Very good for half-starved chaps like me, thick and juicy, and precious dear." The latter evidently one of its most fascinating qualities. Sailors apparently luxuriate in expensive medicine as one of the glories inherent to holiday time. A German of our party was excessively proud of a bottle of gargle which he had somehow obtained, arranging it ceremoniously by his mattress-side along with a spittoon, a brand-new tooth-brush, and a box of powder, and turning his attention from one to the other frequently during the night. After much lolling about on mattresses other than our own, I observed at length slender signs of "turning in," and before completing my own arrangements waited to see what others would do, finally removing only coat and boots, tying a handkerchief around my nose (in this matter following my unaided instincts), and wrapping my frowsy drapery about me. But no—oh, not to sleep, for my companions compared captains one to the other, discussing the "style of grub" of each, and broke out now and again into salty amorous ditties; one trolled out, very slowly, *There She Lay all the Day*, through a thick woollen medium; others smoked, resting their long pipes on their pillows; others, again, told anecdotes of very questionable colour, pre-facing each with a "By your leave, sir," out of respect to my presumed rank as an officer. Finally, as we neared the small hours, all my comrades snored an exceedingly healthy chorus to the accompaniment of a cocks' festival—quite an oratorio of concerted music and solo from one back-yard to another, recitative, duo, and chorus complete—and I was fully occupied in a single-handed passage of arms with a corps d'armée of private and persistently obstinate enemies (Britons to the core, who don't know when they are beaten, and never, never will be slaves) which—Well, they have a strong antipathy to cer-

tain little brown powders sold to travellers by every chemist, but of which unfortunately I had not a supply with me.

LOVE

A FRAGILE girl, who droops and pales,
Like a flower in sudden frost,
Clasping her wailing infant tight,
Shrinking away from her fellows' sight
Like a wounded bird from the noonday light,
Its plumage all smirched and tossed.

Why? and they whisper of sin and shame,
And falsehood spoken in Love's pure name.

A grey old grange, with the ivy wreaths
Far floating from the wall.
The thick dust drifting its floors to heap,
The spider across its doors to creep,
The flag-staff rotting upon the keep,
As the banners within the hall.

Why? and they speak of a forfeit pledge,
And their lord, who fell on his sabre's edge

A youth, in the genius-peopled room,
That once his kingdom made,
His pencil broken, his canvass blurred,
And the music that once the heart-strings stirred,
Dashed right across with a passionate word,
Like the blood from a heart betrayed.

Why? and a common story was told,
Of troth-plight broken for aseen of gold.

A little child, with frank blue eyes,
And lips like flowers in dew,
Who wondered amid his childish play,
Why some should frown, some turn away,
While those who blessing words would say,
Wept 'mid their kisses too.

Why? the passion was past, the charm was spent
The poison was left for the innocent.

A wailing cry 'neath the sombre yew,
A sob by a lonely hearth,
Bright buds flung down upon quiet graves,
Where lush and green the long grass waves
And the dirge of the river's restless waves
Swells sad o'er the sacred earth.

Why? ah, who knows not how life is marred,
Where Death's strong hand strikes cold and hard.

Love. Love forgotten, betrayed, forsworn,
Crushed beneath Death or Time.
A due to every secret wrong,
A note, life's sadness to prolong;
A key, keen, magical, and strong,
To sorrow, or care, or crime.

Yet, priest and poet unite to prove
That "Love is Heaven, and Heaven is Love."

PLANETARY LIFE.

BY HERMES.

NO. II. THE HORSE IN ANOTHER WORLD.

I HAVE already stated, in "Another World," that in our planet the pulse of the inhabitants beats more rapidly than in yours. So it is with most of our brute animals, particularly with the horse, called by us "Gadsala," the circulation of their

blood being far more rapid than is the case with your quadrupeds.

This peculiarity may be reasonably attributed to the known circumstance that Montalluyah is subjected to solar and other electrical influences to a degree to which your earth can offer no comparison. Every animal, as I have said elsewhere, possesses an electricity of its own. It was from our knowledge of the electricity of the horse that we chiefly derived our great power over that noble creature.

To develop the instinctive faculties of the horse the greatest pains are taken, and that sort of docility, which seems proper to the trained dog, and to which the horse is sometimes exceptionally brought by the masters of your equestrian establishments, is with us commonly produced in both animals alike. Thus, at the word of command, our horses will fetch their corn measures, even carry letters to particular places, and bring back answers without the guidance of a groom. This perfection is attained by a constant repetition of our instructions, and, what will appear strange to you, we often make use of our "learned" horses to teach the colts. This they do by a system of example and slight punishment. The "learned" horse puts the pupil in the right way by performing himself the required task, and if his instructions are not followed, he perhaps pulls the pupil's tail, or even bites him a little, without, however, inflicting any serious injury. On the other hand, when the lesson has proved successful, the equine teacher caroles, neighs, and gives every sign of pride and satisfaction.

The "learned" horses are, however, merely elementary instructors. To promote the further domestication of the animal, we employ "horse controllers," whose relation to horses is, to a certain extent, analogous to that of the "character-divers" to our children. These men are especially trained to discover the nature, qualities, and defects of the animals, and where there are faults, to employ fitting remedies. They likewise indicate for what purpose each particular horse is best fitted, and what lesson it should be taught. I should not omit to state that, in addition to what I may call private instructions, we have fitted up for our horses an establishment with large grounds, provided with all objects capable of striking terror through the medium of the eye or the ear. The steed who has gone through his due probation in this establishment is sure not

to be terrified at any object he may meet for the rest of his days.

Sometimes, in spite of the most careful training, the horse will become restive; for the excessive heat of our climate induces irritation on the brain, which may terminate in a terrible disease. When the horse gives indication of such an irritation, it is allayed by a calming electricity, generated by an acid contained in a small ball, which, applied to the animal's forehead, secured by straps, has a most soothing effect. So potent is the acid that the ball does not require replenishing more than once in, say, three of your months.

We have another preparation to meet unforeseen contingencies which we call "Narshua," or the "calmer." By everybody who rides on horseback, a phial filled with this is carried, and if the animal from any cause becomes suddenly restive, he pours a few drops on its head, and the calming effect is instantaneous. The infusion, which is very bitter, is highly refreshing even to human beings, and in a diluted state is often used as a tonic in the case of loss of appetite arising from a derangement of the nerves of the stomach. The herb from which the infusion is made grows on the banks of rivers, or near running water. Its leaf is brown, and it has a small pink flower, not unlike that of your "London-pride." For use, the juice is extracted drop by drop from the freshly plucked plant, and when the infusion has stood for three days, a small quantity of spirits of camphor is added. The liquid thus prepared can be kept for almost any length of time.

In "Another World" I have stated that, in our treatment of animals, particularly those of the tamer species, the greatest kindness is used. We never resort to cruelty with the view of either checking the vices or increasing the beauty or utility of the young horse, but allow free development to all the gifts he has received from nature. In some instances we adopt with colts, as with children, a treatment which apparently promotes the very vices we intend to cure. Thus, if the young horse manifests a disposition to kick, we sometimes place him in a machine, so constructed that he is compelled to kick, whether or not he wishes so to do.

Sometimes, on the contrary, as I have stated in "Another World," we enclose him in a machine, which renders kicking impossible. In both cases the process is repeated until the vice is effectually cured.

When the animals are exceedingly ferocious music is employed, in addition to other remedies.

I may here give a brief account of our slinging machines, to which you have nothing similar. Experience had led us to the conclusion that the practice of tying up horses by their heads was attended with many bad results. The high-spirited animal thus held for several hours proved, in many cases, eager to rebel, until his temper was spoiled, and he became vicious. We also found that the weight of the body, pressing on the slender limbs of a thoroughbred horse, frequently engendered diseases, and often caused injuries to the fetlock joint, sometimes terminating in lameness. At first we substituted for the old arrangement a sort of spacious box, in which the horse was, as it were, a prisoner at large, but when the animals were high-tempered they would resent even this milder form of restraint, and probably injure themselves by plunging and kicking about. Ultimately we hit upon the "slinging machine," which completely answers its purpose. It consists of a kind of mattress, stuffed with soft hair, which is so constructed as to envelop the body of the horse, with "continuations" to encase the legs and feet, and is suspended, by means of ropes from large rings, firmly fixed in a cross beam, near the roof of the stable. The feet generally touch the ground, but so lightly that the weight of the body does not press on them. The whole apparatus is so arranged that the horse can move in any direction, and can even lie down on any part of the padding, which corresponds to his movements, for, by means of a winch, we can raise and lower him at pleasure. We had additional motives for the adoption of our present system in the fact that our steeds are very fleet, and our lands very hilly. It is therefore desirable that the strength of the horse should be husbanded, which would not be the case if he had to bear the weight of his body on his slender legs.

The construction of our "Nozia," or "head-holder," which differs essentially from your bit, is in accordance with the leading principle of allowing the animal as much ease as possible. It forms a figure, not unlike that of your 8, and we so place it that one portion goes under the lower, and the other over the upper jaw, while the central piece enters the lower extremity of the mouth over the tongue. Attached to either side of the nozia, which is of metal, and opens by means of a spring, is

a single rein, made of the hide of a hippopotamus, a material which is never known to break. The power of directing the animal is principally obtained by pressing both jaws together, and bringing down the head close to the chest, a perfectly painless operation, but one which enables the rider to hold his steed firmly, when a decrease of speed is desired. The saddle for men is very small, and is so placed, by means of two girths, as to avoid pressure on the spine, above which it is slightly raised. The hoofs of the horses are protected by noiseless shoes, made of the hide of the hippopotamus, and so roughed that a slip is impossible even on the smoothest and most precipitous road.

For ladies who take a pleasure in equestrian exercises, a special arrangement is made. Two broad bands, consisting partly of a light kind of metal, partly of a substance like a strong and very elastic leather, and lined with an exceedingly soft material, encircle the body of the horse, at the greatest possible distance from each other. Screwed into four metal ferrules, a pair on each band, are as many strong slender supports or poles, from which a small car, placed sideways, is suspended. This falls near, but does not touch, the horse's back, and is so firmly sustained that there is no danger of its slipping lower than the point intended. Attached to the car, of which, indeed, it forms a portion, is a small, light, but extremely firm, piece of mechanism, comprising four or five steps, by means of which the lady easily mounts, and which, when she has taken her seat, she pulls up after her, and fastens to one of the poles. In this position it forms a stool for her feet. Strong as it is, the whole apparatus, including the seat and the steps, is not heavier than one of your side-saddles.

The absence of all pressure on the horse's spine, which is thus enabled to move freely, is regarded by us as a great advantage.

The lady, as soon as she has taken her seat, fixes a small bar, so that she is firmly enclosed on all sides. When the animal moves, the chair swings slightly, but is checked at a certain point, and the skill of the fair equestrian is shown by the ease with which she keeps herself in an erect position, and accommodates herself to the varied movements of the horse. A certain knack is required to preserve a steady and graceful seat, but proficiency once attained, the lady feels as easy in her car as if she were on a chair in her drawing-room. Holding the reins from her seat, she guides

the horse without difficulty; and when she wishes to descend, having stopped the animal, she fastens them to one of the poles, and the steps being let down, readily descends. Neither in mounting nor alighting does she require assistance, and anything like a jump from the seat would be contrary to our notions of decorum.

The exercise taken by our ladies in their cars is far milder than that which results from the use of your side-saddles. Our hot climate is opposed to violence of any kind, and I should not forget to state that, in the season when the sun is most powerful, a canopy is placed over the poles as a screen for the rider. The side towards which the seat is turned is varied on every occasion, that the body of the rider may not acquire any improper bias by too constant usage to one position.

With our horses a propensity to "bolt" is very rare, but if anything of the sort is attempted, the lady can draw the animal's jaw close to its chest, instantly attaching the reins firmly to one of the poles. In that position the horse stops at once, and the lady, if she chooses to descend, may do so with perfect safety. Serious accidents to ladies on horseback, even to novices, are to us utterly unknown.

While on the subject of our horses, I may mention the fact that, in spite of all our precautions, they sometimes become mad through the extreme heat, which is felt annually at Montalluyah during about two of your months. Their bite, when they are in that condition, is very dangerous, and the disease being past remedy, they are immediately killed. Notwithstanding the extent of our discoveries, and the great skill of our men of science, these have not yet found the means of neutralising the poison in the horse's blood, which is the primary cause of its madness. In the prevention of hydrophobia among dogs we have been more fortunate. When the weather is hot, we give to the dogs a decoction of certain berries, which so completely prevents the malady, that an actual case of hydrophobia has not been known in Montalluyah for many years.

These berries, which are gathered from a shrub, called in our language the "Ghildom," resemble the coffee-berry in form and colour, but are less hard, their consistency being nearly the same as that of your Siberian crab or cherry-apple. In their wild state they are difficult to gather, for the shrub only grows in marshes sheltered from the sea, and the men em-

ployed to procure them are often immersed to the waist in water. Of late, however, we have partially succeeded in planting and preserving the shrub in vases. It has this peculiarity, that it will only grow near plants of its own species, and apparently has so strong an antipathy to all others, that it withers and dies if they are set in its vicinity. This vegetable morosity, if I may so call it, is illustrated by the form of the shrub, which is very ugly, the leaves growing so thickly that they seem all joined together, as if to form an alliance against any possible intruder.

The use of the berry was discovered through the instinct of a dog, the pet of one of our ladies, who was suddenly seized with hydrophobia, and ran off foaming at the mouth. The servants gave chase, but the dog distanced all pursuers, and did not stop till he came to a spot of marshy ground. Here he began to bite the bushes.

After some time one of the servants approached very cautiously, whereupon the animal observing him, turned gently over on his back, as he was accustomed to do when he wished to be caressed, and when the man called him by name, he followed him as if nothing had happened. Nearly all symptoms of the malady had disappeared.

The case was brought to the notice of our "field doctors," who concluded that there must be something in the shrubs growing in the marsh capable of counteracting the poison in the blood, and after several experiments they found that the desirable property was in the berry of the ghildom.

To prepare the berries for use, we simmer, say, a pint of them in eight times the quantity of water, over a moderate fire, for eight hours, until the whole is reduced to about three pints. The decoction, when cool, is strained and seasoned with a few essences for which dogs have a known predilection. It is then placed about in the dogs' water-bowls. This most effectual preventive is regularly administered as soon as the hot weather begins, and when the dog shows the slightest symptoms of madness. It has been tried upon horses, but without effect.

I have not yet referred to our carriages, which, in shape, much more resemble the cars of your ancients than those with which you are now familiar.

Our principal carriage, which is open, is firmly constructed, the material commonly used being "ravine metal" of the most

beautiful kind. It is capable of holding sixteen persons, eight in each of two compartments, besides two servants on the box, and two behind, and it is drawn usually by eight or six, never by fewer than four horses. The panels, which are in undulating curves, are richly ornamented, and the inside is lined with a stuff resembling velvet. The body rests on springs, contained in four balls, each supported by a vertical prop attached to a strong bar. This is furnished with three pairs of small wheels, rendered noiseless by a covering made of the hide of the hippopotamus. To a curved bar connecting the two front props is attached the pole, to which all the horses are harnessed in pairs, the wheel-horses being sufficiently distant from the carriage to prevent it from pressing upon them, however steep the descent. This is the more requisite, as in our hilly world the roads often descend for a considerable distance at an angle of about forty-five degrees. The pole is so divided into separate parts, working on swivels, that each pair of horses can turn the part to which it is attached without turning the carriage. The animals do not wear a bit, but their heads are so secured that they cannot raise or depress them beyond a certain point, though in every other respect their limbs are left comparatively free. Thorough-bred and full of fire, they are nevertheless so highly trained, that they respond to the slightest touch. Their labour, too, is lightened by the employment of electric agency, a reservoir of electricity being contained in the bar to which the wheels are attached, and in the axle-trees.

The coachman's seat, which is very lofty, is supported by metal bars, light and slender, but very strong. He has complete command over the horses, which he can pull in instantaneously, and there is a succession of small points, by means of which he can readily mount and descend. The footman's seat, not unlike a boat, is suspended by metal bars from and under the level of the vehicle, so that the man, in the event of danger, can cut off or reverse the electric action upon the wheels. In case of need, they can go along the pole to the front of the carriage and detach the horses.

Our roads, in spite of our natural difficulties, are admirably contrived to assist locomotion; not only do they rise and descend according to the nature of the ground, and wind round the hills and mountains in all directions, but they pass through vast tunnels, which in some cases form a com-

munication between the outer region and the "internal cities," of which I have spoken in "Another World."

ABOUT SNAILS.

THE snail is a peculiar fellow. He has odd notions of things, odd ways, odd likes and dislikes; and there is much diversity in the modes in which he is regarded by human creatures—varying from decided favour to unmitigated disgust. Some of us give him so high a character for genius that we attribute to him, rather than to Sir Charles Wheatstone and Professor Morse, the invention of the electric telegraph; while others amongst us display the crowning proof of our liking for him—we eat him.

Children have their favourite way of coaxing snails to come out of their sentry-boxes. In some parts of Surrey they make use of a couplet equally marked by clearness and severity:

Snail, snail, come out of your hole,
Or else I'll beat you as black as a coal!

And this is continued until the snail puts his head out of his shell. In Devonshire the invocation is expanded to four verses, and begins in a somewhat more poetic form:

Snail, snail, shoot out your horns.

In Silesia the "Schnecke, schnecke" is threatened with the dire fate of being thrown to the crows to eat in the gutter unless he shows his horns. In Naples the cry, "Jesce, jesce, Corna" has precisely the same meaning—so true it is that, in this as in many other instances, nursery rhymes and children's sing-song find their way from country to country throughout the greater part of Europe.

According to an old book called the Shepherd's Calendar, the snail appears to have been credited in past times with combative propensities. In one edition of the work there is a curious wood-cut representing a snail defying the attacks of an armed man. In another the details are more fully worked out. A walled city has upon one of the towers a snail, with head out and horns up; several men and a woman are attacking him. She threatens to drive him out with her distaff, because he has been a marauder among the corn, vines, and fruit trees. The armed men talk boldly, menacing him with expulsion from the tower. If he does not be off soon they will catch him; and then—

We shal thee flay out of thy foule skyn,
 And in a dyshe with onyons and peper
 We shal thee dresse, and with stronge vyneser.
 There was never yet any Lombarde
 That dyd thee eat in such manar of wyse ;
 And breke we shal thy house stronge and hardye.

But the snail was not to be daunted.
 He replied :

I am a beast of ryght great mervayle ;
 Upon my backe my house reysed I bore ;
 I am neither fleshe ne bone to avayle ;
 As well as a great oxo two hornes I were.
 If that these armed men approche me nere,
 I shal them soone vaynequyssh every one ;
 But they dare nat for fere of me alone.

Some folks say that the snail dies hard, not consenting to be killed quite so quickly as his adversaries desire and intend. A Kentish lady, many years ago, wishing to make a miniature tower of shell-work to adorn a cabinet, went in search of some prettily marked snails on the slopes of the neighbouring chalk hills. Her tender heart scarcely liked the office of killing them ; but, mustering up courage, she put them into a large basin, and poured boiling water over them : making assurance doubly sure by a second bath of scalding water when the first was cold. She took the basin out to a summer-house in the garden. Next morning, instead of finding the snails dead, she saw them crawling about, some in the basin and some out ; while a few (with exquisite irony) were eating the very paste with which they were to be stuck to the shell-work tower.

That the snail is a troublesome visitor to gardeners and farmers is well known ; he insists on eating the cabbages and other good things which were intended for a very different class of customers. The district around Dorking is plentifully stocked with them. Besides the large striped brown variety, there is a colony of white snails said to have been introduced into that district from Italy. Some writers say that Sir Kenelm Digby introduced them ; some say Single-Speech Hamilton ; others affirm that they were brought to the spot to indulge the whimsical taste of an Italian lady, married to a Surrey gentleman. Similar white snails being found in some parts of Cambridgeshire, the monks of the olden time have been credited with their introduction ; while, going still further back, the Romans are accused, because such snails have been met with in the remains of a Roman villa in Oxfordshire. But let him have come whence or when or how he may, the large snail seems to like his quarters, and to evince no intention to depart.

That snails are prized for medicinal purposes is well known, though perhaps less in town districts than in the country. A gentleman has narrated that he used, when a youngster, to sally forth in the morning, and collect snails from the fruit trees for the indulgence of an invalid lady, who used to boil or stew them with milk, and take them as a medicinal food or dietetic medicine. That they are good for consumption is a firm article of faith in many quarters ; and when we are told that the patients were better after than before taking them, what are we to say ? Shall we dispute with those who ought to know best ? There was a lady who took a dozen every morning, common garden snails, which she boiled in milk, and considered good diet for a delicate constitution. Bruises are among the small troubles which snails are credited with the power of curing. The medicine men of the Middle Ages were wont to mix pounded snails with the other materials for their plasters. We should like to know whether an old Cumberland man had warranty for his belief on this point. A tourist, while climbing Skiddaw, or one of the neighbouring mountains, bruised his shin, and asked a dalesman what he had better do. " Just seek oot a big black snail, and let him crawl o'er't ; and 'gage me waird, thou'lt find nae mair harm o't."

But it is not to consumptive or delicate patients alone that snails are administered ; persons in robust health are known to relish them thoroughly ; and if we declaim against the dish as something foolish or objectionable, we are met with the poser, " If oysters, mussels, cockles, and periwinkles are allowed to pass muster, why not snails ?" A gentleman one day saw a peasant child eating snails, and asked her a few questions how and why she obtained them. " We hooks 'em out of the wall with a stick in winter time, and we roasts 'em ; and when they're done spitting, they be a-done, and we takes 'em out with a fork, and eats 'em. Sometimes we has a jug heaped up, pretty nigh my pinafore full." Another country explorer came upon a gipsy encampment in Oxfordshire, having their Sunday dinner on Shotover Hill. They were eating snails roasted on the embers of a wood fire, with roast potatoes as an accompaniment. He was assured that the snails were very nice, and was hospitably invited to participate ; but somehow he could not find the inclination to say yes. George Borrow, the great au-

thority on gipsy life, fully corroborates the liking for this gastronomic delicacy. He says in his *Zincali*: "Know this, O Gentile, whether thou be from the land of Gorgios (England), or of the Busné (Spain), that the very gipsies who consider a ragout of snails a delicious dish, will not touch an eel, because it bears a resemblance to a snake." A gentleman has been seen to pick up snails in the road, and eat them with as much relish as epicures do native oysters. An Italian peasant girl was seen to collect three quarts of snails in two hours, in the garden of an English family residing in that country. When questioned as to the motive, she stated that she wanted them for a special supper which she was preparing for her brother and his wife, who were about to pay her a visit. The snails which she selected were of the large brown kind. In the old days when witchcraft was a redoubtable article of popular faith in Scotland, in the seventeenth century, the children of a poor woman were seen to be in good health and apparently well fed, at a time when the villagers generally were pinched with scarcity and dearth. They could not understand it, and so they logically accused her of being in league with the Evil One. She was tried, and under the influence of something like torture, told her tale—which was to the effect that she had fed the children on snails, which fattened them up; she had a great quantity of them in store, but did not wish to tell her neighbours, possibly to avoid their censure, but more probably to keep the store to herself. Fletcher, of Saltoun, her judge, had not much difficulty in acquitting the poor soul of witchcraft. There has been a little discussion concerning the salting down of snails for future use. About ten years ago a paragraph appeared concerning a poor woman who, during a hard winter, fed her children on snails which she had salted down in a barrel; she kept her youngsters in health at a time when other food was too dear for her scanty resources. A question arose whether salt would not melt the snails away? Some persons asserted that it would not; and cited the case of the wife of an Irish gravel digger, at Blackheath, who systematically salted down snails as food for her children. Others stated that the snails cannot be salted down directly, but that they may be scalded, then drawn out of the shells like periwinkles, and salted when the shells have been thrown aside. This plan is adopted in Normandy. Even

if they were to melt down, however, the pulp would still be available as a kind of soup, coddled up with milk or other accompaniments.

In continental countries snail eating is much better understood, much more systematically managed, than in England. A newspaper correspondent, retailing the gossip of Rome, recently said: "A very extraordinary article of diet, agreeable to Roman palates, has just come into season. In the morning shrill voices call through the streets 'Lumacche! belle lumacche!' and countrywomen, with large baskets of freshly gathered snails, are to be seen stalking along, and surrounded every now and then by early housekeepers, who either boil the snails, shells and all, making minestra of them, or, having attained superior skill in cookery, stew the creatures, season them, and fry in oil."

The snail dealers are not content with collecting the corkscrew individuals wherever they may happen to see them; they proceed more systematically, and keep up snail gardens or snail preserves; it is really snail culture, analogous in some degree to the oyster culture of England and France. In the Voralberg, a bit of the Tyrol that juts in like a wedge between Bavaria and Switzerland, there are regular snail gardens, intended to subserve the twofold purpose of ridding the farmers of a nuisance, and providing an article of food for such human beings as can relish it. In various parts of the canton or district, during two or three summer months, the gardens, hedges, coppices, woods, and damp places are thoroughly examined by boys and girls, who collect the snails, and deposit them in small plots of ground set apart for the purpose. Each of these plots forms a dry garden an acre or two in extent, free from trees and shrubs, and having a moat or running water all round it. The plot is covered with little heaps of twigs of the mountain pine, mixed lightly with moss; these heaps are placed at regular distances apart. The snails creep into them for shelter alike against the cold of night and the heat of mid-day sun. When this shelter is lessened by the decay of the small leaves on the twigs, the heaps are furnished up with a new supply. Every day the snails are fed with cabbage leaves and grass, receiving an extra allowance in damp weather. When harvest is over, and winter shows signs of approaching, they regularly burrow themselves in the heaps, and (figuratively speaking) tuck in snugly for the winter. The water, after

flowing all round the margin of the plot, escapes by one outlet only; and at this outlet the moat is guarded by a grating. The snails often tumble into the water while crawling about their domain, or get into it somehow or other, and are carried by the stream towards the grating; this is examined every morning, and all the wanderers taken back to their garden. When the snails have sealed themselves up, they are collected for the market, packed in perforated boxes lined with straw. According to the plentifulness of the grass and cabbage crop, each plot or garden may contain from fifteen to forty thousand snails, some of which come to grief before the summer is over; but the majority are destined to the honour of appearing on the dinner-table or supper-table of the South Tyrolese inhabitants, who greatly relish them. The system is certainly a commendable one, seeing that it brings to an available market what would otherwise be a nuisance and source of loss to the husbandman.

There is another characteristic for which the snail claims attention, a claim partly due to the fact that we know very little about it. The snail, according to some of his admirers, discovered or invented the electric telegraph; nay, he is the electric telegraph, in his own proper though somewhat crooked person. About twenty or twenty-five years ago this matter was much talked about, especially in France. We in England contented ourselves with the designation Sympathetic Snails; but our energetic neighbours across the Channel rushed into science at once, and talked of the *Telegraphe Escargotique*. The assertion, or opinion on which it was founded, was that some of the lower animals, including snails, when brought into contact, become affected by an identity of function and movement. This identity, it was alleged, would continue after the creatures were separated; inasmuch that if you touched the head of one the other would feel it though at a distance, and would show some kind of movement in the head; if you touched either one on the tail, the tail of the other would manifest more or less of agitation; and so on. The practical application of this would be the construction of a code, alphabet, or vocabulary of signals, giving to each movement of the animal a definite meaning. And thus we might make a snail telegraph—the slowest of animals employed to convey the quickest of messages.

The late Doctor William Gregory, Pro-

fessor of Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh, noticed this matter in his *Letters on Animal Magnetism*. He alike avoided belief and scepticism; he had not tested the subject by experiment, and therefore could not vouch for the truth of the statements; while he guarded himself on the other hand from attributing either falsehood or stupidity to the snail advocates. It appears that Messrs. Allix and Benoit, two Frenchmen, made observations separately, and then agreed to work together. They had two sets of snails, each set comprising as many as there are letters in the French alphabet, one particular snail to one particular letter. Each pair (say A) had been, as asserted, brought into contact in Paris; and each thereby acquired the instinctive or involuntary power of trembling or moving whenever the other was touched, however far off it might be. Another pair, similarly brought into contact, might be made to denote B, and so on throughout the alphabet. One complete set was carried over to America to commence a telegraph system in which cables and wires would be alike dispensed with.

According to the accounts given in French pamphlets and newspapers, referred to by Doctor Gregory, the telegraphing was thus managed. When a word was to be transmitted from Paris, the snail belonging to the first letter was brought by some kind of galvanic apparatus (not, so far as we can find, clearly described) into a state of disturbance. The partner or companion snail in America at once sympathised, or received the same kind of galvanic shock, and exhibited the same kind of disturbance. This, however, could not be ascertained without testing. In order to apply a test, the operator in America touched all his snails in succession with a small apparatus; one of them alone was affected in a particular way; and the operator at once inferred that the companion of that one was being touched or in some way operated on in Paris. He knew the alphabetical names or equivalents of all his own snails; he noted which among them was affected, and he hence inferred what letter his colleague in Paris wished to transmit. And so on through all the successive letters and words of the message.

“Now all this,” said the learned professor, “may appear at first sight absurd and ridiculous. I confess it appeared so to me when I first heard of it; but when I recollected all I had seen of sympathy in men, all that was known about sympathy

in the lower animals, and when I read the account given by Monsieur Allix, a gentleman well versed in science, of the successful experiments at which he had assisted, I perceived that the only difficulty lay in admitting the fact of the extraordinary sympathy of snails; and that, this being granted, all the rest was not only possible but easy. Now I know nothing whatever about the habits of snails; and surely I am not entitled to dispute facts, thus attested, without some investigation into them. I cannot say that the alleged sympathy is impossible." He admitted that a verification of the statements would require full details of the manner in which the experiments had been carried on. He credited the inventors with ten years' attention to the subject; but it was evident that he waited for further information before he could judge concerning it. Supposing all to come out right and square, he was justified in adding, "It will certainly be very remarkable if a snail telegraph should come into action, which, in spite of the proverbial slowness of the animal concerned, should rival in rapidity the electric telegraph, and surpass it in security, inasmuch as there are no wires to be cut by an enemy; besides being infinitely less costly, since no solid tangible means of communication are required, all that is needed being the apparatus at the other end of the line, and the properly prepared snails."

Exactly so; but where is the snail telegraph? Transatlantic companies have spent millions of money on cables since Doctor Gregory wrote; and they would have been very glad to make use of our shelly friends as substitutes, if promises had been duly followed by performances. But, telegraph or not, the snail is an ingenious fellow, concerning whose doings and qualities we have much to learn.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c

CHAPTER XLV. "THE YOUNG GENTLEMEN FROM LONDON."

I SOON found that my absence and my London experience had much enhanced my importance at Purrington. I was no longer slightly alluded to as "that boy of Mrs. Nightingale's;" I was now reverently regarded on all sides as "young Mr. Nightingale." As to my professional status vague ideas prevailed; the more general opinion held that I was properly to be described as "a counsellor." There was

much curiosity to see me in church on Sunday morning; especially, I understood, on the part of the Miss Rawsons. My mother, I remember, as we walked home over the down, was severe in her criticism of the demeanour of those young ladies during service; "those Rawson girls," as she described them, denouncing their conduct as "quite brazen-faced." In the matter of dress, I think, for some time, I set the fashions among the young men of the neighbourhood. They were unaware that but a little while since I had myself been viewed by London eyes as "a regular yokel." Tony also excited much attention. A blue satin stock he wore was the subject of general remark; and his silver-topped ebony cane, with the silken tassels, won extreme admiration. I told him so; when he whispered, "If they only knew that I had once raised five shillings upon it at the pawnbroker's!" In Purrington conversation, I found we were usually bracketed together as "the young gentlemen from London."

But if by my absence and advance in years and stature I had gained thus much, I was soon to find that I had also lost something. Kem, Reube, and other of my old associates on the farm, were no more to me what they had been. I left them friends; I found them servants. Division had come between us. Honestly, I do not think the fault was mine. But their old-world sense of class distinctions was very strong; they persisted in assuming an attitude of humbleness in regard to me. Of their real kindness and affection I could not doubt; but somehow, these could not now find expression quite in the old way. I was vexed to see how often Reube touched his hat to me. I did not need such homage. Yet I could not tell him so without paining him; for he was but performing what seemed to him his duty. The difference there lay between the boy Duke and the man, "young Mr. Nightingale!" If I induced him to talk about his sheep with something of his old freedom, it was but for awhile. He soon fell back again into respectful reserve. I spoke of our old visit to Dripford Fair, but failed to draw from him much converse on the subject.

"Ees, I minds un well," he said, "but I had a zight better lot of lambs this zeason, zir."

Perhaps one reason for his uncommunicativeness was to be found in the fact that his old rival, Garge, had left the neighbourhood; dismissed from his employment

with impeachment of his honesty, as I understood. Reube was thus deprived of what had been to him a main theme of discourse. He was too generous to be loquacious in regard to a fallen and departed foe.

"There a' be gone, and I bain't zorry for un; but I doan't want to betwit (taunt) un vor what a's done, or to bear malice anont un. We was allus atwo (divided), and a' was terrible attery (angry) wi' me, times and times; but moast like I shan't zet eyes on un more. Garge wun't come anigh this country agen, I'll warnd."

And there were no more gossips for me over the kitchen fire with Kem. It seemed that once suspended they could not possibly be resumed. If I lingered in the kitchen now, Kem dusted a chair for me with her apron. She would not be seated in my presence. Our old sense of equality had gone with my childhood. The tenderest affection for me beamed in the good soul's eyes, but somehow duty and respect now fettered and hindered her show of friendship. She was afraid of taking a liberty and giving offence. In good sooth her fears were without warrant in fact. But they would not be allayed. Some talk I did have with her, however.

"Well, when are you and Reube to be married, Kem?" I inquired, laughingly.

"Moastlike never, sir, I do think," she said. "Reube's a good, plain, honest man, and a spreath shepherd; I've ne'er a word to say agen him. He's a Methodist, but I don't cast that at him. There's a many honest folks among the Methodys. My own mother was a Methodist as you may have heard tell, sir, though I'm a church-going woman myself, and allays have been. But for marrying Reube, there, I dunno what to say about it. Marrying 's like dinner, it seems to me; the longer one waits the less one cares for it. It's not a morsel of use having vittles set afore you when you've no appetite. An old woman, and that's what I'm getting, sir, can make shift to do without a husband; pertickly if she's never had narra one. It's the young girls as don't know what they want, and think as it's marriage; though oft-times they find they've gussed wrong, after all. That won't be my case, sir. I dunno as I care to marry at all. Women get like cats I do think, sir—I don't mean in their clawing ways, though I've heard that said of 'em by folks as, perhaps, clawing would do main good to—but they get to care for

places as much as persons. I couldn't leave the farm, sir, and that's the truth; nor the master and missus. They know me and I know them, and you too, Mister Duke, if I may make hold to say so. They've allays kind words, and thoughts, and deeds for me. Where could I go and find kinder? I can but say blessee and thankee; but, please God, I'll not quit the farm. I'll work for them, and bide with them as long as they'll let me, and that's the truth, sir. I've a willing heart and a strong arm yet, though my hair's grizzling. So you see, sir, my home's here, and I don't care to be going further and faring worse, maybe, trying to make another home along with old Reube. I've told him so times and times. If he don't know my mind it's not for lack of my telling him of it, and if he's so terrible bent on marrying, why there's girls about in heaps for him to choose from. A wife's soon got by them as looks for one, and a rope's soon found by them as wants to hang themselves. There—I've no call to speak—but there's girls about Purrington as wraps their hair up in papers o' night, and greases their heads with hog's-lard, and sticks their feet into sandals, and carries parasols to afternoon church, as would marry the first man as axed 'em, a'most afore he had axed 'em; and pretty wives they'd make, maybe, when all's told, as couldn't bile a tater nor a dunch-dumpling, nor set 'fore the good man after's day's work vittles as a Christian would care to put inside un. Reube can marry one of such if he's a mind to. I'll not say him nay. He's hearty welcome to please hisself. But I'll bide here, please God, 'long with the master and missus, and you, Mr. Duke, whom I've known since you was quite a little toddling child, and loved as though you were my own babe born; though most like I shouldn't say such things, seeing the man you've grown to be, tall of your hands and main broad in the back, and a bit of whisker already sprouting on your cheek. You'll not mind my speaking so free, sir. 'Tis hard to break onceself of old ways all at ance."

Dear old Kem! What could I do but heartily kiss her rough honest face! Still we were not quite on our old cordially intimate terms.

Tony was soon thoroughly at home in the farm-house. His simple vivacity of speech and manner won upon his hosts very surely. His gay prattle, his bright looks, his airy gestures, were very new to

my mother and my uncle. I seemed quite a heavy prosaic creature beside him. He avowed himself an arrant cockney, who had rarely quitted London, save upon brief excursions up and down the river—bounded he said by the Nore at one end and Twickenham at the other—and in the neighbourhood of Hampstead and Highgate Hills. Of our wild open country he was loud in praise. It was a sure way of securing favour, but certainly no such subtle motive influenced his speech. The farm-yard was an endless delight to him. "Do you know," he confessed to me, "I have scarcely ever seen a pig out of a pork-butcher's shop." He greatly admired my mother's garden; even to the daisies on the lawn—serious disfigurements, in her eyes, to its due trimness of aspect. The clear, fresh, heather-scented air of the downs; the ripe corn-fields, golden seas rippling musically under each breath of the summer breeze; the verdant water-meadows, with the tiny river twisting and gliding amongst the lush herbage like a silvery snake; the stunted lopped pollards on its banks flinging out their thin arms into the air, as though in agony at the mutilation they had suffered; the sheep flocking upon the hazy uplands; the browsing oxen gathering under the purple shadow of the hedgerows to escape the scorching of the noon-day sun; the tired team of farm-horses with plaited tails, and poppy decked harness, the work of fond cartier-boys, returning from labour; the flight of pigeons clustering upon the house-top; the hum and glisten of insects in the sunny air; all these and other common-places of our country-side were marvels and joys to Tony. Silently and curiously, with an amused expression of face, stirring round his snuff-box with his forefinger in his old way, my uncle watched him as though he were some strange creature of another order of existence. My mother never wearied of ministering to his comfort, of seeking for new sources of pleasure for him. I should have been jealous of the bountiful love she seemed to extend to him, but that I began to know how large and full of treasure her heart really was, how inexhaustible her affection. And then her kindness to my friend, was it not an expression in some sort of her fondness for me?

He had made a capital sketch of the dun-purple old barn, and was about to undertake a drawing of the farm-house viewed from the upper down.

I was surprised how little I was questioned concerning my adventures and pro-

ceedings in London. The good folks were content to wait, I think—with that faith in the almost unsought action of nature which often distinguishes country dwellers—until I should see fit to relate to them upon the subject. Or they were wholly bent upon making my holiday as pleasant as might be, and viewed questions as implying in some way uneasiness, or even distrust. It seemed enough for the present that I was with them again—dear good souls—that they could see me, hear me again and clasp my hand. Concerning Mr. Monck, they could say little in the presence of his nephew, Tony. I informed them that the lawyer was a great invalid, and able to take little share in the business of his office, but that he was well represented by his managing clerk, Mr. Vickery, who had been with him a great number of years. "Poor Monck, I am sorry to hear such a bad account of him. I remember him a bold and hearty man enough," said my uncle. And then the matter dropped. Of Rachel Monck I said nothing. Tony I found had spoken of her to my mother. He enjoyed helping her to water her plants in the evening, and, the while, held long conversation with her. I sat with my uncle at the window, learning from him all the news there was to tell of the farm and the neighbourhood.

"I'm colouring nicely like a meerscham pipe," said Tony, laughingly. His pale cheeks had reddened somewhat under the action of the sun. It was but a varnish of health I feared. He was far from strong; was soon fatigued. But his new way of life seemed very pleasant to him. He reproached me for having found farming dull. "What could you be thinking of?" he demanded. "I call it really exciting. I only wish I were a farmer. I'm not sure that I shan't go in for it, even now. I feel that there's the making of a very respectable agriculturist about me. I should really like to wear top-boots and to trudge over ploughed land. It's true that I've a difficulty in making out what the labourers say, though I admire the whirr and drone and twang of their speech very much; and swedes and turnips, and the various kinds of grain are so uncommonly alike, I find it hard to distinguish them. But I dare say I should get over that in time. And then how wonderfully interesting sheep are! And getting in your crops, and going to market to sell them, really a man could not ask for more agreeable occupation; and so picturesque, too!"

He went with me to see Overbury Hall

and Park. We met by the way poor widowed Mrs. Thacker, who still lived at the lodge, and was profuse with her curtsies. She had seen nothing of his lordship, no, not for a long time past, she said, in reply to my inquiries; and she shed tears over the memory of the late Mr. Thacker—not that, I think, he had been a particularly good husband to her. She declared that he had been, however; and certainly she should have known.

The house and grounds looked dreary and neglected enough. But its old air of awfulness and mystery had gone from the place. At Tony's request I pointed out the window of the room in which I had first seen Lord Overbury; in which afterwards I had peered at him asleep, beside the fire, with Rosetta beside him. How distant those events now seemed to me, and of what slight significance! Tony was interested, however. He well remembered my narrative of the matter. And I could see that coming fresh to it the Dark Tower had still some trifle of magic for him, due perhaps to my old account of it. He was impressed by the scene it presented of desolation and decay.

But it vexed me to find him regarding the story of my infatuation, not as a thing completely passed away and done with, but as still possessing vitality and influence. He could not be persuaded that I did not still cherish, locked within the secret recesses of my heart, a fond passion for Rosetta. He was inclined to view me as a kind of Werther; and seemed anxious to sympathise with my supposititious anguish. I could not tell him the real truth: that I loved his cousin Rachel. He meant nothing but kindness; yet his tender regard for my departed passion was to me as a reproach. It made clear to me my folly. In truth, the wound in my breast I had deemed so terrible had completely healed; not a scar, not a trace of it, was now discernible. The love I had lavished so extravagantly had come back to me in full. I had even expended it afresh with increased profuseness. Was I by-and-bye to think as lightly and scornfully of my second love as of my first? Surely it could not be. Yet I felt that my past foolishness justified doubt of my present sincerity.

At his desire I pointed out the exact place of my meeting with Rosetta in the fir plantation; the road the farm-cart had taken in carrying her back to the Hall; the scene of my wanderings on that strange night when, after my stealthy visit to the Dark Tower, I had lost my way in the

snow. A sense of shame oppressed me in rehearsing these old and insensate adventures; but they seemed to possess a curious interest for Tony. He would persist in accounting me a hero of romances on the strength of them.

"Hullo! If it isn't Master Duke! How do'st, my lad? Hearty? I be main glad to see thee again that I be!"

Farmer Jobling was the speaker. I was slapped heavily on the back, and my hand was grasped and shaken with painful cordiality.

"So thou'st come from London to look at farm again and see the old folks at home? A man grown, to be sure, with hair on his face; a weak thin crop, maybe, but time and sun will do summat for it. When will't come and see the old woman, and taste the strong beer again? Thou'lt be main welcome at the Home Farm, and this young gentleman—your servant, sir—along with thee. And harkee, lad, why didst not send for that bit of money I spoke about? I had it ready, and would have sent it if I had only known where. Trust a lad for getting into mischief in London town. I'll go bail you've needed it a many times only you were too shamefaced to let me know. But I'd have stood by thee, lad; I passed my word for it, and the matter of money was at your service, certain sure. Never mind; you may want old Jobling's help yet. Come over to the Home Farm. The sheep thrive mainly, my lad, thankee kindly, and I've a tidy crop of wheat. I've no call to be ashamed on't. We failed in turnips, somehow, for want of early rain, and the pays (peas) is but poorish. You're going to the fight to-morrow, I suppose—you and your friend?"

"Fight! what fight?"

"'Tis to come off in Chingley Bottom they tell me. Hast not heard on't? It's 'twixt a young chap they call the Baker—one of old George Rumsey's sons—you must mind old George, he was my head mower in times past, but he got terrible bad with the rheumatics, and now he's laid up past work, poor old soul, in the union. I take him a packet of snuff or a bit of bacca sometimes to cheer him up when I go by that way. His son Jack was a good-for-nought. I tried him as a carter-boy, but 'twas no manner of use. They 'prenticed him to the baker at Bullborough, but he wasn't there long; then he went away to work on the canal below Steepleborough; and now he's took to fighting, it seems, and they say is clever

with his hands. I've backed him for a trifle, seeing he hails from this country-side; but I'm to lose it, I fear. All say he's overmatched, and that Gipsy Joe will be too many for him. The Mudlark he's called: a Portsmouth man, worked in the docks there, a hulking heavy-weight, hard as nails, and pretty nigh black as to colour, that'll take a deal of beating, as I hear, and'll make short work of young Jack. Anyways, I'm bound to go and see. You'd best come too, you and your friend. Tellee what; I'll drive you over in my four-wheel shay-cart. Is't a bargain? We can put the horse up in old Hickley's stable. Chingley Bottom's on his down-land. I know old Hickley well. He's got a niceish farm down there, and put by a goodish bit of money out of it, the old chap has. He's terribly fond of a fight, and he'll make us hearty welcome. You'll come? Be on the high land, then, near the chalk-pit on the Lisford road, early to-morrow morning, and I'll pick you up in my shay-cart. Good-bye, my lads."

Public opinion of those days did not view prize-fighting so adversely as in later times. It is true that the law forbade such encounters as breaches of the peace; but as though satisfied with having pronounced upon the matter, it turned away its head or closed its eyes, and took little further trouble to carry its decisions into effect. To the world in general a fight was simply a spectacle, on the footing of a fair or a horse-race. My uncle expressed no surprise at the proposed visit to Chingley Bottom. He decided that pugilism had greatly degenerated since his youthful days, when he had attended a fight at Moulsey—which he described as something indeed like a fight—between Jackson and Jem Belcher, I think, but I'm not quite sure about the names of the combatants. Nor did my mother offer any objection. The men of her time of indisputable character had countenanced prize-fighting. It was in the nature of "sport," and therefore apart from feminine comprehension; but by no means on that account to be unfavourably judged. Besides, she knew that we were to be accompanied by good old Farmer Jobling, the worthiest and friendliest of neighbours. She simply bade us come back safe and sound, promising that dinner or supper

should be ready for us return at what hour we might.

We duly met Mr. Jobling at the appointed place on the following morning. The dew-laden down was shimmering in the sun; there was a fresh breeze blowing; and the blue heavens were alive with the music of the birds.

"'Tis a trimming day for the fight," said the farmer; "not too bloomy. If young Jack can only win the toss, and not get the sun in's eyes!"

He had victualled the chaise as for a long voyage. Beneath the seat were piled packets of huge sandwiches; a vast spirit-flask bulged from his pocket; while at his feet stood a large earthenware bottle full of strong beer. His clever cob drew us along at a capital pace. It was a pleasant drive over the down, although now and then the molehills jolted us considerably, and the chaise, so amply burdened, creaked again. Still the turf spared the cob's feet.

"There'll not be a stroke of work done this day upon any farm within ten mile of Chingley, I'll warnd," said Mr. Jobling.

And, indeed, as we approached the scene of action we could see the country people, smock-frocked and leather-gaitered, streaming across the fields, through hedge and over ditch, pouring in from all quarters. At last, from an eminence half a mile off, we looked down upon the assembly in the hollow—a dark irregular mass—like spoonfuls of gunpowder at the bottom of a bright green punchbowl.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MARRINGBERD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XIII. EYV ASKS A FAVOUR.

THE pic-nic party came home at eve from Birbeck Beeches in the same order as they went, but by no means under the same circumstances. It was observed by the other occupants of their respective vehicles that Mr. De Coucy, who was commonly a great talker, and especially when ladies were present, maintained a complete silence; whereas Mr. Paragon, who was ordinarily as dumb as Memnon's statue (without its exceptional conduct in the early morning), was loquacious and restless. If Mr. Bullion's proposition of the cheap champagne, with which the colonist had so improperly made merry, had been carried, things might have happened otherwise; but as it was, exhilarated by the best and purest Perrier Jouet, he had proposed to Judith, and was certainly under the impression that he had been accepted. Judith, on her part, without confiding this tremendous event to Evy, was more affectionate and demonstrative to her than ever; and Mr. Hulet and Mrs. Mercer sat opposite to them without interchanging a syllable, but with their hands fast locked together beneath the railway rug. If the former had ever sat to a sculptor he might have been correctly, as well as poetically, rendered with "gout flying about him," but it had never settled anywhere; and when, like a little mouse, Mrs. Mercer's tiny foot stole towards his own, and softly trod upon his toe, he smiled a welcome to it. Once or twice she made a mistake, and trod on Judith's, but that sagacious young woman, far from exposing the error, made the ex-

pected reciprocation with the utmost good nature. A more complete example of doing good—or at least of conferring happiness on another—by stealth, it would be difficult among the Annals of Good Deeds to find.

When Evy put up her cheek for her uncle to kiss that night before retiring to her room, he pressed his lips to it with unusual kindness, but in place of opening the door for her as usual—for notwithstanding his invalidish ways, he was as polite as Chesterfield—he motioned her to a chair, and said:

"Don't go just yet, Evy, I want to talk with you."

She knew what was coming quite well, and would gladly have relieved him from his evident embarrassment by telling him so; but on the whole she judged it better to be silent.

"I am going to tell you something," he began, "which at the first blush will cause me, I fear, to sink in your good opinion, Evy—that is, I mean"—for she had shaken her pretty head, and smiled a smile that was a thousand negatives—"as to my good sense and judgment. When an old fellow of sixty-five bethinks him of matrimony, folks are inclined to compliment his heart at the expense of his wits; and I think they are mostly right."

"That must depend on circumstances, uncle, surely."

"Just so. A lonely man far advanced on the down-hill of life may marry for company's sake, to insure a faithful friend to tend him at the last; but no such excuse could be given for me, who have the dearest and most dutiful of friends in you, Evy."

"You are very kind to say so, uncle," said Evy, the tears gathering in her beautiful eyes in spite of herself.

"I only say the truth, and less than the truth, my darling, and being so fortunate as I am in possessing such a niece, I allow that it would be the height of folly in a widower, such as you have always supposed me (as I conclude), to contract anew a matrimonial alliance."

Here he stopped a little, and fell to pacing the room, while Evy sat in silent astonishment; she could not have helped him on to his explanation now, even if she would.

"The fact is, my darling, Mrs. Angelo Hulet is still alive, and under this very roof. Perhaps you can guess, now, who it is?"

"It is Mrs. Mercer, I suppose, uncle?"

"Yes; it is Mrs. Mercer, or Mrs. Sophia Mercer, as she calls herself, since after our separation she reassumed her maiden name. We parted from one another, by mutual agreement, nearly forty years ago, upon the ground of incompatibility of temper, after a very short experience of one another indeed. It may be urged that people's tempers do not alter—except for the worse—with time, but I hope that we are both, at all events, a little wiser, and shall be able to act towards each other more judiciously. At all events we have made up our minds to try the experiment."

"I wish you joy, my dearest uncle, with all my heart," cried Evy, rising and throwing her arms about his neck. "If you were about to make a new alliance, I should certainly not have dreamt of questioning your judgment; but to return, even thus late, to one whom you have prom—"
Here Evy coloured, recollecting that it was not her duty to preach to her uncle, and came to a full stop.

"Promised to cleave to until my life's end, you were about to say, Evy," said Mr. Hulet, rubbing his nose, in comical embarrassment; "yes, I am quite aware of that fact; but the truth is (though it is not generally known) that the compilers of the marriage service were for the most part—bachelors. As to loving, that may be possible with persons of exceptionally good principle, for it is said one ought to love even one's enemies, but I defy a saint to "cherish" a woman that won't be cherished. If, for example, when you offer me that arrowroot which you make so admirably, my dear Evy, I were always to knock over the basin with the back of my hand, you would give it up at last, as a sheer waste of time and trouble. You would be a fool if you didn't. Well, that

was my case, or something like it, with respect to Sophia. However, she is as kind-hearted a woman as ever lived, notwithstanding her little foibles; and that which recommends her to me as much as anything is, that she has taken a genuine liking to yourself, Evy."

"Mrs. Mercer has been always so kind, uncle, that it is a real pleasure to me to find in her a near relation."

"And I have no doubt she will continue to be so, Evy. If I thought otherwise she should be no wife of mine again, I promise you. Indeed, I have considered your interests throughout this matter, as indeed it was my duty to do, fully as much as my own. In the first place, Evy, it is thoroughly understood between your aunt and myself that our reunion shall not in any degree affect your future position. Neither she nor I, to do us justice, are very covetous people; when we parted company on our life journey, as we thought for ever, each of us took the entire fortune which severally belonged to us without invoking the tender mercies of the law, and now that I have told her that you will not only be my heiress, but that I am resolved to settle an ample provision on you in the event of your marriage, so far from offering any objection, she seems inclined to increase your fortune out of her own funds."

"Indeed, indeed, uncle, I have deserved no such kindness, even at your hands," sobbed Evy, overcome with the old man's affectionate solicitude. "Oh, how can I ever thank you for it as I ought!"

"First, by drying your tears, my darling," returned Mr. Hulet, tenderly; "and then by telling me that you will not desert your old uncle, or cease to fill his house with sunshine, until such a time as Lord Dirleton's 'Jack'—if he is to be the fortunate man—or some other equally lucky dog, comes to take you off my hands. I may need you more than ever now, Evy, though I hope and believe I shall not, and on the other hand if all goes well, and your aunt and I prove a comfort to one another, you will have the satisfaction, when your wedding-day comes—and a very, very sad one to your selfish old uncle it will be, my dear—of knowing that you leave me, not as you would now, a lonely valetudinarian, dependent upon hiring aid for his many wants, but in good hands; such as understand making possets, and applying poultices, and every art that can make home happy; don't you see, my darling?"

She saw as well as her tears would let her. It was evident that the kind old gentleman was affecting for her sake a cheerfulness, and perhaps even a confidence, that he was very far from feeling.

"Well, well, that is settled, my dear," continued he. "Your aunt and I have no preliminaries to go through in the way of wooing, nor even of wedding, and shall be reunited almost at once. In the mean time, and while I am still my own master—for one never knows what may happen; a man may hold his own at one time, as indeed I did, and pass under the yoke at another—is there anything you would like to ask of me? It would be a pleasure to me, as you know, to grant it."

"Indeed I have all I want, and more, dear uncle," said Evy. "But there is a favour which I would very earnestly entreat of you for another—for poor Judith. I don't think she is quite such a favourite with her aunt——"

"She is not her aunt; she is your aunt," observed Mr. Hulet.

"That may be, dear uncle, but up to the last week she has been in the position of her near relative, and certainly taught to believe that she would be provided for as such. Now, pleased as I am to have won Mrs. Mercer's affection, it would distress me very much if I thought I had done so at Judith's expense."

"I don't see how you can help being liked, Evy," returned Mr. Hulet, "nor even being liked better than Judith. It seems to me, though I have nothing to say against the young lady in question, that you are worth ten thousand of her."

"You may be just a little prejudiced in making that estimate, Uncle Angelo," said Evy, smiling. "But, at all events, it would make me very miserable should our respective interests come into collision with any disadvantage to Judith. What I have to entreat of you is to use your influence with my aunt in her favour; some suitable provision would, I suppose, in any case be made for her, and if, as you hint, Mrs. Mercer was so good as to think of adding to my fortune, I would greatly prefer that that sum, whatever it may be, should be given, instead, to Judith."

"But the girl has no occasion for it," reasoned Mr. Hulet. "She will, as you say, have a moderate independence secured to her, but even then, I suppose, will continue to live under our roof?"

"No, uncle, she will not," answered Evy. "It was told me as a secret, but I

think I am right in confiding to you, that Judith is engaged."

"That is very odd," said Mr. Hulet. "Sophia has often talked to me about the girl, and yet never mentioned that."

"It is the fact nevertheless, for I had it from Judith's own lips, uncle. She is engaged to a young artist, whom Mrs. Mercer disapproves of on account of his poverty; and if the poor girl had a fortune of her own there would be no obstacle to their happiness."

"Then, by gad! it shall be removed, if I pay the money out of my own pocket," exclaimed Mr. Hulet. "Not that I am so very fond of Miss Judith myself, mark you; but for the exactly opposite reason. To tell you the truth, the notion of having that girl an inmate of my house for life somewhat appalled me. My hope was that that antipodean creature—what's his name?—Paragon, would be fool enough to marry her out of hand; but if she has already found a victim, so much the better. I don't mind buying the flowers for that sacrifice, at the cost of a few thousands. If Sophia declines to portion the young woman, I'll do it myself; so you may make your mind perfectly easy upon that score."

"A thousand thanks, dear uncle; it will be a great pleasure to me to tell Judith such good news. But you must promise not to breathe a word to my aunt about the young artist."

"I promise that, my dear, with all my heart, and the more easily since I have nothing to breathe," replied Mr. Hulet, smiling; "you have not even mentioned his name. What is it?"

"Well, the fact is, I don't know what it is," said Evy, smiling in her turn. "She only calls him her Augustus."

"Ah! well, I pity her Augustus, that's all—I may be about to do a foolish thing, myself," added Mr. Hulet, musingly; "I dare say I am; but Miss Judith's Augustus—however, you have taken the young woman under your protection, and therefore I will not say a word against her."

"But what have you to say against poor Judith, uncle?"

"Nothing, Evy, nothing. I don't like her, I confess; and yet I can't give you my reason for it:

"I do not like thee, Doctor Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell,
I only know, and know full well,
I do not like thee, Doctor Fell."

"By-the-bye, talking of doctors, how I hate Doctor Carambole. However," here

he sighed, "it's too late now to think of that—one more kiss, my darling Evy, and good-night."

CHAPTER XIV. AN UNWILLING CONFIDENCE.

"RUMOUR, full of tongues," must necessarily have always had a good many stories to tell, but the older she gets, as it seems to me, the more garrulous she becomes. The institution of the telegraph and of the Penny Dailies, of course, awakens a thousand echoes, more or less untrustworthy, as well as enlarges the sphere of her operations; but independently of them, scandal is more rife. The mention of that mysterious word—so dear to newspaper writers—"transpire," has had, I am inclined to believe, a baleful effect; and what we don't actually hear to the disadvantage of our fellow-creatures, we contrive to take in, like Joey Ladle, "through the pores."

Except upon some such supposition how is it to be accounted for that every tenant of Lucullus Mansion, by ten A.M. on the morning after that fateful picnic, was not only in possession of the fact that Mr. Angelo Hulet was engaged to marry Mrs. Sophia Mercer, but that each had a totally different, and at the same time an entirely reliable account of the matter; a special and exclusive edition published gratuitously in confidential whispers? It was love at first sight; it was an old attachment; he had loved her hopelessly as somebody else's wife; she had loved him despairingly as somebody else's husband. There was no end in short to the various versions of the affair, and some of them reflected anything but credit upon the two respectable persons who were the objects of all this speculation. Such very queer questions, indeed, were asked of Evy by some of her own sex, couched in a tone of sympathy and condolence that made them fifty times more shocking, that she was at her wit's end what to answer. She had not received permission from her uncle to disclose the true state of the case, and she shrank from asking it of him, while Mrs. Mercer, in a private interview before breakfast, had laid on her a positive injunction of secrecy.

"Don't speak of it, my dear; I can scarcely bear to think of it. The idea of my having been your aunt these twenty years without your knowing it! I am delighted, of course; scarcely less on your account, my dear girl, than on my own. But don't let us speak of it; at all events just at present. Push me my footstool. Doctor Carambole says that to one in my

critical state of health, emotion may be destruction. Pass me my drops."

But it was impossible to permit her respected relatives, who now paraded the garden side by side, or sat within doors with the arms of their arm-chairs almost interlaced, in defiance or ignorance of what anybody was saying about them, to be for many days under such shocking suspicions, and Evy took heart of grace and told Mrs. Hodlin Barmby all about it.

It was not easy to astonish, by any social revelation, the mistress of Lucullus Mansion, but this news did take that lady considerably aback.

"You surprise me, my dear Evy, beyond all expression," said she. "I could have staked my existence, for one thing, that your aunt, as she turns out to be, was an old maid. Of course, I took your uncle for a widower, and a very determined one. It is unaccountable to me that having once taken such a step as to separate from his wife, he should retrace it. It is very creditable to our sex, my dear, is it not?"

"Indeed, Mrs. Barmby, I don't see that," said Evy, not without some indignation; for she had not reached that time of life when ladies desert their colours and go over to the other side, on such occasions. "I think it is only natural that my uncle's heart should soften toward the companion of his youth, and regret his estrangement from her. Ever since he met her, the remembrance of the past has affected him deeply, as I could well perceive, though, of course, I was ignorant of the cause."

"You don't say so! Well, now, I should have thought Mr. Hulet—kind, excellent gentleman as he is—would have been no more affected by old times, that is in a sentimental way, than by last week's newspaper. To be sure he seems very fond of her; in fact, to persons unaware of the peculiar circumstances of the case, rather demonstratively so. I conclude," added Mrs. Barmby, with some anxiety, "they are not going to remain with us very long."

"I rather think not," said Evy, simply. "My uncle, who finds himself much benefited by his sojourn at Balcombe, is going to take a house in the neighbourhood, I believe; my aunt and he, indeed, are gone together this very afternoon to look at Cliff Cottage."

"I saw them go," replied Mrs. Barmby, "and very much together they were. You were quite right to confide in me, my dear, quite; but people's tongues will wag in

spite of the most satisfactory statements; and I fear it will be a little difficult to explain matters even now." Mrs. Barmby's forebodings were amply realised. It had been noticed that Evy and herself were engaged in confidential conversation, and no sooner was their talk concluded than more than one lady made excuse for "interviewing" the mistress of the house, and sounding her upon the all-important topic. Such persons would have had to sink their artesian wells of inquiry very deep indeed in the case of Mrs. Hodlin Barmby, and perhaps not to find truth at the bottom of them after all, had that lady been minded to conceal it, but as it was she retailed to them what she had just heard. Mrs. Bullion, who rarely condescended to mingle with the rest, but remained for the most part in her own apartments—engaged, it was rumoured, in financial operations upon her own account—was the last to hear the news, drops of which, however, had mysteriously permeated to her through the walls (which as we know have ears), and tempted her from her retirement.

"What is this I hear?" inquired she, of Mrs. General Storks, who was not usually honoured with her notice, but who happened to be the first person she met, "about Mr. Hulet and Mrs. Mercer? Is it really true that they are engaged to one another?"

"I understand so, madam," replied the widow, gravely, "and also that they have taken Cliff Cottage."

"Taken the cottage! Why that seems a little precipitous, does it not?"

"The garden is so, very," answered Mrs. Storks. "I think it scarcely safe for one so near-sighted as Mrs. Mercer to walk in it."

"I was referring to the haste of their proceedings," explained Mrs. Bullion, majestically, "and not to the perpendicular nature of the locality. They are going to be married then, I conjecture, almost immediately."

"No they're not," replied Mrs. Storks, carelessly, and holding the lace-work on which she was engaged at a critical angle. "They are not going to be married at all."

Mrs. Bullion's full height was about five feet eight; she drew herself up to five feet nine; while her jaw fell almost an inch and a half, and with an audible click. If the Funds had dropped twenty per cent, she could scarcely have evinced greater horror.

"They are going to live at Cliff Cottage,

and not going to be married at all," repeated she, in stupefied accents.

"Just so," said Mrs. Storks; "if you'll kindly step out of the light, because this work requires all one's eyesight, I'll tell you all about it. You must know they've been married already; half a century ago," &c.

And so, within a few hours, the love-story of Angelo and Sophia became public property, and was commented upon from one end of Balcombe to another, and in all its aspects. To Judith, Evy had herself communicated the facts, though not more confidentially, or with greater detail, than she had used with Mrs. Barmby. There was something about Judith, though she viewed her with no such disfavour as did others of her sex, that did not invite her confidence, and upon this subject especially, which to Evy herself was upon her uncle's account a sacred one, she feared to excite her cynical mirth. Even as it was, Judith showed her scorn for the elderly pair who flattered themselves that they would find in their December the warmth that had been denied to their July, and only when Evy went on to speak of what Mr. Hulet had promised at her request to do for Judith, did she drop her mocking tone. Then, indeed, she became all gratitude and humility; called Evy her "benefactress, whose kindness she should never, never forget," and manifested signs of deep emotion. This did not, however, prevent her from attending to business. She congratulated Evy that since Mr. Hulet was already her aunt's husband, there would be no occasion for his making a fresh will, so that her future fortune would be precisely what it had been before—an idea that had not occurred to her companion; and then proceeding to her own affairs besought Evy to persuade her uncle to put his promise to insure her independence into effect at once.

"Such generous resolutions are only too apt to die out, and it is always best to strike while the iron is hot," said she. "I am afraid you think me mean and mercenary, dear Evy, for being so importunate; but, ah! you do not know how bitter the bread of dependence is; when you tell me of this blessed sufficiency in store for me, I cannot believe my tingling ears, and long to see it realised. Moreover," added she, with a faltering voice and a down-droop of her long eyelashes, "you must not forget that all this is not pure selfishness, dear Evy."

"Indeed, indeed, I do not, Judith," protested her companion, earnestly. "I am well aware you are thinking of another far more than yourself."

"Ah! then you yourself must know what it is to love," cried Judith, looking quickly up. "Noble as your nature is, Evy, I thought there must be some sympathy at work to move you to such generosity as you have shown to me. I trust I may one day behold the object of your love, and tell him how you have striven, and what you have wrought, for me for his sake."

It is usually the pride of a young girl to confide to one of her own sex and age the story of her love, and yet there was something within her that forbade Evy to open her heart to her companion.

"I am not so happy as you imagine, Judith," answered she, evasively, conscious that she was crimson from brow to chin, but speaking as calmly as she could; "never even so happy as yourself."

"No, because I have a confidante—a friend in whom I trust, and in whom I have reposed all, Evy; while you, I see, have none. I do not reproach you, however, dear, nor need you fear my curiosity; your secret is as safe from me, as it would have been with me, should you have thought proper to disclose it."

"Indeed, Judith, you do me wrong," answered Evy, whom Judith's rebuke affected the more keenly, since she felt it was deserved. "What I meant to say was, that you were more fortunate than I, since a remediable want—that of more money—is the only bar to your happiness, while in my case there are other obstacles."

"Indeed?" answered Judith, sympathisingly. "Oh, would that it lay in my power, as it has been in yours, to remove them."

The tenderness of Judith's tone, and the touch on her arm which accompanied it from Judith's hand, were too much for Evy's gentle nature; and she straightway told all the history of her engagement with her beloved Jack, which, after all, it was an immense pleasure to her to do. Upon that subject, from which her gentle thoughts were never long absent, her lips were sealed as regarded her uncle, and sympathy was what she yearned for. The treasure of love does not lie in a girl's heart, like gold in a miser's chest, to be gloated over in secret only: she delights to show her glittering wealth to others, and to be wished joy of its possession, as

a poet enjoys reading his verse in a friend's ear. To recount where and how she had first met her love, to paint his looks and to describe his talk, is in some sort to realise once more the fond experience.

Judith listened with rapt attention to her companion's recital; her fine eyes sparkling, and her dusky cheeks aglow with excitement.

"Your tale is a romance indeed, dear Evy, and worth a score of commonplace love stories such as mine," cried she, admiringly. "And so you will be Lady Dirleton one day, and live in a grand house, and set the fashions to a county."

"Indeed, Judith, I don't know that; though if so great a happiness as to marry him I love is vouchsafed to me, I suppose these things will follow, since I trust he will not be disinherited for my sake. All I care for, however, is Jack himself."

"Of course," answered Judith, musing: "and yet it must be a fine thing to have wealth and title, and to rule others—or at least it seems so to me who have neither, and who have always been compelled to obey. How charming you will look, Evy, with a coronet upon your brow—"

"And a sceptre in my right hand like the Queen of Spades," broke in Evy, laughing; "well, no; I am afraid, since I cannot pretend to the philosophy of my uncle, who stigmatises all such things as baubles, that I shall be scarcely equal to the weight of such greatness."

"Ah! you are like the lady of the Burleigh ballad, are you, whose great position weighed her down," answered Judith, in so sharp a tone that it almost seemed contemptuous.

"Faint she grew and ever fainter,
As she murmured, 'Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter
That did win my heart from me.'"

"Nay, I do not say that," replied Evy, with a touch of pride. "I trust I have enough of my uncle's good sense about me not to be dismayed by the prospect of an accidental distinction. And I must say, Judith, considering the profession of the man you love, that your quotation is not very complimentary to him."

"That is true," answered Judith, softly. "I was only speaking generally, of course. Such ideas in a girl in my position are, without doubt, absurdly out of place; but I confess I should like Augustus to turn out to be a peer of the realm, and to wear, myself, a coronet by right of it."

"It would become you vastly well," said Evy, simply, and regarding her beautiful companion with undisguised admiration. "I am sure no one who saw you so attired would believe you to be in the enjoyment of an 'honour to which you were not born.' But, heigho!" added she, with a little sigh, "the thing is but little more likely to happen to myself than to you, Judith. More than five months have to clapse before I am permitted to see him, even if I do see him; and our prospects may be no brighter then than they are now."

A CONDEMNED DRAMATIST.

On the 25th of February, 1754, a new tragedy, entitled *Virginia*, was produced at Drury Lane Theatre. The work had been handed to Mr. Garrick, the manager, by the Countess of Coventry—one of "those goddesses, the Gummings," as the learned Mrs. Montagu described the famous and beautiful sisters. "Dear Mr. Garrick," said her ladyship, with her sweetest smile, "I put into your hands a play which the best judges tell me will do honour to you and the author." Discreetly the countess forebore to urge her own opinion, if, indeed, she had formed one. It was well understood that the charms and gifts of the Gummings were rather physical than mental. But the great Mr. Pitt had found time to read *Virginia*, and had pronounced it excellent. And the tragedy had won the approval of other distinguished personages. The manuscript was left with Mr. Garrick, who promised to bestow upon it his earliest attention. What else could he do? The countess had come in her carriage to Southampton-street, and illumined the manager's library with her brilliant presence. Could he be insensible of this supreme distinction?

But *Virginia* was no new work to Mr. Garrick. It had been submitted to him some time before. Its author was one of his personal friends: a cultivated gentleman, who lived in the best society, of polished manners and competent fortune, who had read much and talked well, "whose taste," says Lord Macaulay, "in literature, music, painting, architecture, sculpture, was held in high esteem." Nevertheless, Garrick had formed but a poor opinion of the dramatic effort of this Admirable Crichton. He had openly expressed doubts as to the prudence of staking

so valuable a reputation upon the success of such a play.

However, there now seemed to be no help for it: at all hazards he must produce *Virginia*. Arrangements were made for its early performance. It may be that Garrick distrusted his own critical powers; certainly he presented in the course of his management a greater number of indifferent plays than almost any other impresario ever ventured to submit to the public. But, more probably, he found it impossible to resist the witchery of the lovely countess, in combination with the author's claims upon his friendship, and the favourable judgment of Mr. Pitt. Social influences, and the opinions of the quality, had at all times undue weight with Garrick, who was too apt to forget that, after all, dramatic success depends not upon the favour of select coteries, but the applause of the general body of playgoers.

Virginia enjoyed a strong cast. Mrs. Cibber impersonated the heroine; Mrs. Graham, afterwards famous as Mrs. Yates, made her first appearance upon the London stage as Macria; Mossop played Appius; Garrick sustained the part of Virginius, and furnished the play with what even Horace Walpole describes as "a remarkably good epilogue." No pains were spared to secure the success of the new tragedy. Nor was its reception of an uncordial kind. It was played eleven times, which may, perhaps, be held to be equal to a run of fifty nights at the present date. In this way the author secured three benefits—the third, sixth, and ninth nights of performance—according to the system then in vogue of remunerating dramatists. But it soon became manifest that such success as *Virginia* won, was entirely due to the exertions of the actors. Garrick's *Virginius* seems to have been an especially noble performance. Murphy describes in glowing terms his acting in the trial scene before Appius, on his tribunal, and its effect upon the spectators: "Garrick stood with his arms folded across his breast, his eyes rivetted to the ground, like a mute and lifeless statue. Being told, at length, that the tyrant is willing to hear him, he continued for some time in the same attitude, his countenance expressing a variety of passions, and the spectators fixed in ardent gaze. By slow degrees he raised his head; he paused; he turned round in the slowest manner, till his eyes fixed on Claudius; he still remained silent, and, after looking eagerly at the impostor, he uttered in a

low tone of voice, that spoke the fulness of a broken heart, 'Thou traitor!' The whole audience was electrified; they felt the impression, and a thunder of applause testified their delight." Still it could not be concealed that the play itself had failed to please. It was dull, tedious, ill-constructed, undramatic. Critics found fault with a catastrophe which left the fate of Appins in uncertainty; they ridiculed his proposal to marry Virginia; they censured as unnatural the long discussion between Virginus and his daughter, which preceded his immolation of her; a deed, so violent and unnatural, they alleged, could only result suddenly from a paroxysm of despair. The author appealed from the verdict of the playgoers to the judgment of the reading public; he published his tragedy. But the reviewers were merciless; they tore the play to shreds; they fell on plot, diction, and characters alike. As a book to be read, Virginia was pronounced less endurable than as a drama to be represented.

Unhappily, the playwright had convinced himself that he was a great poet. He was not less persuaded that the production of Virginia would insure him immortal fame. From this position he was not to be driven. He knew he was right; he knew that the world was wrong. It was nothing to him that he stood alone in the matter. He would persist in his opinion until it obtained universal acceptance. He was the victim of a cruel conspiracy; but he was not to be subdued by the machinations of the malevolent. Certain concessions he was willing to make to popular prejudice. He took back his play, and subjected it to a careful revision. He amended, omitted, added, and, as he held, perfected his work. He looked forward to its reproduction in the course of Garrick's next season of management. He flattered himself that now, at any rate, Virginia was beyond impeachment of blemish; that its merits would surely assert themselves; that success was within his grasp. Garrick, however, was disinclined to revive the tragedy; was, indeed, fully resolved that no more should be seen or heard of it in his theatre. Entreaty and expostulation were in vain. Lady Coventry could no longer lend her aid. The hand of death was already upon her. She lingered some years the shadow of her former self, dying, at last, from painting her fair face with a poisonous wash of white lead. Garrick was polite, but he was inflexible. So far as he was concerned, there was an end of Virginia.

It was the author's one bid for fame; a bid that, as he held, the world should have accepted and closed with on the instant. Certainly he would make no other offer. He had proved himself a poet of distinction; let men deny his gifts and deprive him of his rights at their peril. His foes might, perhaps, triumph in the present, but the victory would assuredly be his in the future. He was doomed to find obscurity gradually thickening around him, however; soon, indeed, there seemed a likely prospect of his being forgotten altogether. Ten years after the production of Virginia, a copious Dictionary of Plays and Playwrights was published, in which occurred the following very brief mention of him: "Mr. Crisp. I know nothing further of this gentleman than that he is a living writer, to whom is attributed a tragedy which was acted in 1754 at Drury Lane Theatre, but published without any author's name, entitled Virginia." A later and more complete work of the same class, simply informed its readers that "Mr. Henry Crisp, of the Custom House, had written a play called Virginia, acted in 1754." Murphy, in his *Life of Garrick*, after describing, as above quoted, the representation of the tragedy, refers to its author as the Reverend Mr. Crisp. Davies, in his *Life of Garrick*, ignores all mention both of Virginia and its author. In the notes to *Walpole's Letters*, Mr. Crisp is stated to be "a clerk in the Custom House."

Alas, for fame! The real name of the author of Virginia was Samuel Crisp. That he was at any time officially connected with the Custom House, is extremely doubtful; it is by no means clear that he was ever in holy orders. The rescue of his memory from almost absolute oblivion has arisen in a curiously accidental way. Certain of his letters were incorporated in the *Diary of Madame D'Arblay*, more famous, perhaps, as *Fanny Burney*, first published in 1842. To this book Macaulay devoted one of his most impressive and finished literary essays. He noted Miss Burney's intimate correspondence "with a person who seems to have had the chief share in the formation of her mind. This was Samuel Crisp, an old friend of her father. His name, well known, near a century ago, in the most splendid circles of London, has long been forgotten. His history is, however, so interesting and instructive that it tempts us to venture on a digression." In this digression Samuel Crisp's curious story is re-told, and his

memory is awarded secure embalmment. His poetic pretensions are by no means admitted; but, at any rate, his claim to the world's reverence has obtained registration. This was not quite the way, however, in which Mr. Crisp had once hoped to live in men's recollections. His name survives, not by reason of his Virginia, but because of his friendship for a little girl who afterwards became a famous novelist, and whose *Diary and Correspondence*, after her death in her eighty-eighth year, happened to be reviewed by a writer with a confirmed taste for literary exploration. "We have thought it worth while," says the essayist, "to rescue from oblivion this curious fragment of literary history. It seems to us at once ludicrous, melancholy, and full of instruction."

As Macaulay points out, Mr. Crisp had not so very much to complain of; "his play had not been hooted from the boards." It had, indeed, been better received by the audience than many much more estimable works; Johnson's *Irene*, or Goldsmith's *Good-natured Man*, for instance. No disgrace had attended the comparative failure of *Virginia*. He was not so much a condemned as a self-condemned dramatist. He might even have laid claim to a respectable measure of success; he preferred to think that he had incurred a disastrous defeat. He complained of the injustice of his audience, who certainly had not been lacking in patience and forbearance. He charged his friends with languor and apathy, although they had so strenuously supported his play as to secure him three benefit nights. He accused Garrick of perfidy and malevolence, who had, as an actor, exerted himself to the utmost to win applause for the play, and who, as a manager, had sufficient reasons for wishing it to prosper. But the enraged author was not to be pacified; would not listen to reason. He lost his temper, his spirits deserted him, he became moody, splenetic, a cynic, and a misanthrope. He quitted London for Hampton; from Hampton he withdrew to Chesington, and became the occupant of a lone and long-deserted house, built on a common, in a wild district; no road, not even a sheep-walk, connecting his melancholy mansion with the abodes of his fellow-men. He kept aloof from his old associates; he confided to none the secret of his hiding-place. At intervals he visited London, and was seen at exhibitions and concerts. But he soon disappeared again, and hid himself among his books in

his dreary dwelling. He survived *Virginia* some thirty years. A new generation had come into being who knew nothing of the unlucky tragedy—had never even heard of it, nor of its author. His existence, his very name, were alike forgotten. Yet to the last his wounds still bled; his wrath had been kept warm by constant nursing; he still brooded over his wrongs, denounced the treachery of Garrick and the cruel injustice of the pit. Still he was persuaded "that he had missed the highest literary honours only because he had omitted some fine passages in compliance with Garrick's judgment." Did ever man so dote upon his own production, and so grieve over its misadventures, as this man doted and grieved? Was ever injured literary vanity so incurable as this? Time did not cicatrize his hurts, but seemed rather to deepen and widen them. "Sincerity," he wrote to Miss Burney, twenty-five years after the failure of *Virginia*, "I have smarted for, and severely too, ere now; and yet, happen what will, where those I love are concerned, I am determined never to part with it. All the world (if you will believe them) profess to expect it, to demand it, to take it kindly, &c. &c.; and yet how few are generous enough to take it as it is meant! It is imputed to envy, ill-will, a desire of lowering, and certainly to a total want of taste. Is not this, by vehement importunity, to draw your very entrails from you, and then to give them a stab? On this topic I find I have, ere I was aware, grown warm; but I have been a sufferer. My plain-dealing (after the most earnest professions and protestations) irrecoverably lost me Garrick. But his soul was little!" Poor Garrick! he had withdrawn altogether from the stage at this time, and his life was within a few months of its close. Again Mr. Crisp wrote to his young friend: "When you come to know the world half as well as I do, and what Yahoos mankind are, you will then be convinced," &c. &c. His warnings against the mischievous advice of literary friends were renewed again and again. "Whoever you think fit to consult, let their talents and taste be ever so great, hear what they say—allowed!—agreed!—but never give up or alter a tittle merely on their authority, nor unless it perfectly coincides with your own inward feelings. I can say this to my sorrow and my cost. But mum! The original sketches of works of genius, though ever so rude and rough, are valuable and curious monuments, and well worth preserving." When

Mrs. Montagu expressed a desire to see the manuscript of Miss Burney's comedy, Crisp despatched an urgent letter of caution. "Now, Fanny, this same seeing it (in a professed female wit, authoress, and Mæcenas into the bargain) I fear implies too much interference—implies advising, correcting, altering, &c. &c. &c.; not only so, but in so high a critic the not submitting to such grand authority might possibly give a secret, concealed, lurking offence. Now, d'ye see, as I told you once before, I would have the whole be all my own, all of a piece; and to tell you the truth, I would not give a pin for the advice of the ablest friend who would not suffer me at least to follow my own judgment without resentment." The shadow of the luckless Virginia was for ever haunting him. Unconsciously, perhaps, the fate of his tragedy was the enduring text of his every discourse.

Yet this moody, acrid, cynical recluse, apart from his fatal delusion, was a man of genuine abilities and accomplishments. He was but mad north-north-west. He believed himself a poet and a dramatist; he was neither the one nor the other. But this he could in no way be brought to comprehend. Years and years of self-torture and mortification were the result of his wretched misconception of the limits of his powers, of the nature of his endowments. He sacrificed everything in pursuit of distinctions which were to him wholly unattainable. Every advantage had attended his entrance into the world. He was well-connected, highly educated, of easy fortune, of stainless character; "his face and figure were conspicuously handsome;" his manners graceful, his conversational powers admirable; he was thoroughly competent to occupy a distinguished position in the world of society. Literary or poetic fame seemed to be in no degree necessary to his happiness; yet he was certainly qualified to shine as a critic or as a connoisseur; his taste, cultivation, and judgment might have won him fair repute as a writer in special departments of literature. But he was bent upon creating. Like Frankenstein, he produced a monster, that never quitted him, nor ceased to torment him.

His letters to Miss Burney are full of well-expressed and admirable advice. The Burneys had after some time been admitted to the secret of his retreat; he was their oldest and most intimate friend; "for them were reserved such remains of his humanity as had survived the failure of his play."

Fanny Burney was to him as a much loved daughter. He called her his "Fannikin;" she invariably addressed him as her "dear Daddy." To him she owed, much more than to her real parents, the development of her intellect. He was not in the secret of her writing *Evelina*, but she read the book to him after its publication, and "had the satisfaction to observe that he was even greedily eager to go on with it." When informed at last that the novel was really written by his Fannikin, he cried "'Wonderful! wonderful! Why, you young hussy, ain't you ashamed to look me in the face—you *Evelina*, you? Why what a dance you have led me! What tricks have you served me!' His face was all animation and archness. He doubled his fist at me, and would have stopped me, but I ran past him into the parlour." His counsels were of real service to her in the composition of her second novel—*Cecilia*. Her *Diary* seems to have been written especially for his entertainment. When she was urged by Sheridan, Murphy, and other injudicious friends to attempt a comedy, she received from Mr. Crisp what she called "a hissing, groaning, cat-calling epistle," which yet contained very excellent advice. A very bad judge of his own dramatic pretensions, he could yet correctly estimate how small was the chance of his Fannikin attaining success upon the stage. He pointed out the full scope enjoyed by the novelist—"as large a range as he pleases to hunt in, to pick, cull, select whatever he likes. He takes his own time; he may be as minute as he pleases, and the more minute the better, provided that taste, a deep and penetrating knowledge of human nature and the world accompany that minuteness. When this is the case, the very soul, and all its most minute recesses and workings, are developed and laid as open to the view as the blood globules circulating in a frog's foot when seen through a microscope. The exquisite touches such a work is capable of (of which *Evelina* is, without flattery, a striking instance) are truly charming. But of these great advantages, these resources, you are strangely curtailed the moment you begin a comedy. There everything passes in dialogue—all goes on rapidly—narrative and description, if not extremely short, become intolerable. The detail which in Fielding, Marivaux, and *Crébillon* is so delightful, on the stage would bear down all patience. There all must be pressed into quintessence: the moment the scene ceases to move on briskly,

and business seems to hang, sighs and groans are the consequence. Dreadful sound! In a word, if the plot, the story of the comedy, does not open and unfold itself in the easy, natural, unconstrained flow of the dialogue—if that dialogue does not go on with spirit, wit, variety, fun, humour, repartee, and—and all, in short, into the bargain—*Serviteur!* Good-bye t'ye!" This is sound criticism; better counsel could not be tendered to a youthful dramatist. How unfortunate it was that, when engaged upon his tragedy, Mr. Crisp had not behind him so sage and kindly a friend as the author of *Virginia* proved himself to Miss Burney! The result completely justified his opinion. Miss Burney's comedy, *The Witlings*, was duly finished, but it never saw the stage, or, indeed, the printing press. It was well written, but it lacked plot and interest, and it bore an unfortunate resemblance to Molière's *Femmes Savantes*, which, oddly enough, Miss Burney had never read. There can be little doubt that *The Witlings* would have signally failed in representation, and that Sheridan and Murphy were quite of that opinion, although they politely withheld its expression. To Daddy Crisp Fannikin replied in graceful and affectionate terms. "I intend to console myself for your censure by this greatest proof I have ever received of the sincerity, candour, and, let me add, esteem of my dear Daddy. . . . Though somewhat disconcerted just now, I will promise not to let my vexation live out another day. Adieu, my dear Daddy. I won't be mortified, and I won't be *downed*; but I will be proud to find I have out of my own family, as well as in it, a friend who loves me well enough to speak plain truth to me." She deserved to have so staunch, and wise, and cordial a counsellor. Their letters redound to the credit of both. In her correspondence with Crisp, Fanny Burney is seen to more advantage than in the *Diary*; she is there a trifle too conscious and given to over-acting in her self-depreciation. Writing to his young friend, the old man's crabbedness is oftentimes laid aside—it is always within reach, but it is not prominently apparent. Surely this is a winsome picture of Fanny Burney's girlhood. "Do you remember," he writes to her, "about a dozen years ago, how you used to dance Nancy Dawson on the grass plot, with your cap on the ground, and your long hair streaming down your back, one shoe off, and throwing your head about like a mad thing?"

Towards the close of his life poor Crisp suffered much from infirm health. He speaks of his "shattered frame," and complains of gout, rheumatism, indigestion, and want of sleep. He grew very deaf, moreover, though that was perhaps the most endurable of his afflictions, for there were very few to speak to him. His sisters, however, had come to live with him at Chesington. Now and then Miss Burney chanced to meet in society some few who had formerly been acquainted with her old friend, and heard him kindly spoken of. Dear old Mrs. Delany, of whom Crisp had spoken to Miss Burney, at seventy-five sent her compliments and her thanks to him, "though how," she added, "he can so long have remembered so insignificant a body I'm sure I don't know." Miss Burney mentioned his name to the old Duchess of Portland, who "instantly asked a thousand questions about him; where he lived, how he had his health, and whether his fondness for the polite arts still continued. She said he was one of the most ingenious and agreeable men she had ever known, and regretted his having sequestered himself so much from the society of his former friends."

He died in April, 1783. Within a week or so of his death he had complained somewhat peevishly, it would seem, of his Fannikin's forgetting him among her fine London friends. "My dearest, dearest Daddy," she wrote in reply, "why did you tell me of the Delanys, Portlands, Cambridges, &c., as if any of them came into competition with yourself? When you are better I shall send you a most fierce and sharp remonstrance upon this subject." But he was not to grow better. He became, indeed, alarmingly ill. Fanny Burney hastened to Chesington, and remained with him until all was over.

She was quite overwhelmed with grief. Some time elapsed ere she recovered composure sufficient to resume her journal. Even eighteen months later her sorrow for the departed was still fresh and poignant. In a letter addressed to his surviving sister in July, 1785, she writes of "my most beloved friend, your honoured and most incomparable brother." "Scarce a day passes in which I do not lament him, and not an incident happens to me that I do not long to communicate to him. My confidence in him was one of the greatest sources of my happiness; his wisdom and his kindness made my unbounded trust at once my pleasure and my profit. He

thought no occasion too trifling to be consulted upon, and I thought none too important to be governed in wholly by his advice. I hardly ever could tell whether I most loved or admired him, for my reverence for his abilities always kept pace with my affection for his virtues. Unconscious of his own superiority, he used frequently to apprehend that when I went more into the world my regard for him would weaken. But even if my nature had been of so ungrateful a texture (which I must hope is not the case), he would still have had nothing to fear. For where could I go to meet friendship more sincere? And whom could I see to inspire a more deserved return?"

Assuredly the man of whom so excellent and amiable a woman could so write deserved a better fate than the persistent obscurity and isolation to which he was self-condemned. But he had resolved to be a poet, or nothing. He was nothing.

Of his unfortunate play there is but one brief mention in Miss Burney's journals and correspondence. It is contained in the letter above quoted. "As to his Virginia, I believe, indeed, it was his wish and intention that everything belonging to it should rest in silence and quiet till they finally sunk into oblivion. With me nothing can that ever belonged to him; but I shall keep all the papers with which you have so kindly intrusted me wholly to myself." These papers, whatever may have been their nature or purport, have never been published. It was held perhaps that Virginia and its author were both absolutely extinct, and that neither they nor public interest in them could possibly be revived.

OUTCAST!

THE moon is red and low, and the stars are few,
The city moaneth like one who talks in his sleep,
In distant meadows full heavily falls the dew,
The dew in the city it falleth from eyes that weep.

Now is the time, my soul, when a grieving pain,
Frightened away by the eyes that shine in the day,
May dare to come forth awhile, and be free again,
And look in thy face and say what it hath to say.

Its mien is pure and true, and it seemeth calm,
Though deep in its gaze there is lying the gloom of death,

Its murmur sounds like the holiest heavenly psalm,
But it singeth a siren's song to thy dreaming faith.

Let it come forth and utter its plaintive moans,
Listened so oft that thine ears are growing dull
To sounds less sad and soft, to the cheerful tones
That ring in the chord of life when it swelleth full.

Hearken it now for the past and never more,
Heed not the eyes that crave and the hand that clings,
Kiss it once at the future's glimmering door,
Float it away in the dark on its own sad wings

So shall it reach that realm on the verge of night,
Where shadows of fair false things and their echoes be;
Thy way is across the hills in the kindling light
'Mid living souls with a footstep glad and free!

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

NO. V. A MERCHANT CAPTAIN'S ROOST.

OH! dear Mrs. O'Cannikin, what muse is fit to sing your charms; to dilate gleefully upon your stalwart form, like that of a very fully developed life-guardsmen in petticoats, your bright round face with its profusion of untidy iron-grey hair, your strong rich voice embellished with the very finest Tipperary brogue, your big splay feet encased in nankeen boots, with each its rent and patent-leather tip, and finally your rollicking hearty manner, and friendly slap on the back? Truly you are a broth of a woman, and all who know you love you—ay, and respect you, spite of your queer ways. No wonder that your house is always full, that the same set of highly respectable merchant-captains, ship-owners, and mates, frequent your boarding-house, returning faithfully to you at the close of each recurring voyage; for you are merry as the day is long; joyous with the highly-coloured exuberant ever-welling fun of the better Irish farmer class, chirruping up-stairs and down-stairs, looking after everybody's comfort, bandying jolly jokes, exchanging firm handshakes with all, having a hard word for none. The O'Cannikin's establishment stands very near the Docks, within the precincts of the Minorities, down a blind alley so dull and still, at a first glance, as to suggest an asylum for mutes. There are six houses in this blind alley, all of a squinting, cock-eyed, shambling sort, thin, tall, dirty, vacant of expression. One hangs out signs of being a nautical hotel, but mould appears to have gathered on its hinges, herbage to have sprung up about its door-stones, while its windows are so carefully packed in cobwebs as to suggest that it will shortly be shipped off with the other cargo ever groaning past the outer thoroughfares for some colonial destination, possibly as a model lodging-house for the Fiji Islanders. The other houses show no sign of being inhabited at all, except the centre one, from the open windows of which shirts and socks imbibe the balmy air, while a tiny brass plate above a bell bears a modest announcement that its owner is O'Cannikin. The alley stands like an islet of silence amid a sea of sound, for on one side a stream of merchandise

is ever drifting towards the Docks, from whence penetrates a continuous hum of lading and unshipping, of hammering and nailing, varied with a measured cry at intervals as one man tosses a keg or package to another in the string; from the Tower hard by come whiffs of regimental orders, and then a sharp musket click and tramp of men; omnibuses roll incessantly down Eastcheap, and the thunder of trains to Woolwich and the wharves causes each tenement to vibrate and shake itself together after the shock, as they tear over the iron bridges.

One Saturday evening the boarding-house door was open, but not to take in the summer air; trunks and boxes, umbrellas and wraps littered the stones, while a powerful voice cried from within, "Now then Kattie, jewel, call those cabs; Mrs. M'Faddle is ready, and the dear old lady will catch cold. The Paratamna starts to-morrow, and she must ship to-night. Try a glass of cordial before you go, Mrs. M'Faddle, darling; it's very soothing." But the old lady wouldn't, and finally got under way—a hale old lady of seventy-six, part owner in several vessels, who had made the voyage to Sydney twelve times, and was now starting on probably her last. Attendant and expectant nephews and nieces were zealously "seeing her off;" the grumpy cook from below stairs nodded farewells from her area; the housemaid from the first-floor front; and every window framed its two or three weather-beaten faces, each waving the veteran traveller god-speed. At length the cavalcade was fairly off, and the O'Cannikin turned briskly from the past, wiping a tear from her "oye," to attend to the clamorous demands of the present. "Och! Kattie, and how'll we get 'em all in? We've only one room free, and there's Captain Lucas coming to-morrow, and Captain Felsen coming to-night, and Mrs. Moriarty, the shipowner's lady, who's so fond of beer, and whom I couldn't refuse as belonging to our Imberald Oisle; she must have a bed somehow; and then there's two mates coming from the Pernambuco, but, bless mee sowl, theirs are young legs, and we'll provide them at the top. Let's see. I can make up two beds in the front parlour, with a mattress on the floor. Captain Lucas must have a shakedown on the sofa in the doining-room. Oh, we'll do it somehow. He had the best bedroom last toime, and it's fair he should suffer a little now, as I make the same charge to all, two shillings a noight.

Och, but he calls this place Hullabaloo Hall; I call it Ramshackle Castle, and we must all do what we can." And the good body bustled off, shouting her orders in all directions, dragging about mattresses and pillows till the stair-well was choked, and the evil-smelling street was pleasanter than remaining in-doors with its attendant odours of musty old clothes-bags and un-aired feathers.

Although the O'Cannikin is all-powerful, a male semi-dependent unit exists in the background in the person of a venerable, white-haired, stone-deaf, smoking-capped individual, who sits generally silent in the dining-room, behind a large pipe, a cake of cavendish, and a board fitted with a hinged knife for cutting the tobacco, which he offers—the cavendish as well as the knife or board—to anybody who is willing to smoke patiently opposite to him, and shake his head knowingly at intervals in default of conversation, for any period of time not less than sixty minutes. Unable to hear anything less forcible than a shout, Mr. O'Cannikin gives vent to his sentiments, some of them of an especially personal and pointed character, in stage whispers much more audible than ordinary speech, which give rise to complications and little embarrassing dilemmas requiring presence of mind from all parties. But all fully comprehend how the matter stands, accepting his mistakes good-naturedly, and so the old gentleman is somehow or other usually the dignified centre of a little circle of seafaring persons of the merchant class, who smoke and nod and smoke again imperturbably until the whirlwind O'Cannikin shall sweep them all into the garden, either for the preparation of some meal, or for the manufacture of impromptu shake-downs.

The "garden" is a very wonderful place, entered from the dining-room window, consisting of some four square yards of earth surrounded on all sides by high walls, giving it the appearance of an embryo mining shaft, from which abut strange ledges and gables, of no use, it would seem, except as a promenade for cats. The garden boasts of no flowers, but instead is made glorious by ornamental layers of great pink and mother-of-pearl shells, such as we see exhibited sometimes in oyster shops, varied by rows of huge flints like fossil octopuses, further diversified with stray water-pails and torn paper collars, accompanied by a sardine box or two, a pair of braces, or other stray fragment of cast off apparel.

The chief feature of the garden, however, is a wooden arbour set against the wall, made of wide green-painted planks, like half a boat set up on end, with benches and three-legged stools about, and here the old gentleman and his captains sit on fine days, or when ejected by the O'Cannikin, enjoying perpetual twilight, and occasionally pelting with pebbles and mud any unwise grimalkin that shall be misguided enough to indulge in a gymnastic walk within reach of their missiles.

The O'Cannikin's arrangements extend generally far into the night; for no sooner has she flopped down panting upon her sofa, exposing a fine view of stocking and nankeen boot, with a yawn like the gape of a hippopotamus, than a telegram is sure to arrive from Plymouth or Southampton, announcing the coming of yet other captains between the hours of twelve and two, which will necessitate still more scheming and ingenious pic-nicking among the furniture.

"Ah, now, Captain Wellin's coming; well, he'll be welcome, he's a dear man. I'm glad he should arrive. Katie! There's another coming. Another mattress and a pilly. Where can we put him? There are two already in the front room up-stairs. The two-pair back is ready to burst. Well, we'll put him somewhere—last toime he brought me some guava jelly that was mighty noise."

The constancy of the ocean kings is very touching. One would imagine that after a long voyage in rough weather, and privations of every kind, they would be glad, when once on terra firma, to enjoy comfortable quarters in one of the numerous hotels about America-square sooner than be the victims of such shifts, with no abiding place but an ill-stuffed pallet beneath the kitchen table; but constant they evidently are, and grateful too for small mercies, which is evidenced by the fact that they never return empty handed, bringing always either some preserved fruit, or a trinket, or a silk handkerchief, for the gratification of the kind lady, who never fails to embrace the donor with a loud smack of the lips like the crack of a coach-whip, and a "Well, now, you're a good choild."

Very free and easy is the O'Cannikin in her ways, although her morals are beyond all reproach. She calls everybody, servants, boarders, old ladies, battered seamen, and budding hobbledoys, by their christian names. The servants are generally "jewel," the old ladies "darlint," and

the rest "dear boy." She is extremely garrulous, sitting down in intervals of management beside you, and discoursing on her most private affairs, although she saw you for the first time but ten minutes ago, then bustling off to hold a stentorian colloquy down the back-stairs, and returning with her hair about her ears, and scratching her head pensively with her back-comb, to continue her confidences, as to how Aunt Jenny died at Melbourne, leaving a legacy of five hundred pounds, and how an heir-at-law intervened, and won a lawsuit, thereby behaving very shabbily. And then she will start up again, tossing the comb upon the table, exclaiming, "Now do try a poipe, now do, docther, dear; I'm going to try a dhrop of something, feeling cauld in my insoide." Presently she creates a diversion by altogether vanishing from the scene for awhile, till the deaf old gentleman, having hunted for her high and low, announces that "something's took her." We rise and explore the place. She certainly is neither in her room, or in the kitchen, or anywhere apparently, unless she be devising new impromptu beds among the chimney-stacks. "Yes, something's took her, sure enough," the old gentleman repeats, in his loud stage whisper, on the stairs. "Is it me you're wanting? Sure, I'm in the front parlour, busy," calls out the jubilant voice, and we rush anxiously thither, to find her gravely sitting on the floor beside old Captain Bluffer, each with a hot flat-iron and a cut brown paper like a tailor's pattern. "Sure, we're smoothing our rheumatiz. The tar, or something in the paper, with a little heat's mighty good for it, and, as I can't reach my shoulder, the captain's koindly doing it for me, while I smooth down his shin." And thus the evening will pass away, varied by departures and arrivals; by schemes for packing people as closely as possible, utilising every inch of space; pipes, and little drops of something, until it is time to go to bed. And what a strange house it is up-stairs! Ever so many little doors open on to each landing, displaying vistas of wonderfully incongruous things within. Uniforms, caps, telescopes, hung on pegs along the wall; sea-chests, half unpacked, with corroded brass ornaments; tiny parcels, evidently presents for friends; ill-made mufli coats, and brand-new tall hats; opossum skins, skins of birds; nicknacks from the South Seas; Fiji curiosities; tropical linen clothing, woollen Arctic clothing,

and generally a dirty bed or shakedown, sprinkled with boots, and not made or arranged since the previous night. Many of the rooms have been subdivided into two or three, barely capable of holding more than a bed, by means of wooden partitions overlapped and painted, giving the queer little pigeon-holes the aspect of ships' bunks. I enter the one assigned to me, having declined the resting-place under the dining-room sofa, and observing large yellow squadrons winding across my pillow like ants about their hill, or like the huge German columns leaving Kaiserslautern previous to the battle of Woerth, set to work to investigate my surroundings.

The feather-bed and pillow with its tawny blanket is quite an interesting study of animal life. There are large insects, small insects, running insects, creeping insects, scuttling insects, long insects, like centipedes; mothers of families and their offspring to the fourth generation; tribes more numerous than the children of Israel in the desert; all winding in and out, falling into patterns like the fragments in a kaleidoscope, most entertaining to behold provided one were not expected to join them in their gambols through the night. I, accordingly, commence a wholesale slaughter, sardonically arranging my game in *tasty* rows along the wall-paper until I achieve a bag of forty-three, when observing the number of my enemies apparently undiminished, I give up the chase, throw open the window, and prefer endeavouring to forget their presence by admiring the prospect thence. This affords me quite a picturesque view of cats jumping on the tiles, throwing diabolical shadows in the moonlight of tails curled and straight, lengthening and shortening with distressing suddenness. Tower Hill, the scene of so much bloodshed, glitters innocently white beyond. The grand old Tower, with its four tarrets dark against a scudding sky, is before me; beyond again I can make out a misty array of masts, infinitely various, stretching away indefinite and vague, like some gaunt geometrical forest. The groaning and tearing down the Minorities had by this time ceased; the rushing trains from Fenchurch-street were still, and the silence was broken only by far-distant sounds of merriment, of carousing and fiddle-playing, evidently a final orgy of some ship's crew about to start to-morrow on a voyage of years. Peals of laughter came upon the air; faint hurrahs as the prosperity of the fatherland about to be left behind

was toasted in bumpers; sounds of scuffling in the streets, coupled with laughter or occasional cries of women; and above it all a scarce perceptible monotonous thud from some far-distant vessel making up for wasted time by receiving her cargo after hours. Little by little the shadows of the cats waxed fainter; ere those animals retired to bivouac in the summer-house below; the orgy terminated in a final three cheers more; the City clocks told morning watches in keys varying with the importance of their situation, sullen or flippant, deep or high in tone; a roar seemed to rise up from the distant sea, advancing with increasing thunder as it eddied nearer, washing and lapping lovingly around the cold grey feet of one bridge after another, until a rosy light tipped the Tower vanes; then, policemen standing statue-like at corners cut strangely black against the ground; then pale slouching idlers began to creep to and fro; then bands of stevedores marching to their work seemed to spring up from somewhere underground; then the streets by slow degrees became thick with hurrying people; vans and wagons groaned, and creaked, and rumbled in a confused but deafening uproar; and vast, seething, boiling, palpitating London had shaken itself up for the business of another day.

In the morning the O'Caunikin is as blithe as Milesian skylark ever was, bustling about her house in a drab dressing-gown and red leather slippers, with her iron-grey locks flapping down her back.

"Hurroo, doother, you're down the first. Kattie, bring up that steak and some tay and a shrimp or two. The captains are all snoozing, bless you, and why shouldn't they? They've no responsibility now, being off duty, and I loike them to take their rest. Any toime between this and one they'll find a bit a' breakfast. I loike my children to be happy. Didn't I tell you this was Ramshackle Castle?"

Being Sunday morning we are favoured with captains in every sort of disguise; bluff hearty fellows, who appear first in all kinds of incongruous toggery, many in stocking feet and unkempt heads, to blow off a few clouds of cavendish in the "garden," and to hold playful passages of arms with their hostess through the open window; to burst forth, later on, the same but other gentlemen, in all the panoply of ill-fitting black frock-coats, creaking polished boots, and amazing paper collars. Others drop in by twos and threes to breakfast, all

ravenous, all cheery, bronzed and battered, some with hands like those of labourers, for in the merchant service the lower grades of officers are frequently expected to work along with those before the mast. Mr. Fruellin, returned from some trip late the night before, comes down with shaky hand, grey, like an unboiled prawn about the face.

"Ah, now, mee choild!" says the O'Can-nikin, shaking her head at him, and endeavouring the while to coax her flying hair into something like order. "Ah, now, ye've been indulging in sperits, and you promised me to stick to beer. Not but what I think sperits, judiciously administered, the most wholesome of the two to the insoide, when you can restrain yerself. Didn't I make you take a private pledge? Oh, but boys, I must tell you all something. You know the two German children, Herman's their name, mates belonging to the Thecla, of Hamburg? Well, what do you think? Their mother's arrived who hasn't seen either of them for twelve years and more, and they're in such a stew up-stairs; have been crying out for pomatum and hot water ever since eight o'clock, and won't let the old lady see them till their titivated up. And they've bin questioning me about her, as to what she's loiko. Has she grey hair or dark, is she short or tall, does she look hearty or the other thing? And they won't believe a word I say, and none of their clothes are good enough to wear. It's a mercy it's Sunday, or we'd have them spending all the money they've earned on the last trip in whoite waistcoats and macassar!"

At this juncture one of the lads came rushing down the stairs, in a white heat of anxiety.

"We must have a bottle of wine," he said; "and is the front parlour made nice and tidy? She'll be down presently and we shall see her once again!"

"Bless the choild, how he goes on," responded she of Tipperary; "I haven't a drop of wine in the house. If I had, you'd be welcome to it all. Ask the neighbour on the right. He's a German like yourself; there are enough of them about here. Ask him to let you buy a bottle. Stay, won't sperits do? I've got some lovely poteen?"

Spirits not being sufficiently aristocratic for the emergency, the young fellow, quite magnificent in a vast display of shirt-front, cuffs like topsails, his hair nearly brushed off his head, flew into the garden, placed a

step ladder against the wall, and straightway there ensued a long guttural discussion through a little hole high up, which ended in the unhooking of a grating and the appearance of a withered hand with a bottle in it, which precious flask was well-nigh broken by the flying leap of the young gentleman as he skipped into the room.

"Now, dear Mrs. O'Cannikin, a clean decanter, some glasses, and some biscuits. Are you sure the beds have been removed from the front parlour? Do tell me, is she as tall as you; thin or stout? Oh, you won't tell me anything." Off he flew again, unable to sit still an instant, to put the finishing touches to himself, as well as to his arrangements, and presently the three had met, coming forth later, calm, subdued, and happy, and red about the eyes. Meanwhile, late captains still appeared out of all sorts of unlikely holes and corners, with stockinged feet and broad, honest faces, sat over shrimps with "tay," or smoked and gossiped round the tiny space among the shells, the flints and pails, discussing Lloyd's, the reason of such a one throwing up his command at the last moment, the opinion of Green's on the tea race, the prospect of shipping off soon once more, and nautical matters of still more intimate nature. One was brisk, and burnt his mouth, laughing over the mishap, for was he not about to start for Sydney almost instantly, and had he not chosen his first and second officer from those in the harbour hard by?

"Kattie, sure they're all done but old Bluffer, whose rheumatics are no better, though mine are. Take his tay and shrimps up to him in bed. He's cosy there, and bring me the poy; I'll make it here." And while some munched their toast at one end of the tay table, the O'Cannikin settled herself at the other with a dish, green apples, board and rolling-pin complete, and proceeded to perform culinary prodigies, still in her drab drapery and red leather shoes. "There now, it's done. An illigant poy. I'll just put a mark on the crust outside, so that the baker mayn't disappoint us as he did last Sunday. Only fancy. I made a poy last week of great mogul plums, with such a crust of fresh butter with an egg in it, as a thing for Mrs. M'Faddle to remember the auld country by when far away. And would you believe it, it was changed at the baker's, who sent us back a common low thing made of dripping and mess, and we couldn't get our poy back anyhow, for the doctor's lady had it, and wouldn't give it

up, saying that she made it herself. To think of such lies on Sunday too! So I made a poy yesterday, sending it privately to the ship, so that she will eat it when far out at sea, and think kindly of us all. Who knows? Perhaps she'll yet come back again."

And so she rambled on, putting away stray bits of paste, mumbling the shreds of apple, performing a toilet in a corner of the dining-room at the same time, before a glass set on the inside of a cupboard door. She brushed up her hair into a loose knot, talking all the while, inspected her stock of jewellery, trying on several pairs of earrings before she was satisfied with the result, and departed, climbing over the shake-downs now returned to their normal condition of stopping up the stair-well, to return presently in a gorgeous Sabbath dress of grass-green silk, with a narrow red stripe on it, and white bows. Her good-natured face dimpled all over into smiles as she observed my intent look of observation. "Green is my favourite colour," she remarked, "in honour of the Immerald Oisle. I bought it for a friend in Melbourne who's very sandy and fat, and she sent it back again, saying it didn't suit her complexion. Well, it suits moine anyhow. Ah, now, I wish I could just run over to Erin; I've invested my money in houses about Doblin, and I've bought a little place. But I've never seen any of them, as I'm afraid of travelling by train, and the boat makes me sick, and so I know that if I got up courage to go, I should never come back again. I'm getting un-wieldy; I do so run to flesh. I'm not stout to look at yet, but I'm mighty weighty." Indeed I could quite conceive that she was, judging of the way in which she caused the room to shake, and the stairs to wheeze and moan. "But if I went over there, and never came back, what would all the captains do at all? And where would I be without them? Moighty dull indeed. They're father, and mother, and children to me, and I love them all, every one. Where's that whisky? I must give a dhrop of it to the cook, who's dreadfully overworked just now. This glass is bulky, and she won't be satisfied if it isn't full," she continued, breathing on it, and polishing it up with her elbow. "Just fill it up with wather, choild." And presently we heard the rich brogue rising in trumpet-tones from down below. "Take care what you're after, it's awful strong, but it'll put the sperit into you to get the beef

well basted, and the gravy browned. Kattie, take those dirty sheets away; it's a scandalising sight upon a Sabbath, littering about the stairs. Who's that ringing at the bell? What! Captain Pottle, is that you come back? Well, you are welcome indeed. Come in, it's just our dinner toime, and take a bit with us, and tell us all about it. How long have you been back? Why ain't ye staying here? I heard yesterday that your ship had been seen off Gravesend. Come in, you'll find the old man inside somewhere. He'll be deloighted to see you. He's terrible deaf. Worse than ever. But come in and sit down. We'll find a place for you. There are nineteen at dinner. We had one-and-twenty yesterday. Come in, all the same."

MODERN ROMAN MOSAICS.

A DEAD MARCH.

So many good things in this world come to us too late! The reflection is trite; but, like other trite reflections, it impresses one afresh under fresh circumstances, and is as vivid as though it had never been made before. For the world is always beginning, and always ending. "Every minute dies a man, every minute one is born."

The world ended for one man the other day at Frosinone. His eyes closed on the blue Italian skies, and the long horizon of the Campagna, and on friendly faces, and on the yearning gaze of affection. He had fought a good fight, and done battle many a time and oft, in the councils of the nation, for Italy. In the confusion of the struggle, down amongst the dust-clouds in the arena, we might not always know with whom was the right; we might not always recognise the valiantest strokes. But now there is a pause. A warrior has gone down sword in hand. Friends and foes lift him reverently, and cover up the dead face, and heap upon his bier the insignia of honour, and carry him with measured footsteps to the grave. They surround the shell of his spirit with pompous symbols, and pronounce fervid orations over his tomb. He has borne a good part. His wounds are all in front. Let the nation acknowledge that he has deserved well of her!

Yes; to the silent dead we can be just; nay, we can be generous. We can forget faults and weaknesses. We can forgive hard blows struck in the heat of contest. We can appreciate ungrudgingly the highest

and the best qualities—which perhaps are always the most real also, as it is the precious fragment of metal which determines the character of the ore, and not the mass of earth encircling it—of the friend or the foe we have lost. Before the shut eyes we lavish honourable ceremonies; into the deaf ears we pour prodigal praises. If he could but have known, this dead fellow-mortal, how highly we estimated his aims, even whilst opposing the means he took to gain them! And so the trite reflection came into my mind just now, that many good things in this world arrive too late.

Whether they be, in very truth, too late, it is not for us here and now too deeply to inquire. We are looking on at a pageant, as mere spectators and narrators of the show. We lean upon the wall of a stone terrace looking down upon the street of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, and wait until the funeral procession of Urban Rattazzi shall pass by.

It is a grey, cloudy afternoon. We have such afternoons now and then even in Rome. Sentimentally disposed persons declare that the "Heavens themselves look sad," in sympathy with the sadness of the occasion. The more practical-minded observe that it is a good thing for the crowds which fill the streets, and for the troops who are to accompany the funeral procession, that the June sun is not blazing quite unveiled upon their devoted heads. It is Sunday; and the number of people who stand or sit at every street corner, flight of church-steps, window, or balcony commanding the line of march, is no doubt increased by the fact of the day being, in any case, a holiday. But independently of the inevitable Sunday loungers, there is a sufficiently wide-spread emotion among all classes of citizens in connexion with this man's death, to have assured a numerous attendance at his funeral. The procession is to start from the residence of the deceased in the Piazza Branca, at five o'clock P.M., on its way to the railway station, whence the body is to be conveyed by special train to Alessandria in Piedmont, Rattazzi's native place, there to be interred. But the Piazza Branca is a long way off—half across Rome, down near the Tiber, although not quite on its banks—and then, of course, they will not start punctually. These are portentous times truly; and Rome has witnessed strange spectacles in these latter years. But no such miracle as the commencement of any public ceremony

precisely at the hour at which it was announced to commence, has yet startled us within the limits of the Eternal City.

We may therefore rest comfortably sitting on our broad low terrace wall, and look and listen to our fellow-sightseers waiting with indefatigable patience and good humour. The folks are dressed in their best. The institution of Sunday clothes flourishes on the Continent; although I have heard it alluded to as being peculiarly English. And in Italy well-dressed crowds are the rule and not the exception. They have a taste for bright colours, and they have, also, a less pardonable weakness for the ugliest extremes of French fashion. Hoof-like feet, and hydrocephalous heads, hump-backs, and foreheads hidden by frowsy tangles of hair—in a word, all the improvements which Paris offers on the human form divine, are to be seen on the figures of maids and matrons of the upper and middle-classes. What a relief to an eye that has learnt ever so little to appreciate grace and outline, is the advent among these disfigured women of a genuine popolana, a woman of the people, with her grand erect carriage, her classically-braided hair, and her broad-chested, natural figure! There are even now in Trastevere scores of women to be found on whom the classic draperies would hang as easily and naturally, as though they had never worn any other garb, and whose large, ox-eyed type of beauty might be the incarnate ideal of a Roman matron.

But although the crowd shows no slightest symptom of mourning, outward or inward, there is enough that is unusual in the aspect of the streets to show that the occasion is not one of mere holiday pleasure-taking. For example, there appear on the walls numerous printed manifestoes edged deeply with black, and announcing the intention of various societies of artisans to attend the obsequies of Rattazzi. Amongst these the announcement of the printers figures conspicuously. Then, too, from several balconies along the route of the procession hang mourning draperies of black and white. And the many tri-coloured banners which droop from the houses in the still evening air, have a black crape or ribbon above the red white and green.

The crowd gossips, and lounges, and stares. It is neither rough nor noisy. Neither is it in the smallest degree reverent. The details of the funeral are discussed precisely in the tone in which one

would discuss a pageant on the stage. Then they speak of the dead man, and of those he has left behind him, and of the loss his death will be to—not to Italy, but to his own party, the Sinistra, the Left or Opposition of the Chamber. I do not say that there are not men in Italy who look from a higher stand-point, and have a wider view. But the tone of ordinary public opinion is that of people in whose minds partisanship has overridden patriotism for many a generation past. To this statement honourable exception must be made in favour of the public press, which has distinguished itself in Italy lately on several occasions by a superiority to private rancours in dealing with the memory of public men, which is a wholesome, and a hopeful sign.

"Last night, quite late, they brought him from Frosinone to his palace in the Piazza Branca," says one old fellow, who has evidently the pretension of being thoroughly well-informed. "He lay in state there to-day, with burning wax-tapers and all?"

"Ha!" returns his crony—one of the numerous and useful second fiddles in the great orchestra of life—"Davvero? And to-day they send him back to his own paese—to Alessandria?"

"Yes; to be buried there. They say they sent for a Capuchin to him just at the last."

"A Capuchin? Senti!—only think! Why a Capuchin?"

"No other sort to be had. Frosinone is a paesuccio—a poor little place. The doctors wanted lots of things they couldn't get for him."

"Davvero! And they say the royal family will be present at the funeral, and——"

"Che, che, not at all!" responds gossip number one, who is resolved to claim a monopoly of information. "No, no, not the royal family. But the senators, and the knights of the order of the Annunziata, and the deputies, and the municipal——"

"In their gala coaches? Ay, it will be mighty pretty!"

"H'm! così, così. So so. Do you remember the Pope's carrozze di gran gala, when he used to turn out in state? Ah, per bacco! Those were fine coaches if you please."

And then he proceeds to point out to second fiddle, who makes subdued and appropriate accompaniment of running in-

terjections, the Marchese A., the Principessa B., the Duchessa C., the Conte, Capitano, Barone D. E. F., and so on all through the alphabet, as carriage after carriage rolls past bearing a freight of fine folks towards the railway station, there to await the arrival of the cortège. I fear me that my old friend puts many a saddle on the wrong horse, and affixes names to the ladies and gentlemen who pass by in a somewhat arbitrary and unauthorised fashion. But second fiddle—who probably guesses this quite as shrewdly as I do—accepts his crony's dicta with entire submission, and the pair are very harmonious and jocund together as they await the coming of the dead body that is to be carried back to its native dust so pompously.

And now, at length, the sound of military music is heard in the distance. We look down the long line of the street, and on to the Piazza Barberini, all full of closely-packed human beings, and we see a swaying movement in the throng, and presently some red dots breaking the dark mass. These are the scarlet facings and plumes of the mounted National Guard, who soon appear heading the procession. They are fine men, finely mounted, and they sit their strong, handsome Roman horses with the grace which comes of perfect ease. For these men belong either to noble families, or to the upper middle classes: many of them are country gentlemen accustomed to look after their wide-spreading Campagna farms, and as a matter of course they have been accustomed to the saddle from childhood upwards.

After them come the National Guard on foot, and then a general of division with his staff. There are several military bands in the cortège, which relieve each other in making music during the march. But there come pauses sometimes. One of these pauses occurs just when the procession is beginning to defile past our terrace, and there is no sound heard save the measured tramp of feet, the impatient clatter of the horses' hoofs as the animals fret and curvet at the enforced slowness of their pace, and the sharp, unsympathetic roll of the drums marking the rhythm of the march. They are not muffled drums. Their notes drop out hard as a rain of bullets, and know no softening influence of death or grief. To my mind there is something strangely cruel in the sharp, inexorably recurring beat of those braced-up drums.

Behind the brilliant uniforms of the

general's staff come detachments of troops of all arms now in garrison in Rome. There are the well-grown, sun-burned, rustic-looking soldiers of the line; a little slouching, a little untidy, and a little—or so it seems to me—over-weighted with their accoutrements, and the great calf-skin knapsack bound on to their backs. There are the bersaglieri—or riflemen—small, active fellows, with their broad-brimmed hats overshadowed by great bunches of cocks' feathers. Then come the municipal guards, and a detachment of firemen; *Vigili*, as we call them here. And these latter, in their polished brazen helmets, are by no means the least martial or effective-looking part of the show.

Then, immediately following the troops, come a great number of civil associations, chiefly workmen's guilds, with their banners, bearing the motto and device of the society. There are the butchers, the shoemakers, the carpenters, the bakers, and many others. All the artisans, dressed in their holiday clothes, follow their respective banners. It is curious to observe how, despite all national differences, the pursuit of the same occupation has a tendency to assimilate men to each other. Among these Roman artisans are faces and figures which I fancy I should recognise as belonging to shoemakers or carpenters, if I met them in Fleet-street.

Behind these specimens of the *popolo Romano*, walk a greater number of representatives (in another sense) of the *popolo Italiano* at large; for here come the deputies of the national parliament, Piedmontese, Neapolitans, Sicilians, Tuscans, Lombards, Venetians—Italians from the north, the south, the east, and the west; from the top to the toe of the boot, from the Alps to the Adriatic. These gentlemen are all in full evening dress, black and glossy, with lavender gloves, and a great display of shirt-front. Such of them as own any order or decoration, wear it conspicuously displayed. There goes the venerable Duke of Sermoneta, as patriotic and excellent a citizen as though he had neither rank nor title—a circumstance rarer in Rome than in London, be it said, without offence to the former—who leans on the arm of a friend, and walks a little hesitatingly; for he is blind.

But now appears a strange-looking legion. The halt, the lame, and the aged pass by with, alas! shabby and threadbare clothes, and bent backs, and mostly sad, thoughtful faces. These are the *Reduci*

dalle Patrie Battaglie—the returned from the battles of their country—as is inscribed on the banner which precedes them. They wear medals and ribbons on their shabby coats, and make a strange contrast with the gold lace and bright-coloured uniforms of the crowd of officers who closely follow them. Pass on, ye pale, humble patriots. I have little respect for fighting men; but I will take off my hat to you, shabby, shambling legion that you are! Your brothers lie on many an Italian field with French or Austrian bullets in their mouldering bodies. But you, at least, have been spared to take an honourable place in this dead march through Rome, the capital of Italy. It is good to see you here walking in the same procession with the son of the king, and with your fellow-warriors, civil and military.

For, if we consider it, are not almost all these men *Reduci dalle Patrie Battaglie*? Some in one way, some in another, have fought according to their lights and to their means. The king on his throne, the cobbler at his last, the carpenter at his bench, and the deputy in his place in parliament, have all been lending a hand in the "*patrie battaglie*." And it is the latent conviction that this is so which brings together so motley a gathering to carry to his last resting-place the dead man who has fallen at his post in the battles of his country, and which combines members of the Right and of the Left, conservatives, radicals, and moderate liberals, in this honourable testimony of respect to a fallen comrade.

After a second detachment of deputies, senators, civic notabilities, and representatives of almost every art and profession in Rome, comes the hearse. A huge, unwieldy, gilded thing, drawn by six horses caparisoned with black velvet. On the top of the pall is laid a laurel wreath, and flowers are strewn over it. One of the cords of the pall is carried by the king's eldest son, the others by the president of the senate, cabinet ministers, and the eldest knight of the order of the *Annunziata*, with which the dead man also was decorated. No honours are wanting to the spectacle.

A striking and curious part of it are the state carriages of the municipality. After the royal carriages—very rich and handsome, with servants in the showy scarlet liveries of the House of Savoy—come three huge, lumbering vehicles, gilt, painted, and carved with lavish splendour,

bearing the famous letters S. P. Q. R. on the hammer-cloths, and driven and attended by coachmen and footmen in the richest and quaintest mediæval costume. They wear an under-jerkin of deep amber, with a crimson mantle over it, amber sleeves and amber stockings, and a large black hat of peculiar shape. It is all like a bit of the sixteenth century, accidentally stranded and left behind by the great stream of time, like a waif thrown up on the seashore above the reach of tides.

Then there are more soldiers, a military band playing slow music, some private carriages, and a miscellaneous concourse of vehicles and pedestrians all mixed together, and then the procession is over. It has taken nearly two hours in going by. Through all the narrow streets and broad piazzas, crowded, one and all, with people, the dead march has wound its solemn way, cleaving a path for itself amongst the populace. Neither soldiery nor police have been called out to keep the line of march. Neither has public order been disturbed by act or voice throughout the whole afternoon.

Reverence, awe in the presence of death, the seriousness of reflection, these I have seen on no face in all the multitude of gazers. But there has been decency, good-humour, patience, and a sense of how it was fitting to behave, which, if found in a drawing-room, we should call tact and good-breeding. And now, leisurely, and in good order, the citizens disperse. The grey clouds gather darker, and a little chill wind springs up, which flutters the crape-covered banners, as the last sad notes of the Dead March die away in the distance.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XLVI. THE FIGHT.

It was a lively scene, with something the aspect of a country fair. Open carriages, however, were driving up with streamers flying and music playing. The gentry were strongly represented upon the occasion. The uproar was great, indeed; although the crowd, with all its rudeness, seemed tolerably good-humoured. The hares, scared by the din in a place that must usually have been most still and lonely, were to be seen wildly scampering about the down. "That's the worst of a

fight in this country," said Mr. Jobling, thoughtfully; "it brings about such a main lot of poaching. It's those Steepleborough chaps mostly. They can't set eyes on a hare but they covets un. I'd like to put my stick across some of their backs, I know. And there's a lot of lurching dogs about as I'd make short work of if I had my way. There's a heap of blackguards as will have hare for supper to-night, biled up with cabbage and a bit of bacon, most like." The farmer entertained the opinions of his class: scorning town-dwellers, and especially those of Steepleborough, and regarding poachers as a kind of vermin to be exterminated as promptly as possible. But soon he forgot these prepossessions of his in his intentness upon the coming fray.

We were informed that the betting was much in favour of the Mudlark, but that the Baker had been heavily backed by his patrons and friends, and that a sum of something like a hundred thousand pounds depended upon the issue of the combat.

We had an hour or more to wait. It was now nearly noon, and the sun's rays were beating hotly upon us. We attacked Mr. Jobling's store of provisions with keen appetite, though he blamed us for making such slight inroad upon his prodigious sandwiches. Aided by the broad blade of a large clasp-knife he set us a good example, seeming to hustle his food into his capacious mouth, and lunge at it afterwards with his weapon, as though to make sure of its fate, with something of a sword swallower's relish for cold steel. The strong beer was almost lukewarm, but still it was refreshing, and of unquestionable quality.

Farmer Hickey was discovered: a white-haired old gentleman, with a Punch-like figure and a purple face, very loud of speech, and liberal of oaths. He interchanged hearty greetings with his friend Jobling, and welcomed us on his account. "Servant, young gentlemen, glad to see you," he said; and he asked, in a neighbourly way, after the health of my uncle. "I ain't seen him this many a long day; but I mind the time when he was a smartish young chap and rode well to hounds. That's over with him now, I s'pose, as 'tis with me. When you come to have gout in both feet you'll find you ain't the man you were." He wore list slippers, I noted, and was riding a very steady old dun pony. He begged us to

call at his house before we turned homewards. He was very angry about poachers and trespassers—"There, they'll do me a sight of mischief before they've done, I s'pose," he said—but otherwise he seemed well pleased that the fight should take place on his land, and grew highly excited as he spoke of the probable results. "I've backed the Baker for a trifle," he said. "The lad hails from this countryside, so I felt bound to. A spræth, sprack young fellow enough, with some science; but the weight and strength's all with t'other un. But they do cut the time to waste, terri-bly, to be sure. Dang un, let 'em take and get at it, ding-dong; that's what I like to see!"

We secured a good standing place, looking down upon the roped ring of level untrodden turf, that seemed so specially green and fresh in the bright sun, and by contrast with the thick dark crowd surrounding it. There was an outer ring beyond, rudely marshalled and ordered by a band of pugilistic-looking functionaries wearing drab "box" coats, with highly-coloured "Belcher" wrappers round their necks, their hair very closely cropped, and their features exhibiting enduring traces of violent usage. They did not hesitate to enforce their orders upon unruly spectators by the administration of blows and kicks. I saw more than one white smock-frock soiled by a bleeding nose, or a wounded face.

There was a stir among the crowd; a buzz, a cheer, and then much excited hustling forward and swaying about. The combatants, complying with the prescriptions of such occasions, had flung their hats into the ring, following them forthwith, attended by their seconds and bottle-holders. There was still a considerable pause as they leisurely divested themselves of their clothes. They took their time over this performance, as though they delighted to keep us in suspense as long as possible. I felt my heart sicken a little from nervous tension. I glanced at Tony; he had been rather silent for some time past, and was now deadly pale from excitement.

A strange gentleman, with an eye-glass screwed between his frowning brow and his inflamed nose—he was rather fashionably dressed, but his linen might have been cleaner and his chin more closely shaven—supplied me with information in regard to the more celebrated personages present; but I cannot be sure that his statements had any pretensions to accuracy. He seemed

an expert in the matter of pugilism, however, and avowed (with a hiccup) that he had never missed a fight yet, and that he wished he might die if he ever did. He said that he had travelled down from London with a numerous party by the night mail, and had not slept a wink for eight-and-forty hours. That they had kept it up lively all the way, however, with a pack of cards, and as much gin and as many cigars as I liked to mention. That, arrived on the ground, he had freshened himself up with a draught of new milk, liberally "laced" with Jamaica rum. For the present, he stated, he had missed his friends, but he hoped to find them again soon. His appearance was certainly not very reputable, and from behind its glass his blood-shot eye, shadowed by the curly rim of his fluffy, smeared white hat, glared at me in rather a sinister and sodden sort of way. Still he seemed anxious to favour me with some share of the fund of knowledge in his possession, and at such a time, in such a scene, I could scarcely turn a deaf ear to him. Indeed, I found his discourse decidedly interesting.

He pointed out among the gentlemen present the Duke of This, the Marquis of That, and—but in this respect I resolutely refused to believe him—a celebrated dignitary of the Church of England, wearing a red comforter and the fantail hat of a coalheaver, presumably by way of disguise. He fortified with an oath—if that, indeed, could be considered as of any fortifying effect, under the circumstances—the correctness of his statement. "The bishop's like me so far," he said, "he's never been known to miss a fight yet. But he's a first-rate Greek scholar they say. I'm not. He has the better of me there." Further, he showed me a Mr. Egan, in a blue-cravat spotted with white, whom he clearly regarded as the most gifted author of that period. He furnished, it seemed, a famous weekly sporting newspaper with florid, almost poetic, accounts of all the great prize-fights. "And that man over there, that man in gold spectacles—you see? next to the gent with the green shade over his off eye—there, leaning over the rope at this moment—that's Bang-up Brown!" This seemed to be the culminating point of his intelligence. "You know Bang-up Brown, of course. Everybody knows Bang-up Brown."

To this hour I have never been able to

ascertain who, and what, Bang-up Brown really was, why he was so called, or why everybody should be supposed to know him. Certainly I did not, and I have never found anybody who did, my interlocutor with the eye-glass only excepted.

There was a mixed noise of cheering and groaning. The pugilists had tossed "for the sun," it appeared, and the Baker had lost. "It's all over with poor young Jack, I'm main aveard," said Mr. Jobling. And now the combatants were led by their seconds to the "scratch," and there was a roar of applause as they shook hands, each grinning mirthfully, and then fell back in fighting postures.

I turned for a moment—there was a sudden movement in the crowd—to look for my stranger-friend with the eye-glass. But he had vanished. I wished I could be sure, when I afterwards came to miss my purse and silk pocket-handkerchief, that they had not left Chingley Bottom in his possession. Fortunately, my loss was but trifling. It entailed upon me much ridicule from Farmer Jobling, however. "And you from London, and a lawyer, too! I thought you'd ha' been a match for a pickpocket any day in the week."

"Look," Tony whispered to me. "The Apollo and the Hercules!"

Jack Rumsey, surnamed the Baker, was a slight-looking, cleanly-built young fellow, with a modest, simple air and a cheerful countenance. His features were flattened somewhat, and his jaw very square. On the whole, however, his face was rather handsome and his figure most symmetrical. His light flaxen hair was cropped pretty close; but it was naturally curly, and, short as it was, assumed something of the form of young lamb's wool, sitting in compact flat little rings all over his head. In the bright sun his smooth, fair skin shone like satin; his muscles stirring restlessly beneath with the force and rapid elasticity of steel springs. Great natural grace attended his every pose and gesture, and he was surprisingly light and active in all his movements. Sometimes, I noticed, he quite unconsciously—for what, indeed, should he know about such matters?—fell into the attitudes of classical sculpture. Tony, I found afterwards, had also observed this, and was much impressed by it. Our sympathies went wholly with the Baker. He viewed him as the champion of the county of our adoption. And we joined in cheering him.

But there was no escaping the con-

viction that young Jack had in Gipsy Joe, the Mudlark, a very formidable opponent. He was of lofty stature and great bulk, his skin of a tawny olive hue, and his fierce dark eyes glanced from under his beetle brows with a look of supreme confidence and assured triumph. His arms, as he stretched them forth on guard before him, were as the gnarled limbs of some giant oak. Presently he was whirling them about with the swiftness and mighty strength of sledge-hammers in full play.

Even the most enthusiastic supporters of the Baker felt some dismay as they observed the colossal proportions of his foe. What hope was there of their slim hero routing that sinewy stalwart savage? What were Jack's tactics to be? people inquired. He had excellent advisers, it was whispered, and had promised to follow implicitly their counsels. But what could the utmost skill and science, even supposing Jack to have these at command, avail against that monster of strength? One blow from the Mudlark, it was urged, would quite demolish the Baker; who might defer his fate for some time, perhaps, but must surely succumb to it at last. While for any injuries young Jack's lithe arms might inflict upon his adversary, his strength might as well be tested upon a stone wall. Gipsy Joe could not be tired out or fought down; that was the general opinion. And if he once got the Baker in his power, as sooner or later he certainly must, why then the fight would be over forthwith, and the pretensions of Jack Rumsey and his backers very decisively silenced.

So the learned contemplated the issue of the encounter.

"I'm most aveard my money's clean gone," said Mr. Jobling, shaking his head forebodingly.

The severest critics could but detect one failing in the equipment of the Mudlark. His strength was not equally distributed, they alleged. His arms were mighty, indeed; but his legs—and certainly one of them curved suspiciously inward at the knee—were unequal to the support of the enormous bulk and weight of his body. Still his aspect was most imposing. The betting was greatly in his favour.

I cannot venture upon any detailed narrative of the fight. It was fully chronicled at the time by Mr. Egan, I believe, with accurate particulars of its every incident. It was at first strangely interesting and exciting as a spectacle; but it grew hor-

rible as it proceeded. So Tony and I agreed when we afterwards came to compare notes; but we did not avow our conclusions very publicly, lest we should be denounced as "milksops"—to youth a very dreaded term of opprobrium. It was divided into many "rounds," and occupied a considerable time. It was a struggle of skill and activity against stolid weight and enormous brute force. At first young Jack suffered severely; yet he moved about with the grace and activity of a dancer in avoidance of the blows aimed at him, manœuvring to change his position so that the sun might fall on the face of his antagonist, and though repeatedly struck to earth, appeared always to fall lightly and to rise without serious injury. It did not seem to me that he ever encountered the full force of his antagonist's arm. Many of the Mudlark's most strenuous efforts were spent in air, and he now and then fell prone from the lack of sufficient resistance to the blows he delivered. But the Baker was much disfigured; his fair skin was soiled, and bruised, and bleeding. The green turf within the ring was now trampled black by the incessant movement of the combatants. The Mudlark exhibited few traces of injury; there was a patch of bright scarlet on one side of his face, however, and a dingy-hued swelling had risen beneath his right eye; moreover, he was now somewhat scant of breath, and he stood, I thought, less firmly upon his feet. The Baker was still alert and smiling, but with an ugly rent on his under lip. His system of warfare was soon made manifest. He avoided coming to close quarters as much as possible; but whenever he could get through the guard of his foe he struck him full in the face. To do this, and fly back out of reach of a return blow, was a matter of some difficulty. But he fairly succeeded, and though his strength was plainly waning, his chances of ultimate triumph were, in the opinion of well-informed bystanders, steadily improving. He was encouraged by the uproarious cheers of his supporters, when his quickly darting fist alighted anew upon the brawny visage of Gipsy Joe, leaving behind it, as it invariably did, sure marks of havoc. Could he endure until the

mashed face of the Mudlark had swollen so that he could no longer see? It was horrible—it was sickening; and yet it possessed, I'm bound to say, certain fascinating elements of heroic audacity. Already Gipsy Joe seemed striking at random; flinging himself where he believed his antagonist to be standing, and receiving yet another desperate blow before he could recover an erect position. The battle was prolonged in the most brutal manner. During several of the closing "rounds" the Mudlark was understood to be quite blind and completely at the mercy of the Baker, who, anxious perhaps to terminate the conflict as soon as might be, did not hesitate to avail himself of his opportunities. At length the fight was formally declared to be over, and the defeated giant, blinded and bleeding, his face a hideous, featureless, pulpy mask, was led away, staggering and groaning, by his friends.

Prodigious acclamations announced the victory of young Jack Rumsey—the local favourite. He was panting as the blood was wiped from his wounds; a triumphant grin sat on his face as, with the aid of his seconds, he resumed his clothes.

"I've beat un," he said, simply, with a strong country dialect, as he pulled his shirt over his head; "and I've won your lordship's money for ye."

He was speaking to a man leaning over the ropes. I started. I almost screamed with surprise. The man was Lord Overbury.

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CHAPTER XV. CLIFF COTTAGE.

CLIFF COTTAGE—a residence whose appellation had something in it of the pride that apes humility, being in fact not a cottage at all, but a villa of considerable size—was situated a quarter of a mile or so beyond the last outskirts of Balcombe, in rather a remarkable position. The red sandstone rocks, of which the coast line was composed, were in that spot perpendicular, and had arranged themselves in a double line, one behind and above the other; and, on the plateau of turf that interposed between them, the house was placed. At back and front of it, therefore, there was a precipice of red rock, the head of the one in the clouds, and the foot of the other in the sea. A more romantic situation could scarcely have been imagined, nor indeed a more beautiful one, for so much of the plateau as was not occupied by the house itself was made into garden ground, where, under shelter from the upper cliff, even the least hardy flowers thrive and flourish. Sheer as this shelter was, its soft material was honeycombed by wind and weather into a thousand fantastic shapes, ranging from a deep-set monastic cell, to some weird likeness to lettering, such as that which showed itself on Belshazzar's wall. On the lower cliff a more powerful graver—Ocean—had hewn out echoing caverns, guarded by gigantic pillars, but nothing of this could be seen from "the cliff walk," as it was called, which ran round the garden, and only by a low stone wall was separated from the sheer abyss.

It was said that the sea was encroaching

upon Red Rock Bay, as the place was named, and that this fence had every five years or so to be removed, and placed more inland; but though such a consideration might, as Mr. Hulet laughingly remarked, "have affected a newly-married couple of the usual age," Cliff Cottage was likely to last his time, and that of Mrs. Sophia also; while as for the garden getting smaller every lustrum, it was probable that their power of taking walks in it would decrease at the same rate, or even quicker. He did not think it necessary to consult the interests of the two young ladies in the matter, since Judith was already engaged, and his opinion of his own sex, if not very high, was sufficiently so to give him confidence that Evy would soon find another lover, even if Lord Dirleton's "Jack" should play her false.

Unsolicited by Evy, for he was a man who did not need to be reminded of a promise, one of Mr. Hulet's first acts on taking possession of his new home was to make provision for Judith. His wife, indeed, had herself proposed to do so, but he would not hear of that. "It is I who have rendered the girl unnecessary to you," he argued, "and therefore it is my place to provide for her for the present; while as to the future, supposing that I survive you, I shall give effect, of course, to every wish that you may express respecting her."

But though a considerable sum had thus been placed at Judith's immediate disposal, she evinced no wish to throw herself at once into the arms of her Augustus, but contented herself with writing him epistles, doubtless of a most affectionate kind, which she always took to the post-office herself, as being too precious to be intrusted to a letter-bag. To Evy she explained this conduct as being dictated by

Augustus himself, "who is proud, dear fellow, as he is poor, and insists upon gaining a position for himself, as he feels he is on the road to do, before taking the hand which, thanks to you, has been so amply dowered." Evy thought this strange, conceiving that were she in Judith's place she would have found arguments to overcome such scruples, but she could not but applaud the delicacy of sentiment which such self-denial evidenced in the young painter, while her uncle (to whom, under the circumstances, she thought it right to disclose the matter) only shrugged his shoulders, and pronounced Augustus to be a much wiser fellow than he had taken him for.

Mr. Hulet, as we have seen, did not like Judith. Invalid old gentlemen—when their complaint is deafness—have sometimes, at unlucky moments, flashes of hearing, and, when they are almost stone blind, see things at times that might escape even the keen sighted; and Mr. Hulet, while neither deaf nor blind, had all the morbidly acute perceptions of an invalid. A glance of scorn, a movement of impatience at some unguarded moment, had probably prejudiced him against Judith. He could have heard the news of her approaching departure from Cliff Cottage with considerable resignation. The attitude of benefactor, in which she insisted upon placing him, embarrassed him exceedingly; while the humility in which she always clothed herself in her relations with his wife annoyed him even more, since it had a bad effect upon that lady in fostering those airs and graces, which in years ago so irritated him, and which it seemed she had discarded only during the short period of his second wooing. But still he bore with Judith as being, after all, but an insignificant item of the sum of ills which his own folly had brought upon himself. For to confess the truth, his reunion with the wife of his youth he had found to be a mistake—not to say an unmitigated failure. An occasional argument, with a political opponent, is well enough, and promotes a healthy tone of mind; but a member of the Commune would not be welcome to an admirer of the British House of Lords as a tenant of the same dwelling-house. Nay, it is even said that, the smaller the points of difference, the more fiercely are they apt to be discussed between persons so thrown together. And similarly, though nothing is more agreeable to a valetudinarian than to compare his ailments for a few hours with those of another invalid,

two persons living under the same roof, both afflicted with "nerves," are apt to quarrel. There is egotism in all illness; and an egotist requires a clear space about him, and especially one not occupied by another ego. The claims of such persons upon the attention of their fellow-creatures are apt to clash, and their wants to interfere with one another. The effect of their second experience of married life soon showed itself in the couple in question; Mrs. Hulet, in addition to her many physical maladies, fell into a chronic state of "protest." She assumed a silent, but very demonstrative attitude of suffering under oppression, and left it in no sort of doubt either to himself or to others as to who was the oppressor. Once, and only once, she had expressed this sentiment in words; it was on an occasion when he had forbade her going on the cliff walk without a companion—a really dangerous place at any time for one so shaky and short-sighted as herself, and especially so since it was her caprice to frequent it after dusk.

"Angelo," said she, in the presence, too, of both the girls, a circumstance which did not make the statement less unpleasant, "you always were a tyrant, and you always will be."

"No, my dear, I am no tyrant," was her husband's quiet rejoinder; "but I frankly allow that of late months—I don't know how many, it seems years—I have shown myself very weak, and, on one particular occasion, to be a most enormous fool." No epithet, indeed, was too gigantic for him to apply to that act of weakness which had caused him (to use his own words) once more to take to himself, for better or worse, a woman concerning whom he ought to have known there could have been no such alternative. A bachelor might marry without much prejudice to his judgment; a widower might do so, through a misunderstanding of the doctrine of chances, or a too sanguine confidence that he would have better luck next time; but that a man should take the same wife the second time—under the impression that she might have improved, like wine, with years—words, he said, failed him to express the profundity of contempt that he felt for such an idiot. It was not magnanimous in Mr. Hulet thus to speak, even if he could not help entertaining the sentiments described, and it did no good. Those who heard him retailed his words to others, and in due time they got round to his wife's ears, not, as may be imagined, to the improvement of

their mutual position. She grew more "aggravating" every day, and her husband more sour and irritated. The weak points in his character—which was a generous one in the main—were brought out under this course of treatment with painful distinctness. Irresolute, or resolute only by fits, in matters of moment, he was obstinate to excess in trifles. For example, being very careless in his habits, he had on one occasion left a glass of colourless but most powerful medicine in the dining-room, which, had he not chanced to return at the precise moment, would have been swallowed by Evy in mistake for a glass of water. Of this circumstance Mrs. Hulet made the most, not hesitating to make use of her husband's affection for Evy, who herself would gladly have passed over the affair in silence, as a weapon against him. "If even love for his niece could not restrain him from such acts of selfish carelessness, what motive could be expected to have weight with him," &c. In consequence of which rebuke it became Mr. Hulet's practice to leave his medicines about so recklessly, that a chance visitor to Cliff Cottage might well have been excused for taking it for a dispensary.

The cottage had many visitors, including not only the neighbours, who were very friendly, but many of their old acquaintances at Lucullus Mansion, almost all of whom were fixtures there. Among these Mr. Paragon was one of the most constant; he was seldom or never a guest, because Mr. Hulet disliked him, but for that very reason the mistress of the house encouraged his visits.

We have said that Judith's conduct towards her Augustus had seemed strange to Evy, but her behaviour to the Australian millionaire was a matter of much greater amazement. If, in fact, she had not known for certain that Judith's hand was engaged elsewhere, she would have thought it, if not the property of Mr. Paragon, at least to be had for the asking. It was no business of Evy's, of course, but this behaviour shocked her to that extent that she was driven to remonstrate with her young friend: a somewhat dangerous experiment, which, however, the other took in excellent part.

"There will be no hearts broken, my dear Evy, I promise you, however serious matters may appear. Mr. Paragon and I quite understand one another. And as for Augustus, he has all the confidence in me that I have in myself. And that," added she, with a little laugh that grated on her friend's ear, "is very considerable."

Evy, though by no means satisfied with this reply, said no more upon the subject, and the time was now drawing on towards an event which naturally monopolised her thoughts, to the exclusion of every other topic, namely, the April steeple-chases at Balcombe, for which she read in the local journal, with heartfelt joy, that Captain Heyton's Walltopper was entered.

CHAPTER XVI. IN WHICH MRS. HULET "COMES OUT" UNEXPECTEDLY.

UPON precisely "the day six months" after that on which the two lovers had parted from one another in Dirleton Park did the faithful Jack present himself at Cliff Cottage. Evy, of course, expected him. She knew from Mrs. General Storcks that a new face had recently appeared at the table d'hôte, "and a very good-looking one too, except that he has had his hair not cut my dear, but mown, in consequence of an attack of brain fever, from the effects of which he has not recovered."

Evy, who was aware, from his portrait, that the deceased general had been wont to wear his hair flowing over his coat-collar, and to a considerable distance down his back, was prepared for her dear Jack's round head affording the widow some excitement, but the words "of which he has not recovered" alarmed her exceedingly. She had had no communication with the captain, and he might very easily have been taken ill without her knowledge. "Is he an invalid then?" asked she, mustering all the indifference at her command.

"Not in body, my dear, so far as I know," was the widow's rejoinder, "but certainly in mind. No man who is not mad would ride a steeple-chase, I suppose, unless he was paid for it; and that is what the captain has come to Balcombe to do. 'Going to ride his own horse, sir,' was what every man whispered to his neighbour down the long dinner-table at the mansion, and if he had been Shakespeare himself they could scarcely have regarded him with greater reverence. When I asked who the new-comer was of Mr. Paragon, he told me he was a 'gentleman rider,' which seems a very remarkable profession; the same thing, I suppose, as your 'gentleman farmer,' only on horseback?"

"Oh dear no," said Evy, "not at all the same thing;" and at once entered into an explanation and vindication of gentlemen riders with an enthusiasm worthy of the noblest cause. But though Evy had thus been made aware of the captain's presence

in Balcombe, and fully expected him at the earliest date on which his pledge to Lord Dirleton permitted him to visit her, his arrival, when it did take place, was nevertheless somewhat of a surprise.

Though she had slept but little on the previous night for thinking of him, she had come down-stairs calm and collected, and with the resolve not to reveal to anybody—and especially to Judith, who she fancied had been watching her of late with mischievous narrowness—the emotions that were thronging her gentle bosom. At the breakfast-table, over which, under pretence that Evy alone knew how to make his tea, she had been appointed to preside by Mr. Hulet, she officiated as usual; listening to the narration of old “symptoms” in aunt or uncle with exemplary patience, or sympathising with the new disorders with which one or other of them was for ever being threatened. After the morning meal her arm was offered to Aunt Sophia for the customary stroll on the cliff walk, an honour to which Evy had shown herself very averse, not on account of its inconvenience, but because she felt that she was taking Judith’s proper place in accepting it; but it had been thrust upon her. Mrs. Hulet manifested a very marked preference for her society over that of her late companion on all occasions—in which alone her husband was wont to observe his wife showed sense—and for Evy to protest against the expression of it only made matters worse.

“I beg you will not have any delicacy on my account,” Judith had plainly told her, “for it will not make your aunt’s behaviour to myself one whit less odious; it is quite clear that I have lost her favour, and that you have won it; wear it and welcome, my dear Evy; push her footstool, hand her salts, and listen to the wisdom of her Doctor Carambole; I have had enough of it all, I assure you, and resign my post to you without a pang of regret.”

Without regret, perhaps, yet not altogether, as Evy fancied, without some wound to her self-love. At all events, Judith’s behaviour towards her had certainly lost the cordiality it once possessed, for which she pitied, but did not blame her. And so it happened that on the eventful morning of which we speak, Evy and her aunt were promenading slowly up and down the cliff walk together, the latter silent and shivering in her shawls, though April at Balcombe had almost the warmth of June elsewhere in England, and the former silent also, but very thoughtful.

Dear Jack was coming, that was certain,

and with faithful purpose; but were the circumstances such as to allow of her permitting him to put that purpose into execution? Did it involve the sacrifice of his prospects and of his favour with his uncle, that was the question; above all, if it was so, would she have the courage to refuse him? It would be very, very hard to do so. For six long months she had not asked, she had not heard, the least tidings of him. With the exception of that conversation with Mr. De Concy at the pic-nic, and of her unwilling confidence to Judith, she had not spoken of him to any one, and yet she had him as vividly before her eyes as on the eve of that day of their separation; still heard his loving words, still felt the kiss he had given her at parting on her faithful cheek.

That her uncle would be less willing to lose her than ever, she well knew; but also that his love for her was far too genuine to permit him to oppose her happiness. That rested, she felt convinced, with herself alone. Nothing would be easier—and certainly nothing more delightful—than to meet Captain Heyton, as in the hour in which he had bidden her adieu, as his plighted bride. But would not such behaviour be a proof that her love for him was not so genuine and unselfish as that of her uncle for herself? To this, indeed, her heart could not assent, for was it not throbbing at that instant with as genuine and unselfish love as ever beat in human breast? But from her heart she endeavoured to appeal to her conscience—her sense of duty. It would not be right to permit her lover to lose his fortune for her sake, and therefore, unless she knew that that sacrifice would not be demanded—unless he told her so with his first words—she would receive him, not coldly indeed, for that would be impossible, but with maidenly reserve and dignity. It would not be difficult, she thought, in the very expression of his face, to read how his suit with the old lord had sped; whether she was free to love him or not. If he wore a quiet resolute smile—the smile of one who is set upon a purpose though the loss is great—she also would be resolute to oppose it. While on the other hand if his looks showed—

“Evy!”

She stopped as suddenly as though like Daphne she had been rooted to the ground, causing her nervous companion to utter a shrill scream, under the impression perhaps that one or both of them had fallen over the cliff; but Evy did not hear it.

she only heard her name, and recognised the voice that uttered it.

"Evy!"

For one instant she saw him standing in the little drawing-room, at the French window that opened on the croquet ground, and the next he was across the lawn, clearing the flower-bed at a bound, and had clasped her in his arms. There was no time to learn from the expression of his features whether he was fated to have fifty thousand a year or only five hundred; but if happy looks are the index of a moneyed man, Jack Heyton must have been a millionaire at least. Not till she had returned his embrace with corresponding warmth did the recollection of her good resolutions occur to poor Evy, accompanied by the reflection that it had occurred too late.

"Dear me, dear me," gasped Mrs. Hulet. "How you have made my heart go, young man! Evy, where's my salts?"

"A thousand pardons, madam," replied Jack, taking the little bottle of restoratives from Evy's fingers, and applying it with his own hand to the good lady's needs. "But your niece has made *my* heart go, and has it in her own possession, which must needs excuse the impetuosity of my conduct. My aunt, the late Lady Dirleton, used to be affected like yourself with palpitations, and I was always sent for—just like the doctor—because I was so conversant with her favourite remedies."

"Dear me, how nice of you!" ejaculated Mrs. Hulet, with the bluntness that habitual ill-health engenders. "How I wish that early in life I had met with some young man like you."

The idea that so eminent a person as Captain Heyton's aunt should have suffered from the same complaint as herself was doubtless grateful to the old lady's sense of dignity, but his attention to her physical exigencies—he was at that very moment fanning her with his wide-awake with all the delicate dexterity of a Japanese performing the butterfly trick—fairly carried her heart by storm. A man of the world would have taken it for granted that the captain had not got his uncle's consent, and felt the necessity for ingratiating himself in other quarters; but in the latter respect, at least, he would have been wrong. Jack was eminently "good-natured," and was always ready to help a lady, a term which he understood to apply to any one of the fair sex, whatever her social position.

Mrs. Hulet's naïve remark made both the young folks laugh heartily, and helped to put blushing Evy at her ease.

"So you did not expect me so soon," said the captain, gaily, when the old lady had been brought round.

"I thought you might not have come perhaps till the afternoon," answered Evy.

"There, you hear that," exclaimed Mrs. Hulet, smiling. "My niece expected you to leave your card with kind inquiries after her aunt and uncle, and then to ride away again, or, at least, she endeavours to persuade me so. I see how matters stand. An old woman like me is sadly in the way on these occasions; if you'll give me your arm to the house, Captain Heyton, you shall come back and have a walk with this young lady alone, for your reward."

Never, within Evy's knowledge of her, had her aunt evinced such liveliness and excitement, as she did on this occasion. "I like to make young people happy," continued she, as if in apology for her unwonted behaviour, "and though I have not been very fortunate myself I still entertain the greatest interest in the marriage lottery. Captain Heyton," added she, more gravely, as they slowly drew out of ear-shot of her niece, "you have gained a prize in Evy, such as falls to the lot of few men."

"I am sure of that," answered he, frankly; "I am also aware that I do not deserve it."

"I don't know about that," returned the old lady, kindly; "you seem to me to have a good heart. Though, indeed" (here she sighed deeply), "that is not enough to insure wedded happiness. You must be patient with her as well as kind, my young friend. 'Bear and forbear' should be the motto on every wedding-ring. Forgive me for speaking so plainly, and with such abruptness; my love for Evy must be my excuse. To-morrow, or even sooner, you will find out that I am nobody in this house, and my good advice will seem to you of no value. Good morning, sir."

As she spoke of her own troubles her manner, which had been singular warm and earnest, grew frigid, and her last words fell like three little blocks of ice. Jack raised her withered white hand to his lips, and kissed the finger tips.

"Though others may consider you 'nobody,' madam," returned he, with feeling, "there is one person, at least, whose esteem you have won to-day, and you will keep to his life's end."

"Thanks—hush! That is Mr. Hulet's voice. It is sad to have to say it, but if you would gain his favour I counsel you to show none to me."

The next moment Mr. Hulet appeared at the porched door, which opened on the garden, and as if in corroboration of his wife's words, his brow darkened at sight of the stranger upon whose arm his wife was leaning.

"Who is this young gentleman?" inquired he; "if at least you think it worth while to introduce your visitors to the personage who is humorously entitled the master of the house."

"Speak to him fairly, and don't cross him," whispered Mrs. Hulet, in an earnest whisper, at the same moment withdrawing her arm, and walking unassisted (as, indeed, she was perfectly competent to do) within doors.

"My name is Heyton, sir, Captain Heyton. We have met before more than once, Mr. Hulet."

"Indeed, then, I had forgotten it," returned the other, coldly. "I remember you now, and conjecture the cause of your present visit. Don't you think it would have been more becoming, under the circumstances, Captain Heyton, if, instead of making your way yonder"—he pointed to where Evy was standing—"if, instead of seeking out my niece, or endeavouring to secure Mrs. Hulet's good offices on your behalf, you had come, in the first instance, to me?"

"Indeed, Mr. Hulet, I endeavoured to do so," answered the captain, with a humility that did his self-restraint great credit. "It was for you, and you alone, I asked, and the servant left me in yonder room, from which, however, seeing the ladies walking in the garden, I thought it no harm to join them."

"It might have been, it may be still, great harm, sir. However, perhaps you will now favour me with a few minutes' private conversation in my study, before rejoining Miss Carthew, if, that is, you succeed in making it clear to me that it is advisable that you should rejoin her."

It is not always the best plan for establishing your position in a house to cultivate the good graces of the junior partner.

THE HOUSE OF HABSBERG.

SOME seven or eight miles above Vienna, on the bank of the Danube, lies the little town of Klosterneuburg, of easy access to lazy people by carriage, rail, or steamer, and a pleasant and not too severe promenade for the fanatical pedestrian, provided he can find his way through the by-

paths past the Krapfenwald, over the Kahlenberg, and down the Weidling Glen. The atmosphere of this Cloister New Town seems charged with lethargy, as is usually the case in places where monks have built their nest, and the neighbouring slopes are rich with the vine, which is also usually and curiously the case where holy men have secluded themselves for the more perfect contemplation of heavenly things. In Roman Catholic countries generally, and in Austria in particular, the best wine is grown in the monks' vineyards, and Klosterneuburg, no exception to the rule, is particularly noted for the quality of its wines, red and white, and in such quantity, that the local humorists have nicknamed it "Zum Rinnenden Zapfen," which signifies the sign of "The Running Tap."

The town, on first impression, might well be called Sleepy Hollow, were it not that one discovers, on a better acquaintance, a number of circumstances that militate against repose. It is the head-quarters of the Pioneer Regiment, with its pontoon train, and during the drill season there is an everlasting throwing of bridges over the Danube, and breaking them up again, going on at all hours. Through the summer and autumn sight-seers and tourists are intermittent, and the Vienna cockney is chronic, especially on Sundays and holidays.

The first objects that strike the beholder on approaching the town, either from the river or from the hills, are the gigantic copper imitations of the imperial crown and archducal hat, perched on the top of a huge pile of building, blazing in the sunlight, and symbolic of the power and grandeur of the House of Austria. The history and traditions of the old and the present reigning families, of Babenberg and Habsburg alike, are intimately associated with the place and its rich old Augustine monastery.

Leopold, the Godly Babenberg, patron, saint, and protector in chief—Nepomucene and Florian kindly assisting him in his duties—of the Austrian archduchess, lies buried in the church of the monastery, which he was induced to found by the miraculous interposition of a piece of his wife's paraphernalia. The tale, even for a monkish one, is remarkable for its silly triviality; but it is not to be lightly doubted by a presuming heretic or free-thinker, for it is a leading article of belief in the Lerchenfelder religion. Leopold and his wife Agnes were one day standing de-

voutly meditating on the site of a monastery which the latter had made up her mind to found, influenced thereto by the pure and disinterested promises of her ghostly confessor, that such an act would assuredly open to her the gates of salvation. The wind, however, cut short their meditations by carrying away the markgräfin's veil, which, judging by the long but ineffectual search made for it, must have been of considerable value to the lady. This circumstance would seem to have restored the world and its vanities to the uppermost place in her thoughts, for nothing further was done in the matter of the foundation for nine years; at the end of which time her husband, whose piety was never allowed to interfere with his sport, though he managed to blend the two in a very edifying manner, found the veil out hunting. Unharmful by time or exposure, it was fluttering from the branches of an elder-tree, on the spot where now stands Klosterneuburg. Whereupon conscience and the priests reproached the markgraf for his worldly backsliding, which Providence had obviously checked in such a miraculous manner; and he straightway proceeded to found the monastery on the site where the veil was found. The believer in miracles and relics will no doubt be much solaced by a sight of the veil and tree-stump, preserved and exhibited by the worthy fathers.

The passion for building has been, and is still, no doubt hereditary, along with some other peculiarities, in all the rulers of Austria, from Jasomirgott to Franz Josef. The greatest builder of them all, the last sovereign of the male line of Habsburg, and father of Maria Theresa, the Emperor Charles the Sixth, erected the present stately pile, meaning to use it as his summer residence, but, as moneys had become scarce, he was never able to complete his grand designs. Another Habsburg, the Archduke Maximilian (fourth son of the Emperor Maximilian the Second), Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, and twice elected King of Poland, but unable to maintain his right, dedicated the archducal hat "out of devotion"—but by what right is not quite apparent—to Saint Leopold, and implored the protector in chief to take care of it. In other words he handed over the custody of his father's state head-gear to the monks, who have managed ever since to make the utmost capital possible out of the archducal piety or necessities, by averring that the

hat belongs to the convent, and not to the imperial house. They have succeeded so far in this curious pretension, that whenever the hat is required in order to have homage rendered to the wearer as Archduke of Austria at coronations, or on other occasions, the emperor, as archduke, has to beg the loan of it, which is of course always granted, but not without a great deal of ceremonial palavering, eating, drinking, and posturing. When the hat is wanted, two commissioners of the real old Austrian noble stock, or the nearest obtainable approach to that phenomenon, arrive from Vienna in a coach and six, with an escort of cavalry. To receive them with all honours, the citizens parade "in buff and bandolier," or whatever is the equivalent for them now-a-days, and the whole brotherhood, from the abbot to the scullion, is assembled before the monastery gates. After effusive and long-winded compliments on both sides, commissioners and all go to Saint Leopold's chapel to hear mass, and sing a Te Deum. Then the bishop of the diocese, crosier in hand, gives audience in the throne-room to the visitors, and asks them, with well-simulated gravity and innocence, what may be the nature of the business that has brought them to Saint Leopold's shrine. Then the commissioners, keeping up their parts in the comedy with much spirit, inform the "well-beloved, pious, and faithful," that the old archduke is dead—a fact known for several weeks, or months, as the case may be, to the whole world—and that the new one wants the loan of his own old hat. This request appearing perfectly reasonable to the bishop, he solemnly declares his conviction that there is no just cause or impediment why he should not have it, and the chapter, with beautiful unanimity, record their compliance. After this comes the only sensible part of the proceedings, when all adjourn to the banquet-hall, where they are not regaled with lentils, and where they drink a very fair quantity of the best of the "Prälaten-wein" to the eternal health and glory of the House of Austria.

It shows great faith in the heads of the parties concerned, or in the excellence of the prelate's wine, that the examination and verification of the hat and its appendages should take place immediately after this symposium. The commissioners produce the old "protocol," in which the hat with its sable tags, its large blue sapphire on the top, its pearls, rubies, and emeralds are all set forth with minute detail. When

everything is examined, verified, sealed, and protocoll'd over again, the hat is packed away in its red leathern case, locked up and carried to the gate by the dean and two acolytes, and formally handed over to the imperial, royal, and archducal commissioners. The case is then placed on a litter borne between two mules, under the special guardianship of a dozen full-blooded noble troopers of the guard, and, followed by commissioners, trumpeters, horsemen, footmen, buglers, the general gaping public, and the bishop's empty carriage, it is conveyed to the gates of Vienna. The restoration of the hat to the shrine is conducted much in the same pompous fashion, though with not quite so much elaborate ceremony.

More labour and research have been expended on the early descent of the Habsburgs, than on that of any other house that ever reigned in Europe, which may partly be accounted for by the very prominent share which these sovereigns have always taken in European politics—a prominence to be ascribed, however, more to the exigencies created by the heterogeneous elements of the nations brought under their sway, and the dynastic and religious complications arising therefrom, than to any great or noble qualities ever exhibited by the rulers themselves (Charles the Fifth and Joseph the Second excepted) since Rudolf laid the foundations of the family fortunes. He was in himself ancestor enough for half a dozen houses, and could easily afford, as far as history is concerned, to dispense with a grandfather. As the first Napoleon once silenced a caviller by the assertion, "I am an ancestor; my patent of nobility dates from the battle of Montenotte!" so might Rudolf have begun with himself, and dated his patent from the bloody victory of the Markfeld. His descendants, with the aforesaid exceptions of Charles the Fifth and Joseph the Second, have not contrived among them all to throw much additional lustre on the dynasty. They might, therefore, have also been reasonably contented with this patent without priding themselves individually on being merely the tenth or twentieth "transmitter of a foolish face." Napoleon never lost an opportunity of discharging his rude sarcasms at the "Olympic pride" of "ce vieux ganache," as he once politely, in conversation with Maria Louisa, termed her father, that haughty Habsburg, whom the inexorable logic of facts had alone compelled to accept him, "a person of no birth what-

ever," as his son-in-law. His farewell snub to Francis, delivered in the presence of the "parterre" of German kings and princelets at Dresden, before setting out for the campaign of Moscow, was very Napoleonic and the reverse of soothing—"Je suis le Rodolphe de Hapsbourg de ma famille."

Guillemannus, in his *Habsburgiacum*, or *Treatise on the Origin of the House of Austria*, Fugger, Peireskius, and Hergott, are the best known writers on Rudolf's ancestry, but among the crowd of obscurer flatterers there is one lunatic who deserves a passing laugh before noticing the accounts of the more reasonable compilers. As Kohl admirably observes: "Many historiographers have laboured for the glorification of the old House of Austria, but none have gone about their work in a way to be at all compared to Johann Rasch's." Less inspired or gifted genealogists have been satisfied to carry the pedigree modestly only to the Romans, but no meaner cradle than the Ark, or lower descent than that from Ararat, could appease the lofty ambition of Rasch, who was a teacher in the Scottish convent in Vienna, and lived at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The magnificent library of the monastery of Klosterneuburg is rich with some twenty-five thousand volumes and four hundred manuscripts of rare and curious works, and among them is to be found the precious *Chronica Austriæ* of this wonderful instructor of posterity. It is doubtful if there exists in this or any other collection another piece of humbug so unique of its kind as this compilation, although heralds and genealogists are famous enough for such efforts of genius. The *Chronica Austriæ* would be a capital burlesque if it were not, to all appearance, outwardly and inwardly intended for grave history. Notwithstanding that the volume is printed and got up in the best style of the last century, and written with a species of sober insanity, it may, after all, be really meant for a bit of sly monkish humour. There are many items of curious information, not generally known, regarding things that occurred, and men who flourished on the earth before the Deluge, which are not to be found in any other history, sacred or profane; but as no authorities are cited, the reader must take them all with pure faith as matters of inspiration. By Father Rasch's account the House of Austria can indubitably trace its pedigree back to the

first mariner and navigator on record, for he gives an unbroken chain of rulers in direct descent from Noah. Forty "heathen," and several Hebrew princes, with the different variations of their names and their aliases, are ranged in imposing files, with their various coats of arms. It is perhaps a little startling at first sight to find Noah and his sons called heathens, which in the commonly received acceptance of the term would imply they were Turks or other mis-believers, and can only be accounted for by the fact that the original meaning of the word *heide*, heathen, was derived from the wild, waste, or forest in which he dwelt. After the Jews, the crazy chronicler seems to be at fault in his genealogical scent, and shuffles out of the dilemma by merely noting that "heathen princes again ruled in Austria, and certainly not fewer than seven." These are succeeded by one hundred Christians, commencing with a certain Rolantin, and going down to eleven Babenbergers and fifteen Habsburgers. To make up for his want of authorities he is very particular in his dates, as when he states that "eighteen hundred and seven years after the creation of the world, one hundred and fifty after the Deluge, and two thousand one hundred and fifty-six before the birth of Christ, Tuisko brought a great people with him from Armenia, Germans and Wendes, among whom were twenty-five counts, and about thirty princes." As far as the name, and the name only, of the leader of these immigrants is concerned, he would seem to have condescended to temper his own exuberant imagination with the scarcely more trustworthy fancies contained in the old legends collected by Tacitus, as mentioned in all German histories. In the first century after Christ, the Roman historian heard from the Germans on the Rhine that the common ancestor of their people was called Thuisco or Thuisio, and sprang from the earth. Thuisco is evidently derived from Thuit, Thiot, the people, as is also the name of his son Manniako, from Mann, a man. The appellation of this mythical ancestor, it may naturally be supposed, was adopted by many of his descendants, and in time, among other modifications or corruptions, would appear as Ethico. In the seventh century there did exist an Ethico, Duke of Alsace, who, with a certain degree of probability, is claimed as ancestor of Rudolf, and it is likely enough that the more extravagant pedigree-maniacs may have muddled him up with the apocryphal progenitor of

the whole Teutonic race. The passion for hunting up ancestors, real or imaginary, has always been a hereditary weakness of the members of this house, and it is therefore no great matter for wonderment that plenty of sycophants and expectant pensioners were ready to hand to pander to it. The most notable indulger in this passion was the Emperor Maximilian the First, husband of the beautiful Mary of Burgundy, and grandfather of Charles the Fifth. He not only employed others to make out his pedigree, but he invented one for himself, entitled a Genealogical Chronicle of the Austrian Family, which he dictated among other works to his private secretary, Grunbeck. Maximilian sent forth seven wise men, all learned historiographers, through Germany, to search, what were in those days the only sources of information, the archives of convents and abbeys, in order to collect materials for the genealogies of his ancestors, and to examine the resting-places of the dead for monumental inscriptions that would throw any light on the subject. The result of these labours was about a dozen pedigrees, the most learned of which went back to Adam and Eve, though they are by no means so amusing or ingenious as Johann Rasch's magnum opus. This vehement pursuit of his dead ancestors induced a cynical wag to write on the wall of the imperial court-yard the lines, of which the following is the well-known English version :

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman ?

The emperor's common sense, provoked by the doggerel, would seem to have been touched for the moment by the absurdity of his hobby, for he wrote underneath :

Ich bin ein Mann wie ander Mann,
Nur mir das Gott die Ehre gann.

Maximilian's grandiose idea, as expressed in his own words, was to "outdo Julius Cæsar, and to be *semper e familiâ Caroli Magni*." Charlemagne was somehow or other to be made one of his ancestors, and his avidity and perseverance in claiming kinship with all the royal families in Europe, extinct or flourishing, were marvellous and indefatigable. Because his mother Eleanor was a princess of Portugal, and great-grand-daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and because John of Gaunt's grandmother was a French princess, and his father took the style of King of France, he quartered on his escutcheon the

arms of Portugal, England, and France with those of Spain. Besides the arms of Hungary and Bohemia, he appropriated those of the Byzantine Empire, for he argued that the Holy Roman Empire was one and indivisible, and that the Eastern portion had been only separated from the Western "owing to the arrogance of the Greek Church, wherefore God had punished the Byzantine Empire, and subjected it to the heathen, and King Maximilian or his descendants might hope in a short time to reconquer it." And if any further right were necessary to quarter these arms, he claimed relationship with the imperial family of the Palæologi. Notwithstanding these and various other industrious but eccentric literary vagaries of royal, noble, learned, and mad authors and pedants, the only authentic facts connected with Rudolf's ancestry are that he was the son of Albert the Fourth, Count of Habsburg, and can trace his line back without any question to Guntram the Rich, Count of Alsace and Brisgau, who lived in the tenth century. There is also a slight amount of plausibility in the claim set up to carry it still further back, as has been before mentioned, to Ethico, Duke of Alsace, who flourished in the seventh century. Owing to the very considerable amount of promiscuous slaughtering and plundering that went on among the class, in which the members of the modern European haute-volée are so delighted and proud to detect and establish an ancestor, castles and lands changed lords, and one title went down and another up, with such pantomimic rapidity, that the history of these vicissitudes degenerates into a sort of harlequinade. It is consequently very difficult to trace with satisfactory accuracy the titles and possessions of Guntram's immediate descendants. His son Kanzeline appears to be known as Count of Altenburg, and to have managed to live on his property at Windisch, the site of the old Roman station of Vindonissa, on the banks of the river Aar, in Switzerland. Radebot, or Radboton, a son of Kanzeline, was known as Count of Kleggau, and has the credit, with some writers, of having built the Stammhaus, or cradle of the family. But the celebrated Acta Fundationis of the monastery of Muri, in the Canton of Aargau, founded by another son of Kanzeline, Werner, Bishop of Strasburg, leave it beyond doubt that Werner himself, and no one else, erected the Castle of Habsburg in the beginning of the eleventh century on a hill above Windisch. Rad-

boton's eldest son dying without issue, his second son, Werner, who was the heir of his uncle, Bishop Werner, is the first of the family who is clearly designated in the old records as Count of Habsburg. The descendants of this Werner married, increased, murdered, or were murdered, fought, robbed, and waxed rich in the orthodox style of those cheerful times, until 1232, when Count Rudolf dying, his two sons, Albert the Fourth and Rudolf, divided the patrimony between them. Albert kept the territories in Alsace and Aargau with the Stammschloss of the family. Rudolf took Kleggau, the lands in the Brisgau, Rheinfelden, and Lauffenburg. Albert the Fourth married Hedwige, daughter of the Count of Kyburg, and became father of Rudolf, the great founder of the imperial royal line of Austria. Rudolf, younger brother of Count Albert the Fourth, fixed his residence at Lauffenburg, and became founder of the line of Habsburg-Lauffenburg, from which are descended the Earls of Denbigh. According to the great Sir Bernard, the English Habsburgs settled in this country in the reign of Henry the Third, and the cause of their coming is explained in an ancient manuscript, written about the time of King Edward the Fourth, in which it appears that Geffery or Godfrey, Count of Habsburg, having been reduced by the characteristic rapacity of his cousin Rudolf, King of the Romans, to the extreme depths of poverty, one of his sons, also a Geffery, came to England, fought for King Henry in his wars, and assumed the surname of Fieldeng or Filding, from his father's patrimony of Rheinfelden. With the usual luck of his family, he obtained, on account of his services, and also out of the king's compassionate feelings for his case, "considerable support in rents and fees, lying in divers places," which his descendants, with the same proverbial family luck, increased from time to time, by marriages and grants. Lord Denbigh is described by Ulster as "Count of Hapsburg-Lauffenberg and Rheinfelden in Germany," and as such, a count of the Holy Roman Empire, in which statements, however, neither the Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Gräflichen Häuser, nor the Historisch-Heraldisches Handbuch appear to support him. The member of the English Habsburgs best known to fame is Henry Fielding, the novelist.

Albert the Fourth, Count of Habsburg, turned Crusader, and died of the plague at

Askalon, in 1240. Before setting out for Palestine he gave much pious and worldly advice combined to his sons. They were to cultivate truth and piety, and shun evil counsellors; never to go to war without extreme necessity, but once engaged therein, to act with courage and firmness; to be swift in action, and to prefer peace to their own private gain. His descendants certainly cultivated such piety as is taught by the Jesuits; but in courage not many of them could be counted as paladins, while, as a rule, they have acted in the very contrary sense to every other of the above precepts.

"Be mindful," said the paternal monitor, "that the Counts of Habsburg did not attain their height of reputation and glory by fraud, insolence, or selfishness, but by courage and devotion to the public weal. As long as you follow their footsteps you will not only retain, but augment the possessions and dignities of your illustrious ancestors." By a remarkable irony of fate his descendants have succeeded amazingly in life by adopting a course of action, which cannot in any way be reconciled with their ancestor's exhortations. No sooner was Albert dead, than Rudolf, flinging his good counsels to the winds, commenced that long career of turbulent and selfish aggression which marked him out as "great" among his fellow-men, and eventually mounted him on the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. He collected adventurers and desperadoes from all parts to his standard, and made himself a terror, or an aid, to his neighbours, as his own interests dictated. He protected the adjacent states from the inroads of banditti, or of barons not much better than banditti. Under various pretexts he acted the part himself of a knightly bandit. He turned his arms against his paternal and maternal uncles; from the former he got as much as he gave, but from the latter he managed to extort money for his necessities, though he was foiled for the present in any further exactions, for the Count of Kyburg made over his territories, as fiefs of the see, to the Bishop of Strasburg, to avoid losing them to his rapacious nephew. Rudolf then harried the possessions of the Bishop of Basle, entered the city by night, and burnt down a nunnery, for which he was excommunicated by Pope Innocent the Fourth. In expiation he served in a crusade, conducted by Ottokar, whose rival and conqueror he subsequently became, against the pagan Prussians. Afterwards he as-

sisted the same monarch against Bela, King of Hungary. On his return home he mixed himself up in a series of feuds in Switzerland, and, with cunning zeal, helped the Bishop of Strasburg against the citizens, and beat them. He now made friends with the uncle he had so sorely bullied, persuading him to ask back the grant of his territories from the bishop, and on the refusal of the latter, he sided with the citizens against the prelate, who died of disgust at the losses and defeats inflicted on him by his former ally. His successor in the see prudently restored the estates. Rudolf, unable to remain quiet, got himself appointed prefect or protector of the city of Zurich and of the forest cantons, in which capacity he embroiled himself with a powerful league of barons. Before the war with this confederation was concluded, the Abbot of St. Gallen summoned him to do homage for the inheritance derived from his uncle, Hartmann of Kyburg. On his refusal, the angry priest marched against him, and, at the same time, he received intelligence that the citizens of Basle, instigated by his old enemy, their bishop, had massacred some nobles of his family and party, after a tournament given by his cousin of Lauffenburg. With wily address he hastened to make peace with the Abbot of St. Gallen, and even succeeded in securing his assistance against Basle. While encamped before the walls of Basle, into which he had driven the bishop and his adherents, he was awakened in his tent at midnight by his nephew, Frederick of Hohenzollern, Burggraf of Nürnberg, with the news that he was unanimously chosen King of the Romans by the electors of Germany. This Frederick of Hohenzollern had been one of the most active partisans of Rudolf in securing his election, and was an ancestor of the present Emperor of Germany. By a curious coincidence a Hohenzollern was foremost in giving the control over the affairs of Germany to the Habsburgs, and another Hohenzollern, his direct descendant, was their supplanter on the field of Königgrätz, when in the course of time and things their imperial rôle had come to be played out. Rudolf, however, could not foresee this, and, he at least, had succeeded finally, at the ripe age of fifty-five, in planting the roots of the Habsburg stock, to grow and flourish into a tree of goodly girth and stature for nearly six centuries at the head of Germany. When the citizens of Basle heard of Rudolf's election, totally disre-

garding the desperate remonstrances of their bishop, they hastened to open their gates and submit, saying, "We have taken up arms against the Count of Hapsburg, and not against the King of the Romans." The astounded and mortified prelate, forgetting his dignity and his apostolic calling, and thinking only of his enemy's good luck, struck his forehead in a fury, and irreverently exclaimed, "Sede fortiter, Domine Deus, vel locum Rudolfus occupabit tuum!"

AUT CÆSAR AUT NULLUS.

CÆSAR or nullus! Brother, say not so;
By such mad speech thou dost thy soul much wrong:
Such words are not for thee, who art too strong,
Manly, and true to let thyself sink low,
Missing the highest. There is bitter woe
For every son of man who turns his back
On his ideal; therefore, though the track
Lead to no regal goal, still onward go.
Not thine to fix how high thy state shall be,
Nor thine, perchance, to feel the Cæsar crown
Clasping thine upturn'd brow; thou ne'er may'st see
The purple from thy shoulders falling down.
But it is thine to live right royally,
King of thyself, and gain a king's renown.

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

VI. AN ARTISTIC SHELTER.

PAGET HOUSE consists of several houses run into one, and is large and imposing. It possesses a flaunting wide front in a principal thoroughfare of the artist quarter, and its prevailing characteristics are stuffiness and gloom combined with an odour of decomposed toast-and-water. Indeed, on entering its portals you feel as though suddenly plunged into the centre of a mildewed pillow, or as though you were spending a wet night in a leaky omnibus among the damaged straw. Wall and floor and staircase wear a dissipated, up-all-night, gin-and-water look. Sundry very old masters, and an early effort or two of some once rising artist whose broken heart has mouldered into dust, blacken on the smoky walls, crooked, awry, and desolate. Time-worn oil-cloth, from which all pattern has long since vanished, decorates the hall. The stairs, which have not been washed for years, act as a calendar of long devoured beefsteaks, bearing on their surface greasy indications of trodden-down fat dropped off plates by careless servants. In ambush at corners of steps are little heaps of flue, portions of garments of lodgers passed away, torn off by the innumerable headless nails that crop up through the plaster everywhere. Broken busts, and sketches

for statues which no one would order, encumber the landings, trying to shroud their false proportions from view under a decent cobweb mantle. Rusty morean portières festoon the drawing-room doors; blinds once fair and white, now stained and speckled with many finger marks, adorn the staircase windows. A wan waiter in soup-smear'd garments, with dusky towel under arm, receives you at the door, and conducts you with patient air, as though sighing to himself softly, "Yet another victim," into the sanctum of Mrs. Jopkins, who sits in fearful deshabelle among her maids, giving orders for the day. She is old and fat and damp, is Mrs. Jopkins, wheezy and scant of breath, innocent of cap, with short grey hair screwed with paper into little tails all over her head, like half-developed quills on a baby porcupine.

"Yes, you can have a room by the week, with complete board, at thirty shillings. Oxtail soup, Mary, with plenty of pepper. Gibbs, show the gentleman his room, three-pair back, number sixteen. Too much soap used this week, Jane, and the washing's ridiculous. If the boarders will spill their food over the tablecloth so much the worse for them. When coals are so dear we must take it out in washing. One clean tablecloth a week's enough in all conscience. It's them dirty brats that does it. We won't have no more children here, that's flat."

"Oh, ma! don't be absurd," ejaculates a deep voice close by, and Miss Jemima Jopkins makes her appearance rattling a bunch of keys. She is an old young lady with a quantity of false hair, piled like a Tower of Babel on her head, high cheek-bones, a dress that was once smart, no cuffs or collar, and not overclean hands. "Where should we be without the children? They brighten us up. I do love children!" and her chaste bosom heaves a gentle sigh. "A new lodger. Are you coming to breakfast? The bell will ring presently."

I follow the wan waiter up the stuffy stairs, tumbling over brooms, and boots, and clothes laid out to brush on chairs, and mysterious plates pushed out of room doors, bearing signs of strange overnight orgies of bacon and poached eggs. My room is small and exceedingly grimy; it boasts a bed covered with a dirty counterpane, one chair, one crazy table, scant washing arrangements spread on a chest of drawers, old flowered curtains washed out and tattered, and festoons of cobwebs about a window thick-crust'd with dirt-

tears of years. I feel like Baron Trenk at Madame Tussaud's, and expect hoary mice and veteran blackbeetles to come wandering about my feet, but a cracked bell suddenly echoes through the house, doors open and shut, feet patter over the stones, and I, too, obey the call to breakfast. Surely that dining-room is the very centre of the mouldy pillow! The windows cannot have been opened for days, fumes of last week's boiled beef hang about the cornice, the worn carpet is redolent of fried ham, whilst the tablecloth!

Miss Jopkins occupies the head of the long table, in front of a portentous array of teacups and tin pots of tea and coffee. A frisky old lady sits at her right hand, a lady with roses in her cap, bands of purple hair across a heavily ploughed forehead, a good many old-fashioned rings, an effigy of an eye as a brooch upon her bosom, one or two hair bracelets, a soupçon of beard, and a massive gold chain and ponderous watch. Opposite to her is a burly Irishman, an ex-Indian officer, with a loud voice, and Milesian twinkle in his eye, which belies the fierce curl of a white moustache; beside him sits his faded little wife, and beyond a dyspeptic sculptor, also Irish, upon whom the art goddess has evidently not smiled. Beyond him again are two painters of the long-haired, black-nailed school, now happily almost extinct. At the extreme end of the table, visible over a vista of toast-racks, boiled eggs, and plates of cold meat, Signor Merella, one of the champion trapezists, his hair curled with tongs, with an Italian wife and two children. A pale young man, red-haired, whose sole occupation seems to be the continuous use of a tooth-pick, completes the party, for, as Miss Jemima explains, all who can afford it are out of town, and one or two are ill upstairs.

"Tea or coffee, Mrs. Goram? Gibbs, don't leave the room, your attendance may be required."

This to the wan waiter, whose patient aspect changes not as he deprecatingly shifts his weight from one foot to the other, and whisks his towel with a despondent phantom of alacrity under the other arm.

"Meejor M'Carthy, I've a little surprise for you this morning," observes the frisky lady with a little laugh, jumping nimbly up and drawing from some hidden receptacle a plate of pickled salmon. "You are always talking of your love of fish, and here's some for you."

"Madam, I don't know what I've done

to deserve this attention. My dear, thank Mrs. Goram. Perhaps Miss Jemima will join us in a slice. Very thoughtful indeed, I'm sure."

Here the dyspeptic sculptor woke into something resembling the liveliness of a tortoise, his bloodshot eyes rolled round a moment, and he offered Mrs. Major M'Carthy a piece of his private toast, much as a schoolboy lends his knife to the recipient of a cake from home.

"My dear, accept a slice of Mr. M'Grath's own peculiar. It is very superior, toasted by himself. Will Mr. M'Grath join us in a little bit of salmon?" And so the ruse was successful, and the sculptor's longing properly appeased. It appears the fashion at Paget House for every one to gloat over his particular delicacy, to bring from his den up-stairs some special tit-bit that shall fill the souls of the others with envy, and to mark stately courtesy or shades of dislike by stiff offers of small fragments thereof, or to wither up enemies by slowly devouring it all before their tantalised gaze.

And now the conversation became general, and was quite amazing from its rapidity. Mrs. Goram, with many a smirk, told of her terrific adventure in taking a wrong turning out of Oxford-street, and of the disasters that thereupon ensued, until her rescue by a timely omnibus. Miss Jopkins was quite hysterical over a coming meeting with an old school friend, remarking in her deep voice, with a youthful gurgle, "and you know what gurls are like when they get together!" Miss Jopkins's facial expression, by-the-way, is very fine; she can go through an entire gamut at a moment's notice, passing from ethereal innocence into deep Kemble-like reproaches aside to long-suffering Gibbs, and then, should occasion arise, as rapidly assuming an absorbed aspect of attention like Joan of Arc desecrating visions, or a virgin martyr at the stake. Her treatment of the boarders, too, is a masterpiece of infinite diplomacy. She smiles and blushes at honest Major M'Carthy, as she hands his second cup of tea, modestly veiling the brightness of her eyes. With Mrs. Goram she is confidential and familiar, pressing her gouty old hands gushingly, and breathing artless confidences into her ear. To the dyspeptic sculptor, who has long since swallowed his salmon, and now looks ruefully at his empty plate, she speaks with a tinge of hauteur; while for Signor Merella's benefit

her nose seems to shorten up, and her cheek-bones to protrude like twin aggressive cliffs, until her eye falling on the children, her hard face softens again, and perhaps she thinks of the husband she might have had years ago when that hair and lovely bloom were all real, before she finally settled down to her mother's business to drone through an ugly sleep-life, like some hapless princess for whom the fairy prince refused to come.

But though Miss Jopkins's life may be dull, what is her dreariness to that of poor Gibbs, the forlorn one? It is his business to be bullied by every one, to do everything, and be everywhere at one and the same moment; to clean prairies of boots; to fetch up breakfasts until it shall be time to fetch up luncheons; to go on at that, with intervals of knife-cleaning, until dinner-time; to sit up till long past midnight, his cheeks ash-coloured, and his eyes bleared with watching boarders feeding on scraps; to retire finally to rest under a kitchen-dresser, until it shall be time to renew the weary round once more, and so on hopelessly until a weight of years and worn-out vertebrae shall land him in the workhouse—such is the fate of Gibbs, and of many another hard-worked drudge, whom evil fortune has set in a groove from which he has no longer energy to wrench himself. We have homes for dogs, refuges for decayed ballet-girls; why does not some philanthropic millionaire set up an almshouse for broken-down servants-of-all-work?

Half an hour before dinner a clanging bell summons us all into the drawing-room, a large apartment hung round with dreadful portraits of gentlemen obtrusively clinging to parliamentary documents, hatless and smirking, regardless of awfully black thunder-storms on the horizon; and of guileless ladies in Sunday clothes, artlessly settling flowers in vases, and very red in the face from unsuccessfully attempting to conceal their brazenness under an arch demeanour. Wax flowers under shades occupy the mantelpiece, crazy modelled figures, crumbling and fly-blown, evidently the work of former boarders, stand about in corners, and scraps of old thumbed and tattered music litter the oil-cloth cover of the grand piano.

The painters and sculptors drop in one by one, bringing with them a savour of turpentine and clay, and greet each other with remarks upon the fine light they have enjoyed; Mrs. Goram enters in a grand

cap, followed shortly after by Major M'Carthy, bearing two black bottles in one hand, and a plate of plums in the other. Feeling a sudden draught on my left side I turn sharply round to find Gibbs sighing into my ear.

"If you please, sir, will you drink beer at dinner? How many glasses, sir? You see I contract for these things separate like."

Mrs. and Miss Jopkins are heard loudly below, rating Jane and Mary violently, talking of jam puffs and custards in a shrill key, and unlocking a seemingly endless number of creaking cupboards and presses. There is a scuffling from above, followed by a fall and a prolonged howl, after which Signor Merella is descried banging one of the children's heads, previous to an effective and smiling entrance with a background of Madame Merella and babes grouped as much like Medea as may be. At last dinner is ready, and we descend in order of our presumed rank. First, goes Mrs. Goram, as senior boarder, who takes her place on Mrs. Jopkins's immediate right, receiving as she does so a curtsy from that lady, who has by this time developed her tails into three corkscrew curls, has compressed her redundant form into a grey merino garment like a huge pillow-case, and sits, damp, hot, and anxious, behind two great dishes and a pile of plates. Miss Jemima Jopkins occupies the head of another table, her girlish muslin and cerise bows well-nigh concealed by her rival set of dishes, and acknowledges by little simpers the bows of the boarders as they take their seats. Each person produces his private drink in a black bottle or decanter, with ribbon round its neck; and a sepulchral aside to Gibbs, who has been furtively trying to read the newspaper upside down, warns him to remove the covers. All heads are craned towards the steaming viands, the dark-nailed ones unroll frayed little napkins which would be all the better for soap and water, and Mr. M'Grath breathes dyspeptically as he surveys the unappetising meats, indulging his plastic proclivities the while in the manufacture of small black busts of bread. Major M'Carthy frowns ominously, the which his faded wife perceiving, she looks imploringly at Mrs. Goram, who straightway becomes very frisky, bobbing up and down on her chair, indulging in sallies of wondrous playfulness, shaking the bugles of her cap till she fairly rattles like a hail-storm, and employing innumerable innocent

wiles to avert the impending tempest. But the major is not to be so easily appeased. Gibbs's voice pervades the room, asking in sad cadences like some wheezy Æolian harp:

"Please, sir, do you take fricasseed rabbit, or lamb and peas?"

And we accept our fate, with its accompanying mess, without so much as a murmur. Not so the major. Amid a silence, broken only by the clattering cutlery and the creaking of Gibbs's boots, he takes up his parable in freezing accents, and confronts Mrs. Jopkins, grown damper and more hot than ever.

"I think, ma'am," he says, "I had cause last week to expostulate concerning Monday's dinner. Stews and hashes are very well, ma'am, and economy, combined with comfort, most desirable; but at the same time a dinner without one piece of new roast meat is what I am not accustomed to. It is economy without comfort, ma'am. Thank you, no, that lamb was overroasted yesterday, and now it's only gristle and string. I will take a little rabbit, a piece with some meat on it, if you please. My dear," this to his wife, "you will also take a portion of rabbit with a little meat on it, or I shall have you ill again, and that will be no economy at all, and a few peas—no, thank you, not the brown ones—out of the other dish. The milk, by-the-bye, ma'am, this morning was by no means as it should be. A trifle too thin and blue, ma'am. I fear you will have to change your milkman, ma'am."

These remarks are received at my end of the table with every demonstration of delight. The dark-nailed ones perform acrobatic antics with their knives, as they shovel down their peas, suggestive of intense joy, accompanied by winks which seem to say, "He's a knowing one, the bulwark of our constitution. She'd starve us but for him, and he won't stand any nonsense." One of them pokes me violently in the ribs to impress on me the importance of the situation, while the young gentleman, whose occupation is his tooth-pick, all but swallows it, thus very nearly putting an end to himself and his profession at one fell blow. Mrs. Jopkins pants and fumbles with the spoons, murmuring something about, "Very sorry, but some gentlemen are so very difficult to please," and Miss Jemima covers her mamma's retreat by a solemn order to Gibbs to remove the first course, and bring in the tarts and custard.

"Oh, I do dote on custard," remarks Mrs. Goram, with a mincing smirk, "it is such an improvement to a tart."

"I dote on syllabub," interposed Miss Jemima, sentimentally.

"I know you like custard, Mr. M'Grath," continued she of the bugles, "I see it in your eye" (and, indeed, his fishy optic had assumed some sort of life). "Do you remember at the party there was here last summer how you helped yourself to nearly all the trifle, and how Mrs. Gandish complained to Mrs. Jopkins about it?"

"And how Mrs. Gandish left in consequence," put in our hostess. "She was a cross-grained thing, and I was glad she went, for she was always making mischief. Not that I ever interfere with the quarrels of the boarders. The drawing-room's large, I always say, and they can keep to their own ends if they don't want to see each other. Now, there's Mrs. O'Candy, upstairs in her room, fancies she's had some slight, and won't come down to dinner. Jane, take Mrs. O'Candy's dinner up to her, and don't spill the gravy. She'll get over it by-and-bye."

And so I discovered the meaning of whisperings that had lately taken place in the passage, and sundry irruptions at intervals of extremely down-at-heel housemaids with empty plates. There were possibly several sets of recluses away upstairs, self-banished because of the delinquencies of others, who would in time recover their equanimity, and return to the common table. Dinner being over, the major, mollified by custard, presented Mrs. Goram with his dish of plums in return for the salmon of the morning, and launched out into some of his favourite Indian stories, which people listened to with nodding heads, as they do to some favourite old song of which they know every note; and Mrs. Goram was thereby induced to indulge the company with reminiscences of Jamaica, where she had lived most of her life with poor dear Goram. At the sound of his honoured name and the pathetic souvenirs conjured up, the departed gentleman's eye twinkled on her bosom in its gold frame, as though it said, "I'm looking at you. Out of sight, not out of mind; here I watch my faithful relict;" and then, as she heaved a sigh and settled her dress, he sank again under the ribbons, for the bereaved one had put aside the passing cloud, and was skipping really quite nimbly up-stairs to have a game of

cockamaroo with the "meejor" on a dilapidated old board in the back drawing-room. In the course of the evening Mr. M'Grath invited the artists present into his studio at the back of the house, there to smoke the fragrant long clay pipe, whilst admiring his masterpieces. The studio was not a bad one, iron-roofed, with an anteroom reached through a sort of cupboard under the stairs hard by Mrs. Jopkins's awful sanctum, so that whilst appreciating the gems of Grub-street-classic art one had the advantage of overhearing that lady's arrangements for the morrow.

If the studio was not bad, the works therein were pitiable to behold. They comprised a few emaciated busts, a statuette or two, a group of lapdogs in wax, and the culminating chef-d'oeuvre of Frightened Nymph at the Stream—a consumptive young lady, with preternaturally swollen ankles and no clothes to speak of, endeavouring, without much chance of success, to cover herself up with a very thin pair of arms. The young gentleman with the toothpick thought her very fine, the dark-nailed ones looked at her through grimy fists, measured her with black fore-fingers, and shook their heads at her with one eye shut up with a hideous leer and corrugated brows. No wonder she looked frightened. Wishing to make myself quite agreeable, I expressed my hopes of seeing the statue in next year's Academy, whereupon they one and all turned on me like an avalanche, and spent the rest of the evening grumbling in concert over the fiendish manners of that institution, the bitter jealousy of its leaders against the denizens of Paget House, and fearful threats of condign vengeance when the much-talked-of day of retribution should at length arrive.

"Justice walks slowly," remarked Mr. M'Grath, in the sentimentously classic manner, "but she is firm of foot. In my mind's eye I see her coming towards us holding out a palm-branch, with a rod in the other hand for the chastisement of those unworthy ones. By Jupiter, sir, it would make a fine statue. I'll make a sketch of it to-morrow."

And overcome with his effort at declamation he said not another word, but smoked on moodily, until we all parted at last to stumble over the boots and clothes, having enjoyed, in passing, a view of Mrs. Jopkins slumbering in her arm-chair, with the merino garment a trifle disarrayed,

and her mouth wide open, while Gibbs cleaned knives below, and waited up for the late lodgers.

PETITIONS.

To suffer in silence is, happily, beyond the philosophy of Englishmen. It has always been their wont to air their grievances and put their wants into words, as the likeliest way of getting redress and satisfaction. Pretty liberally exercised at all times, the right of petition was never, perhaps, so freely used as in the troublous days when Crown and Commons contended for mastery. Then, indeed, petitioning became a mania. Fresh grievances turned up every day, not all so real as that impelling the mayor of Plymouth, the grand jurymen of Devon, and certain western merchants to express their righteous indignation at an English admiral allowing a fleet of Turkish pirates to sweep the coasts, and capture vessels before his face. So many petitions were presented in 1640 that above forty parliamentary committees were told off to examine them. In 1642, six thousand patriotic men of Bucks set their hands to a recital of wrongs, winding up with a declaration of their readiness to die in defence of the privileges of parliament; an example quickly imitated by others, including the apprentices and the porters, the latter, boldest of all, vowing that, unless the evils they complained of were remedied without delay, they would proceed to extremities unfit to be named, and make good the saying that necessity knows no law. Even the beggars earned the thanks of the Commons by praying that those noble worthies of the Upper House who concurred with the happy votes of the Commons might separate themselves from the rest, and act and vote as one entire body. Women, too, came to the fore, to express their hatred of papists and prelates, and their horror at the treatment accorded their sisters by the cruel Irish rebels. Led by a brewer's wife, some two or three thousand appeared at the doors of the House with a petition, which was thankfully accepted by Mr. Pym. Twelve months afterwards the ladies cried "Give us that dog Pym!" when they appeared as petitioners for peace, refused to accept the answer of the Commons, pelted the train-bands with brickbats, and were only dispersed by a charge of cavalry. So long as they sided with parliament, the right of the sex to discuss

politics was cheerfully acknowledged, but when there was no longer a king to be annoyed, their old abettors told them to mind their household affairs, and leave the governing of the country to their masters.

When the Restoration came political petitions gave way to personal ones. Charles the Second had hardly set foot in England ere the downpour began. Secretary Nicholas was overwhelmed with appeals from long-suffering royalists, anxious to recover their old positions, recoup their losses, and obtain substantial recognition of their services. King James's embroiderer sued to be re-established, pleading his seventy years, his twenty-one children, and his having saved the king's best cloth of state and his pearl-embroidered carpet from destruction. Master Maddon, who had been prevented from waiting upon his beloved master for orders for twelve years, sought reinstatement as court tailor. An old fellow of ninety-five claimed the office of comorant-keeper by right of appointment by his majesty's grandfather. A quartermaster of artillery asked to be made painter to his majesty, on the strength of the king's father having promised him the office upon seeing a cannon painted by him. Old Master Fawcett reminded the king he had taught him how to use the long-bow, and solicited the place of keeper of the long-bows, having already provided four bows, and all things necessary, in case he and his royal brothers desired to practise an art honoured by kings and maintained by statutes.

One petitioner besought the royal favour because he had, in Charles's young days, taken charge of his batons, paumes, tennis-shoes, and ankle-socks. Another had been taken out of a sick-bed, and carried to Dover Castle, where he was "honoured by being the youngest prisoner in England for his majesty's service." The mayor of Canterbury was encouraged to ask a receivership, by the remembrance of the gracious smiles with which the king had received him when he entered Canterbury.

Robert Thomas claimed consideration on the ground that he had lost his mother, "his majesty's seamstress from his birth." John Southcott prayed to be appointed clerk of the green cloth to his majesty's children, when he should have *issu'd*; and Robert Chamberlain, less precise in his demands, merely craved some mark of loyal favour ere he went to his

grave, "being a hundred and ten years old."

It ought not to have been difficult to find George Paterick a place in the royal barge in compensation for sixteen years' service on land and sea, many imprisonments, and banishment from the river whereon he had been wont to ply as waterman. Towers, forced to risk his life on the hazard of the die, and exiled upon winning the cast; Thomas Freebody, who had been banished twice, and imprisoned five times for his loyalty; John Fowler, who had been sent to the West Indies as a present to the barbarous people there, "which penalty he underwent with satisfaction and content;" and the royalist who was hung upon a tree until the soldiers of the proud rebel, Cromwell, thought he was dead, had all fair claims upon the monarch in whose cause they had suffered. Still harder must it have been to be deaf to the supplications of such devoted partisans as Katherine de Luke, Elizabeth Pinckney, Elizabeth Cary, and Mary Graves. To the last-named lady Charles had been indebted for the charger that carried him through Worcester fight, and the steed that bore him from the lost field. She had furnished him with ten armed horsemen, and when all was over, sent Francis Yates to see the royal fugitive safely to the coast. Yates paid for his fidelity with his life, and then Mistress Graves took care of his widow and five children until she lost the remainder of her property through assisting the rising of Sir George Booth. This loyal lady suffered in purse, her fellow-petitioners suffered in person. Dame Pinckney had been imprisoned, beaten with whips, kicked, pulled, and torn. Katherine de Luke had seen her husband die of his wound, her son had been sold to slavery, and she herself, for carrying letters when none else durst run the risk, had been sent to Bridewell to be whipped every other day, and burned with matches to make her betray her trust. After being imprisoned in Windsor Castle, Newgate, and Bridewell, and the Bishop of London's house, Elizabeth Cary was sent to the Mews for carrying the king's proclamation from Oxford to London at the time of his sire's martyrdom, and afterwards taken to Henley-on-Thames, where a gibbet was erected for her execution, but where she escaped with a broken back. How it fared with Mistress Graves we do not know. Katherine de Luke obtained the lease of the waste land in Yorkshire upon which she had set her

mind, and Elizabeth Cary went satisfied away with a pension of forty pounds a year.

The young bachelors of to-day, so often reproached with cherishing anti-matrimonial ideas, may console themselves with the knowledge that they are no worse than their great-grandfathers. They, too, were laggards in love, unless sadly traduced by the ladies of St. Alban's, who, in their so-called petition to the new-come queen of George the Third, expressed a hope that better times were in store for husbandless fair ones, saying: "As subjects are greatly influenced by the example of their sovereign, we have the greatest reason to hope that the matrimonial state will be duly honoured by your majesty's dutiful subjects cheerfully following the royal example; an example too much wanted in this degenerate age, wherein that happy state is made the object of ridicule instead of respect by too many vain, giddy, and dissipated minds. If the riches of a nation consist in its populousness, this happy country will too soon become poor, whilst the lawful means to continue posterity are either shackled by the restraint of mistaken laws, or despised by those who respect none. But as every virtuous and commendable action is encouraged by your royal consort, and your own noble sentiments and conduct, we hope this example will be duly followed by your majesty's loyal subjects." Others, besides the St. Alban's ladies, had faith in the wonder-working power of royal example, even to believing Fashion itself could be controlled by advice, if the advice came from the throne. Although King George had failed to keep wigs upon his subjects' heads, when the shoestring threatened to oust the buckle from its pride of place, the alarmed buckle-makers called upon royalty to save their trade from annihilation, and prevent the miseries, emigrations, and other horrible consequences which must inevitably ensue. Every member of the royal family was in turn entreated to come to the rescue. The buckle-makers of Birmingham, Walsall, and Wolverhampton relied especially upon the intervention of the Prince of Wales. Sheridan espoused their cause, introduced the representatives of the three towns to the prince, and highly extolled their address. One paragraph, which he declared to be perfect, ran thus: "When Fashion, instead of foreign or unprofitable ornaments, wears and consumes the manu-

factures of this country, she puts on a more engaging form, and becomes Patriotism. When Taste, at the same time and by the same means that she decorates the persons of the rich, clothes and fills the naked and hungry poor, she deserves a worthier appellation, and may be styled Humanity. We make no doubt but your royal highness will prefer the blessings of the starving manufacturers to the encomiums of the drawing-rooms." The saddest of these appeals on behalf of the shoe-buckle was that addressed by the fraternity in London and Westminster to the Duke of York, praying him to discourage the wearing of shoestrings by officers and gentlemen, and save a staple manufacture, doing an incredible business abroad, from being ruined by ribbon, leather, and whipcord. After reminding the duke that an immense number of people had spent the best part of their lives in buckle-making, and formed connexions, and increased their families, in dependence upon it, the petitioners grew eloquent in dilating upon the sad results of the cruel capriciousness of Fashion: "The nuptial tie, pitifully relaxed by reiterated sorrows; the children cry louder and more vehemently for food; the husband unmanned, his wonted courage fails; the wife, more delicately sensible, is not able to resist one of the obtruding woes which crowd upon her mind. Few friends before! less than ever now! Demands come quickest upon the most needy, often reminded of their bereaved trade, and no philosopher's stone to smooth the creditor's brow!" Springing suddenly from despair to jubilation, they went on: "Now spread wide the happy cause! The prospect changes! Hope, with cheering looks, advances. A letter from the trade at large informs them of our appeal to your royal highness. Instantly they assemble, and congratulate each other they have so glorious a source of expectation. Hope, with magic power, appeases their hunger, removes their depondency, makes the manufacturer's heart dance with joy; and the Duke and Duchess of York echoes in their cups, toast after toast!" There was no withstanding such pathetic appeals; the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and the Duke of Clarence forbade any member of their households using strings, and at the next drawing-room the buckle was again in the ascendant. But its reign was only prolonged a little while; Fashion had decreed its fall, and not all the king's sons could set it up again.

When George the Third was king, the aldermen and common councilmen of London had souls above mere City matters. Constituting themselves irresponsible advisers of the Crown, they badgered their sovereign whenever a chance offered for displaying their "patriotism." In their hands the petition became a very effective weapon of annoyance. In 1769, they petitioned his majesty to dissolve parliament, and indignant at no notice being taken of their demand, drew up an "Address, Remonstrance, and Petition" for presentation at St. James's. This was so strongly worded that the recorder refused to have anything to do with it, the common-serjeant broke down in reading it, and the town-clerk had great difficulty in finishing the task for his brother official. It says something for the king's self-control that he allowed such a document to be read to the end. The mildest-mannered of monarchs might well have lost his equanimity at being told that his legislators were corrupt and their proceedings illegal, that he himself was a slave to a secret and malignant influence, and bent upon imitating the conduct which had cost two of his predecessors their crowns. Couched throughout in equally offensive language this extraordinary petition finished thus: "The misdeeds of your ministers, in violating the freedom of election, and depraving the noble constitution of parliament, are notorious, as well as subversive of the fundamental laws and liberties of the realm; and since your majesty is, both in honour and justice, obliged invariably to preserve them according to the oath made to God and your subjects, at your coronation, we, your remonstrants, assure ourselves that your majesty will restore the constitutional government and quiet of your people, by dissolving this parliament, and removing these evil ministers for ever from your councils." When the town-clerk had done his part, King George told the bold citizens their address was disrespectful to himself, injurious to his parliament, and irreconcilable to the principles of the constitution, and so dismissed them. The obnoxious petition was afterwards ordered to be laid on the table of the House of Commons, and voted to be unwarrantable, and tending to destroy the allegiance of the subject, the vote being followed by a joint address from the two Houses to the king, severely censuring the City remonstrances. The remonstrants thereupon again met in common hall, and adopted a second address, de-

claring the royal criticism of the first to be opposed to the principles of the constitution, and the result of invidious attempts of evil councillors to perplex, confound, and shake the rights of the people. Upon the 23rd of May, 1770, Lord Mayor Beckford, attended by a number of aldermen and common councilmen, proceeded to St. James's. The king sat upon his throne, sceptre in hand, to hear what his troublesome remonstrants had to say. When he had heard, he replied that his sentiments remained unaltered, and that he should ill-deserve to be considered the father of his people, if he suffered himself to make such a use of his prerogative as was inconsistent with the interests, and dangerous to the constitution, of the kingdom. Then to the astonishment of his majesty, and the consternation of the court, the lord mayor delivered himself of the "great speech to the king," which was to make his name famous in civic story. The spirit of old England, may, as Chatham said, have spoken on that never-to-be-forgotten day, but whether the spirit of old England spoke the speech emblazoned on the Guildhall statue is very doubtful. Horne Tooke averred that Beckford was so flurried that he could remember nothing of it, and as it was necessary a speech of some sort should be printed for public edification, he supplied the want.

Had the discontented Londoners known how to be plain without being insulting, Farmer George would assuredly have condoned any little irregularity of form. When brave Colonel Ottway, tired of seeing his juniors promoted over his head, got the chaplain of his regiment to write a petition for him, he demurred at the concluding words, "and your petitioner will ever pray," as fit only for a parson, and insisted upon ending in his own way, "and your petitioner will ever fight." This departure from ordinary rule so amused the king, that he took care the veteran was gazetted to the first vacant command. More irregular still was the petition sent to Queen Victoria not long ago from Newcastle gaol, by the self-styled Countess of Derwentwater. "O Queen! mercy and justice is thy mission on earth, and why allow one inoffensive heir of Derwentwater to be falsely incarcerated, shut up for seven months, languishing, and deprived of even a breath of fresh air? What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Are tyranny, torture, and wrong the civil rights of the people thou

rulest? I have kept all thy laws diligently. O queen! listen. It is thy prerogative to command, 'Let right be done!' The crowns have fallen lately from the regal heads of several princes in Europe, and the greatest monarch that ever held the English sceptre looked back and moralised, and her majesty exclaimed, 'Millions of money for moments of time!'"

Stranger petitions than that of the Derwentwater claimant have issued from prison cells. Bacon thought it worth recording that a certain Irish rebel was such a stickler for precedent as to petition he might be hanged with a withe instead of a halter, because rebels had hitherto been so despatched. What would the philosopher have said to a reprieved convict soliciting that he might be executed, not because he was tired of life, but merely to spare his sovereign annoyance? Such an instance of loyalty occurred in 1640, when Charles the First received the following petition: "Whereas your majesty's petitioner hath understood of a great discontent in many of your majesty's subjects at the gracious mercy your majesty was freely pleased to show upon your petitioner, by suspending the sentence of death pronounced against your petitioner. These are humbly to beseech your majesty rather to remit your petitioner to their mercies that are discontented, than to let him live the subject of so great a discontent in your people against your majesty; for it hath pleased God to give me grace to desire with the prophets, 'That if this storm be raised for me, I may be cast into the sea, that others may avoid the tempest.' This is, most sacred sovereign, the petition of him that should esteem his blood well shed, to cement the breach between your majesty and your subjects.—John Goodman."

In 1723, Jonathan Wild, weary of his merits remaining unrecognised by the City authorities, sought to bring the lord mayor and the court of aldermen to a proper sense of what was due to him, by sending in a petition, setting forth how he had been at great trouble and charge in apprehending and convicting divers felons for returning from transportation before their time; how he had never received any reward for his services that way; and praying that those services might be requited by making him a freeman of their honourable city. The infamous thief-maker and thief-betrayer did not obtain his wished-for freedom. Had he been successful he would not have enjoyed it long, seeing that, in

1725, as many of his pupils had done before him, he—

In his shoes
Died of a noose,
That he got at Tyburn tree.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XLVII. AFTER THE FIGHT.

I KNEW him at once, though he was certainly altered. He looked very much older, and was strangely dressed in the glazed hat and shabby, many-caped drab coat of a hackney-coachman. A beard of some days' growth gave his chin something the look of a white scrubbing-brush with its bristles much worn. His appearance altogether was most neglected, soiled, and even squalid. He had been one of the Baker's chief backers I was informed, and was a considerable winner by the result of the battle. There was a large party with him of noblemen and gentlemen, it was rumoured—though, indeed, they scarcely seemed to be such. They were handing him various sums, in payment, I presumed, of the bets they had lost. They had no doubt been supporters of the defeated Mudlark. His lordship held in his dirty hands—which trembled a good deal, and seemed bossy about the joints with gouty knots and swellings—a crumpled bundle of bank-notes. He was by no means sober, and from time to time ejaculated raucous shouts and inarticulate sounds of triumph. He was still cheering on the Baker to further efforts, and hurling maledictions at the head of Gipsy Joe. Now and then he struck out with his arm wildly in the air, swayed to and fro, elbowing the crowd, and seemed trying to execute some jubilant dance of a Red Indian pattern, uttering the while a hideous war-whoop. But for the support of the ropes of the ring, he would certainly have fallen prostrate on the sward.

"Lord Overbury," I whispered in Tony's ear, as I grasped his arm.

"Impossible! Why, the man's mad!" And, indeed, he might well have thought so. But then he had never seen his lordship before, as I had.

We had been hustled by the crowd towards Jack Rumsey's corner of the ring. There was much pressing forward to gain a nearer view of that champion. But he was now muffled up for departure, with a cold bandage round his left hand, which had suffered much from frequent sharp

collision with the bones of the Mudlark's face. A handkerchief enfolded his forehead also, and a black patch of plaster concealed his cut lip. In his heavy "box" coat and swathing "Belcher" he had certainly abandoned all resemblance to the Apollo. He looked, indeed, a veritable ruffian.

"Good day, my lord, and thankee for all you've done for I," he said, touching his forehead respectfully. He was in his way a hero perhaps; but he was a hind too.

His lordship said nothing intelligible in reply, unless it was an imprecation. But he stared, laughed, staggered, and then thrust several of his bank-notes into the raw, battered, and puffed right hand of the pugilist.

There had been some jeering at the nobleman. But this was silenced now. It was perceived that he was the patron and friend of the Baker. There arose something of a cheer for him. He received it with supreme indifference.

The throng was now thinning rapidly. The spectators were departing on their homeward ways in all directions, stretching out in long lines over the open country like rays diverging from a star's centre. There was the hum of laughter and conversation in the air; quite in the distance a key-bugle, in the hands of an infirm performer seated on the top of a four-horse coach, emitted strange discords. Carts and carriages were climbing the steep sides of the down to regain the high road to Steepleborough. Gradually Chingley Bottom was regaining its accustomed look of extreme seclusion and tranquillity, with trampled grass, littered paper, and broken bottles, the only evidences of the recent fray and tumult. In an hour or two the scared hares and rabbits might safely resume possession of it.

Lord Overbury was left almost alone. He was standing rubbing his rough chin, muttering to himself, hiccupping, and now and then looking round him with lustreless drowsy eyes in a confused way, as though scarcely conscious of where he was, or of what had happened. Tony and I watched him from a little distance curiously, and with, on Tony's part, a sort of amazed repugnance. Mr. Jobling had gone in quest of his cob and chaise.

Suddenly a bank-note fluttered out of his lordship's hand, and was borne by the wind almost to my feet. I picked it up, and carried it to him.

"Something you've dropped."

He had difficulty in understanding me. But he took the note, almost snatching it from me.

"I didn't bet with you, did I? You're not one of the Mudlark's backers? Dropped it, did I? Well, thankee, my lad. 'Twas honest to give it up, anyhow. But—I hadn't missed it. What a fool you were not to keep it! That's what I should have done in your case."

He spoke very thickly, interlarding oaths and laughs in his old way. Suddenly he stopped, and looked intently in my face. For a moment his maltreated senses seemed struggling to break through the sottish fog that enveloped and prisoned them. He made an effort to stand firmly, and, as it seemed to me, to reflect and remember. But his inebriety was too complete. He failed to recognise me, although certainly a flash of intelligence had for a second illumined his dull and darkened faculties. He glanced at me, and then at Tony, and then, waving aloft a flaccid hand, said, "I get to Chingley turnpike-gate over that down, I think!" stumbled away, cramming his bank-notes into his coat-pocket, and muttering thickly—his words, if, indeed, he uttered any, being probably independent of thought, and possessed of no clear meaning even to himself.

Some three hundred yards away from us, when he was half-way up the grassy slope of the down, he stopped, turned, shouted, and shook his clenched fist in the air. We failed to comprehend the significance of this proceeding, and decided that it had none.

"He is a satyr, and no mistake," said Tony; "and a very inferior specimen of that curious species. I seem to breathe more freely now he's gone. And he's Lord Overbury; and the husband of your Rosetta!"

My Rosetta, indeed! But I said nothing.

Mr. Jobling reappeared.

"We'll not go up to Hickleby's house, this journey, I think, my lads. He's got the place full with a regular noisy party, from all I can hear. So we'd best get towards home. We shall be none too early as 'tis. Come; another sup of the strong beer. There's plenty yet in the stone bottle. It's bound to hold a gallon. Well, 'twas a pretty fight, wasn't it, young gentlemen? and worth coming all the way from London to see. That's my opinion on't. A main pretty fight; and our man won. I be as pleased as pleased. Not for

the trifle of money I'd put on young Jack. That says nothing. But for the honour of the county. I'll go bail those Portsmouth chaps will look down their noses when they come to hear on't. They made sure the Mudlark was going to have it all's own way. But young Jack put it well into un. Gave un a main hiding. That's what I call it. Gipsy Joe want scarce be able to see out of's head for a fortnight or more. Well done, young Jack! I always thought un a sprack young fellow. Not that he was e'er a morsel of use on my farm. Never did, not to say, a stroke of work. But he knows how to use his fists anyways. And he won the fight!"

The wind blew sharply from the east as we drove homeward. The farmer was in high spirits, and talked incessantly. It was clear that the great combat in Chingley Bottom had supplied him with a topic of conversation that would last him for a long time to come. I felt sure that after it had seemed to every one else perfectly threadbare, exhausted, and done with, Mr. Jobling would still now and then reproduce it, and find it fresh, and new, and full of interest. Tony said little. He was very tired, I think, and shivered much from the coldness of the wind, or from nervous reaction after so much excitement.

"Well, and who won?" asked my uncle as we re-entered the farm-house.

"Our side."

He laughed and waved his newspaper in the air. My mother was very glad to see us safe home again. The fight was nothing to her; but for my uncle's entertainment—and he was certainly interested in the matter—we supplied him with a detailed account of our adventures, including our meeting with old Hickley, whom he well remembered, though, he said, he had not seen him for some years.

Tony withdrew early that night I remember. He was quite worn out. I found my mother noting compassionately his jaded looks.

"Duke," she said, "there can be no need for your friend's going back with you."

My holiday was coming to an end. Already I had been making preparations for my return to town.

"He is far from well. He wants more rest and fresh air. He is happy here, I think; and I'm sure we will do all we may to make him happy, and to take care of him. Why should he not stay; for a while, at any rate?"

I knew of no reason why. Indeed, I thought, with my mother, that it would be better for him to stay until he gained in strength and health. I was well assured he could not be left in tenderer or more heedful hands. There was nothing calling for his return to town very immediately. He had no engagements to fulfil. Only, as I stated, I had hopes of securing him work in the studio of Sir George Nightingale.

"Ah! You have seen Sir George Nightingale?" She spoke with some eagerness. "I remember now. You mentioned it in one of your letters; and he—Sir George, I mean—received you well, Duke; he was kind to you."

"He was very kind. He acknowledged me at once as a relation. Am I nearly related to him?"

"He is only a distant relation of yours—very distant," my uncle interposed rather sharply. He had been reading the newspaper, holding it away from him, at arm's length, with a candle between it and him. His sight was weakening, and he read with difficulty; but he was still a devoted student of our county journal. He especially liked, I think, to con over the quotations of the prices in Steepleborough corn market; though as he punctually attended there every Wednesday he must have possessed quite as much information on the subject as the editor of the paper. Still it was somehow pleasant to him to have his knowledge confirmed by the press. It was almost like seeing himself in print.

"He was very kind to me in any case," I said.

"I hope you did not urge any claims to his kindness?" He laid down his newspaper, put the candle from him, and straightened himself in his chair as he spoke.

"No, certainly; I made no claim upon him."

"That's well. These great men, you see—and Sir George, I suppose, is held to be a great man, not merely by himself, but by others"—he stopped to take snuff, and then abandoned the subject of his discourse almost as though he had forgotten what he intended to say. His tone had been unusually and unreasonably acrid, I thought.

"Lord Overbury was at the fight," I mentioned, after a pause, changing the subject.

"I did not know he was in England," my uncle said, quietly. "Indeed, I heard at market, quite lately, that his embarrass-

ments would prevent his ever reappearing in this country. He has not been seen about here for many a long day. He has not been missed, however. I wonder the estate has not been sold. It's as much as his trustees can do, I understand, to pay the interest on the mortgages. So he was at the fight, was he? He was always a great patron of the ring."

Tony was disinclined to allow me to return to London alone. It was unfair, he said, that I should go back to work while he idled and enjoyed himself in the country. He yielded at length, however, rather to my mother's entreaties than to mine. She had acquired considerable influence over him, though she exercised it in the gentlest and tenderest way.

"You know, Duke, I never saw my own mother, to remember her," he said one day. "But it seems to me she must have been something like yours. It's wonderful what a sort of home-like feeling this house has for me. I've only known it really for a very few weeks, and yet I seem to have lived here all my life. It's due, of course, to your mother's exceeding kindness to me. And your uncle too, I mustn't leave him out. He's wonderfully good to me, and doesn't mind in the least the rubbish and nonsense I sometimes talk. Really, you know, all things considered, I'm a most fortunate young fellow. I've done nothing to deserve the kindness people—all sorts of people—show me. I won't speak of you, old fellow because if I once begin I shan't know when to leave off. I wish very much I could go back to London with you, and recommence hard work again. There are so many things I intend to do: to assist Sir George, and revolutionise portrait-painting, among others. But, as you say, being here, perhaps it's as well to stay, and grow quite well and strong again. I shall soon shake off this ridiculous feeling of illness, and rejoin you in London."

Poor Tony! It was Death's secure grasp he was talking so lightly of shaking off. He knew nothing of the peril he was in. Nor, indeed, did I at that time. He was so young, and to me, then, death seemed only the fate of the old: an event so remote from youthful years as to be not worth taking into account. At twenty or so life seems to have no limits. My mother's eyes, I think, had been more far-seeing and observant: or she, perhaps, rather feared than knew that my poor boy-friend was seriously threatened. She said no word upon the subject, yet I noted a watchful

foreboding in her eyes when they rested upon Tony. It may be that, almost unconsciously, she discerned upon his face signs as fatally significant of coming doom as the "blaze" of white paint to be seen upon certain forest trees, marking them out as the early prey of the woodman's axe.

I have stated that he knew nothing of his peril, and generally this seemed so. He talked in full faith of his certain and speedy recovery. Yet something he once said suggested that he entertained some vague misgiving on the subject.

He was sketching from memory the scene in Chingley Bottom, and was loud in his admiration of the graceful proportions, the skill, and strength of our champion the Baker.

"Yet it seemed to me throughout," he said, "that his life was in extreme danger. It was quite true what the country folks about us said. One blow from Gipsy Joe's brawny fist would surely have killed him. The blow was never fairly struck—Jack was far too clever and nimble to give the Mudlark the chance. But if it had been! There would have been an end for ever of poor Jack. And really, you know, we're all nearer death than we ever suppose, even though we don't stand up in the ring against such muscular monsters as Gipsy Joe."

It was a day or two after this, and the eve of my return to London.

"Duke, do you think you're lawyer enough to draw a short will?" he inquired.

I said I thought I was, provided it was of a simple nature, as well as short.

"Oh, it's simple enough. Because I'm to be the testator, and I've little enough to dispose of as you know. Still there's just this: the money in my uncle's hands, that belongs to me. It seems absurd, no doubt, my making a will. It looks pretentious almost, as though I affected to be possessed of enormous wealth. I always picture to myself a testator as an old chap sitting up in bed in a nightcap, and, at the point of death, making testamentary arrangements that will bitterly annoy all his kinsfolk. Still I don't know that even at my age it isn't a good and prudent sort of thing to do, rather than not. What do you say?"

I said that it was certainly a good and prudent thing to do.

"A line will be almost enough, I should think. 'I give everything to poor Rachel, absolutely.' Isn't that the right word? I'm only a year or two older than she is;

but she may survive me. Who knows? Women are generally longer lived than men, I believe. They lead such quiet, sober, steady lives, you see. The poor child, though, has not had a very happy time of it hitherto, I fear. I give her everything, and appoint her sole executrix. That's rightly put, isn't it? Of course there ought to be a thumping legacy for you, old fellow; and something——"

I would not allow him to say a word more on that head. I was vexed at his thinking for a moment of a bequest to me to the prejudice of his cousin. I urged him almost peremptorily to leave everything to her.

"You grow quite warm about it, Duke," he said, laughingly. "But I dare say you're right; and I'm glad to see you've such a firm, stern, lawyer-like way of stating your opinion. It's very bracing to a weak client. Yes, everything to poor dear Rachel; let it be so. I owe her very much. She's been quite a sister to me. At least, I'm sure if I had ever been blessed with a sister—I never have been, as you know—she would have been to me just what Rachel is. She's a dear, good little soul, thinking of everybody before herself; and what a dull secluded life she's been leading in that dreary old house in Golden-square! She's been shut up like a fresh lily in a musty law book, perfuming its stupid pages, but hidden, crushed, sacrificed. So it always seemed to me. She looked very pale and sad, I thought, the last time I saw her. But she wouldn't own to being unhappy, except about her father." He was silent for some moments, musing over Rachel, but very calmly I judged—not as a lover would. "Yes," he resumed presently, "everything I have must go to her of course."

Still he did not regard the will very seriously; it was in his eyes a sort of "merry bond."

I made a rough draft, and then a fair copy of it. I was surprised at my own skill. The document had a due legal and formal flavour; and there was no question but that it completely carried out the testator's intentions, and was thoroughly valid. It was executed with all proper

ceremonies. I was careful that my mother and my uncle should add their names to mine as witnesses. They were gratified, I think, at the evidence afforded of my professional aptitude; and they viewed the matter with becoming gravity. As they put on their glasses and affixed their signatures to the paper their manner had something about it quite solemn even to sadness. Tony restrained all inclination towards jesting; his face wore a thoughtful and impressed look as he sealed up and delivered the will to my mother, and asked her if she would kindly take charge of it for him. She pressed his hand very tenderly, I noticed, as she received the little packet from him. And presently she turned away, so that he might not see, perhaps, that there were tears in her eyes.

"It's odd, old fellow," he said to me afterwards, with a sigh, "that making one's will should seem so like signing one's death warrant. But it is so. I feel it so; and they, I could see, did so too. And you feel it also, I'm pretty sure. Yet it's a mere form. What superstitious creatures we all are. A will made by one of my age. You know it's really more of a joke than anything else." But he sighed as he spoke. "Good-night, my dear Duke, and many thanks, once more, for all you've done for me. I shall soon rejoin you in London."

The next morning I returned to town, and resumed tenancy of my lodgings in Featherstone-buildings.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGERD," "A PERFECT TREASURER," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XVII. UNCLE ANGELO MELTS.

Mr. HULET's "study" at Cliff Cottage was much the same sort of room as it had been at Dunwich, and as most "studies" are which appertain to men who seldom read anything but the newspaper. It had a somewhat bare and disused air about it; the tenants of the bookcase were few and huddled together without order in a couple of shelves, just as they had been taken out of the packing-case; and in a corner of the room stood, without any pretence of concealment, the proprietor's boots, which, though the morning was far advanced, had not yet superseded his slippers. Nor was the absence of literature made up for by the attractions of art. Only one picture graced the walls—the portrait with which we have already made acquaintance, that of Mr. Hulet's revered ancestor, as he appeared when about to cut off His Sacred Majesty's head. Upon the table was a large assemblage of physic-bottles, but not so many as there would have been but for their owner's habit of leaving them all over the house.

"Take a seat, Captain Heyton," said Mr. Hulet, frigidly; the captain obeyed, and being naturally under considerable nervous excitement, began to play with a graduated medicine glass; "and if you will take my advice," continued the host, "you will not put that glass to your lips, unless you are in the habit of taking prussic acid in considerable doses."

"Dear me, that is rather dangerous, is it not—I mean the leaving it about like that?" said Jack.

"It is nothing of the sort, unless where there are idiots in a house," answered the invalid, sharply.

The poor captain could hardly have made a more unfortunate observation save one, and that in his great embarrassment he did make.

"I should have thought it was bad for children."

"And what if it be, sir? There are not any children here I believe, nor likely to be any."

Jack held his tongue; this being a point which he felt it did not become him to argue. Mrs. Hulet's whispered injunction was still in his ear, not to cross this man, but to speak him fairly; and since speaking had not proved a success, he resolved to be silent. An excellent determination, for time for reflection was just what Mr. Hulet required. That gentleman was, in fact, more angry with himself for being out of humour than he was with his visitor. He had recognised Jack immediately, though irritation at seeing him—attempting as he thought to curry favour with Mrs. Hulet—had caused him to pretend otherwise; and albeit he had a natural distaste for the man who was come thither with the intention of robbing him of his heart's treasure, his conscience smote him with the sense of his own injustice. Moreover, if this marriage was to be, how injudicious, he reflected, was it to make an enemy of this young fellow, who would have the power to carry—and keep—Evy away from him.

"Well, Captain Heyton, you have doubtless something to say to me. By your presence here, I am to conclude, am I not, that you are of the same mind with respect to my niece, Evy Carthew, as you were six months ago?"

"That is so, sir," answered the captain, earnestly, "or rather, I seem to love her ten times as much to-day as I did then; though then it seemed impossible that I could love her more."

Mr. Hulet smiled approval. This was a young aristocrat, it was true, idle in his habits, extravagant in his tastes, and with everything wrong, in all probability, about his opinions; but at all events he was not ashamed of what his class would term a weakness—a tender affection for an honest girl.

"That's well, so far," answered the old gentleman; "absence makes the heart grow fonder. I have found that out myself, and only regret I did not give it a longer trial. But, you see, I know nothing about you, Captain Heyton; absolutely nothing, except what Evy has told me—who is not an entirely unprejudiced informant. When I gave her permission to receive a visit from you at the termination of six months, I honestly confess to you I flattered myself that by that time you would have forgotten all about her."

"That is but a poor compliment to me, sir, and what is of much more consequence," added Jack, with graceful humility, "to Miss Carthew also. I cannot fancy any one who has ever seen her forgetting her in six months; no, nor in a lifetime!"

Jack spoke out of the fulness of his heart, with heightened colour and earnest tone, but he could not have found a nearer way to his host's favour, had he employed the most elaborate devices to obtain it.

"You are right, young man," said Mr. Hulet. "Evy is one in a thousand, Heaven bless her. But there are some persons, and especially in a certain rank of society, for whom modesty and goodness have few charms. Forgive me for supposing it might have been so with you. You are the nephew and heir-presumptive of Lord Dirlleton, I believe?"

"The nephew, Mr. Hulet, but not the heir-presumptive," answered the young man, gravely.

"Umph," chuckled the invalid. "So the old lord has kept his word, has he, and cut you off with a shilling?"

"Indeed, sir, no; my uncle has behaved to me with the utmost kindness and consideration. His prejudices are very decided as you know—"

"Oh! yes, I know," interrupted Mr. Hulet, with a glance at the portrait of his ancestor. "In particular, he has a great dis-

like to Regicides, even to the tenth generation."

"That was certainly one of his objections to my making my addresses to Miss Carthew," continued the captain.

"And you, what do you think about it?" inquired Mr. Hulet, with sudden vehemence. "Do you consider that that man yonder"—and he pointed to the picture—"deserved well of his country for ridding it of a false and feeble tyrant, or would you have dug him from his grave, and hung him in chains for having performed his duty?"

"Indeed, sir, I am no politician," returned the captain, in great embarrassment, "but it seems very improper to have dug him up—disturbed the sanctity of the grave!" added Jack, hastily. "To war with the dead appears to me a very cowardly proceeding."

"Young man, give me your hand," cried Mr. Hulet, with unwonted excitement. "Your opinions do you honour, and are altogether superior to your—ahem—to what might be expected; now let me hear about your uncle."

"Well, sir, I have no very good news—not such news as you perhaps may be counting upon—"

"Never mind me," said Mr. Hulet, drily. "I am nobody. Confine yourself to his Serene Transparency—I mean stick to his lordship."

"Well, sir, he has stuck to me, I must say, so I trust you will not speak ill of him," answered Jack, simply. "He has been a father to me, and a most kind and indulgent one, all my life, just as Evy tells me you have been to her. If her uncle has faults she has never told me of them, and—and I do hope, sir, you will not compel me to listen to anything to the disadvantage of mine."

"I am not aware that I manifested any intention of abusing him," observed Mr. Hulet, not perhaps without a prick of conscience; his tone and manner had been certainly hostile towards his lordship, the mention of whose name, in fact, had always the same effect upon him as the red flag of a bullfighter upon a bull.

"Far be it from me to blame you, young man, for standing up for your relative. He is fortunate in having such a defender, and may well term you—though I once laughed at him for doing so—his Jack."

"Well, sir, all that is over," returned the captain, with a little sigh. "We have not quarrelled, indeed—because it takes two

persons to do so—but we two have shaken hands—for ever.”

“Don’t be too sure—I mean don’t distress yourself too much about that,” observed Mr. Hulet, grimly. “It is not so easy to effect an eternal separation as some people think.”

“You do not know my uncle, sir,” answered the captain, unconscious of the other’s allusion to his own domestic affairs. “What he has once said he never unsays. He opposed himself to my courtship of your niece from the first upon a ground——” here he hesitated; but following his eyes which had wandered to the ancestral portrait, Mr. Hulet gathered his meaning.

“Objected to the family, I suppose; eh?”

“Well, yes, sir; not to the existing members of it, of course, but to a certain remote progenitor. An objection fanciful and frivolous, indeed——”

“I don’t see that,” said Mr. Hulet, sharply. “The question is distinct and substantive enough.”

“I meant rather that my uncle’s views upon such matters are fanciful, sir, or at least overstrained. I pointed out to him that no young lady, however prudent and sensible, could avoid being descended from her forefathers; and even (though it was dangerous ground to venture upon), that we had had some queer ancestors ourselves. ‘Not Regicides, however,’ he replied, in a tone that I, who know him so well, interpreted but too correctly. I did not need him to add the words that followed: ‘Much as I love you, Jack, I would rather see you dead at my feet than consent to such a marriage.’”

In his regret at his uncle’s obstinacy, and still more in his sorrow for the gulf that had opened between them, the captain had somewhat lost sight of the fact that he was addressing one who had not only no sympathy with Lord Dirlton, but a great contempt and hatred of his opinions.

“Upon my life, young man,” cried Mr. Hulet, “one would imagine that I had nothing to get over in this matter. It is just possible, sir, that what seems a ‘*més-alliance*’ to his lordship, may appear also very undesirable to me from my point of view, and even on the same ground; you yourself confess that you have had some queer ancestors, and I quite agree with you; some of them not quite so remote, perhaps, as my revered relative yonder. For my part I have not only no respect for titles that have not been earned by public service, but their possessors do not

recommend themselves to my taste. It is no satisfaction to me, sir, but very much the reverse, though you may find it difficult to credit it, that you will one day be Lord Dirlton.”

“It appears to me, sir,” said Jack, plaintively, “that it would have been a great advantage to Evy and myself if we had both been foundlings.”

“I do not know that,” said Mr. Hulet, who by this time had worked himself into that state of mind in which a man feels inclined to dissent from everything. “I know a foundling—and, by Jove, I wish you would marry her instead of my niece. However, I suppose that is not to be thought of. Well, let us get on. The long and short of what you have to say, I suppose, is that your uncle cuts you out of his will if you marry Evy?”

“Out of his will, he does, sir. ‘And also,’ said he, ‘I keep my word to the letter as to not giving you a shilling; at the same time, I will pay my debts.’ At this I looked up surprised, for so far from owing me anything, he had paid off my liabilities more than once.”

“Debts of honour, I suppose?” observed Mr. Hulet, dryly.

“Yes, sir; and bills and so forth,” continued Jack, with simplicity. “However, my uncle was good enough to say that since his attachment towards me, and the expectations which it had doubtless engendered, had prevented my entering into any profession, and had also given me expensive habits of life, he considered it only just that he should make me compensation. He has given me twenty thousand pounds, sir.”

“The devil he has!” exclaimed Mr. Hulet. “Then he is not nearly so black as he is painted.”

“I thought it very generous and high-minded of him,” continued Jack, taking no notice of this doubtful compliment; “and but that my love for your niece is such that the idea would be preposterous, I protest that I never felt so inclined to obey my uncle as when he was supplying me as it were with the means of disobedience. You don’t think that confession an impertinence I hope, sir.”

“Quite the contrary; on the whole, indeed, Captain Heyton, and not at all the less from your last words, I am inclined to think you are a good fellow. As to money, Evy’s own fortune, present and prospective, will, added to the sum you have mentioned, form an ample provision.

But I must exact certain conditions. Through no fault of your own, you have contracted tastes and habits which may be very disadvantageous to my niece's interests. Hodlin Barmby dug the grave of his own fortune, and then of his wife's, in the place where persons of your condition are apt to dig it—on the Turf. That must not happen in your case. You must give up steeple-chasing, and all which it includes; I need not indicate the items—betting and so forth—for you are a man of honour, and will not prevaricate. I know I can trust your word—will you give it to me?"

It may seem a small thing to give up a mere pleasurable excitement, for the sake of such a lifelong treasure as a loving wife; but to men like Captain Heyton, without professional pursuits, or grave occupation of any sort, it is no light sacrifice. Jack did not hesitate, however, for a moment.

"You have my promise, sir," said he, "though I believe that my regard for your niece would have been sufficient to restrain me from such imprudences as you hint at. You will not object to my riding the steeple-chase to-morrow, however; where, indeed, I risk little except my neck."

"By no means," answered Mr. Hulet, grimly. "I was referring to more serious contingencies. And, besides, you will not be married to-morrow, I suppose?"

Of course there was nothing in it, but it afterwards struck Jack as strange, that in his first interview with his uncle upon this same matter, he should have used a similar expression to this last, "You are not going to be married to-morrow, I suppose." Well, of course he wasn't, still it is unpleasant to hear what we have set our hearts upon spoken of by others as problematical, or subject to vague adjournment.

"I hope, Mr. Hulet, that since matters are arranged as favourably—that is in my own case—as they are likely to be, that you will impose no unnecessary delay."

"No, sir, no; I will not," answered the other with emotion. "It would be unfair to both of you. It pleases me, of course, Captain Heyton, to know that I am bestowing happiness on my niece in bestowing her on you; but you can hardly understand that this is one of the most miserable moments of what has never been a pleasurable life, and which bids fair—what remains of it—to be a very, very wretched one."

Jack's kindly heart was touched; he felt that he was about to take away from this man, failing in health, and oppressed by growing years, the prop of his life, the sunshine of his darkening days.

"Indeed, Mr. Hulet, I can understand that you are making a great sacrifice for the sake of one you love, to one who is at present a total stranger. In time, perhaps, I may grow more nearly to you. It will be my endeavour to show myself grateful for the blessing you have conferred upon me. However that may be, one thing I will gladly promise—not to take Evy far away from you. Nay, if you wish it—"

"Don't promise *that*," interrupted Mr. Hulet in passionate warning. "I asked Evy to promise it, and she consented; but it was not right. Under this roof, it would be impossible that you two should find the happiness you deserve. Don't tempt me with the idea that it would be possible to retain my bird, my blossom." He stopped; drew himself straightly up, and added in a firm voice, "Give me your hand, young man, and go and seek her. So far as I can give her to you, she is yours."

CHAPTER XVIII. THE THIN END OF THE WEDGE.

It was not without some trepidation that Evy beheld her lover return to her across the lawn; his interview with her uncle had lasted for a full hour; and she had seen enough of their first meeting to gather that it had not happened under very favourable auspices. What an age had that period of waiting seemed! How crowded with fears and hopes and unuttered prayers! If she had not seen him, clasped him, kissed him, if matters had been in short as they were yesterday, she might have been more patient, if less sanguine; but having once permitted herself to believe him to be hers, the apprehension that it might not be so was intolerable.

"How dreadfully you have frightened me, dear," were her first words, as with joyous face, and bounding step, Jack once more hastened towards her; man as he was in years, in manners he was still a boy; no notions of dignity or swelledness stiffened his limbs, or made languid his air; his movements were the barometer of his feelings, and that moment it stood at Very Fair.

"Frightened you, darling? Why should that have been?"

"Because you have been so long with my uncle. Are you sure, Jack, are you quite sure that all is well?"

"Indeed I am, my darling, matters are better than we could possibly have hoped for; and I am more than ready to subscribe to all that I have heard you say respecting Mr. Hulet. He may be eccentric, but he is an excellent fellow, and a first-rate judge of character."

"He likes you, does he?" cried Evy, rapturously. "Oh, I felt sure he would."

"Nay, I meant to imply that he was very fond of *you*, my darling," said Jack, "though, indeed, it does not require much judgment to be that—but only eyes."

"But that is not at all a compliment," answered Evy, attempting to pout, but with such miserable success that she broke into a smile accompanied by two lovely dimples, which were its constant attendants, like very young bridesmaids upon a bride. "Now do be serious, Jack, and tell me all about Lord Dirleton. How did you ever induce him to give his consent to your marriage?"

"Well, I showed him your photograph; but that was not so successful a plan as I had expected; for it made him want to marry you himself."

"Nonsense, sir. You are inventing all these foolish speeches to put me off. Don't deceive me, darling? Has he really forgiven you, or—ah, Jack"—there was a momentary look of embarrassment in her lover's face—"you have been disinherited; you have lost all for my unhappy sake."

"Well, I am to have twenty thousand pounds, dear, to be paid down on my marriage-day, if you call that disinheritance," said Jack. "Mr. Hulet, too, has been very liberal; and, in fact, if you and I do not have enough to live upon, that will be the fault of the housekeeper" (he looked at her with confidence, but nevertheless as no man ought to look at his housekeeper), "who has, however, a most excellent character from her last place."

"Oh, my darling, how happy I ought to be," said Evy, with a tremor in her pleasant voice, and a dewy softness in her loving eyes. "How happy and how thankful!"

"Then how much more I?" said Jack, with simplicity. "It is said that 'the course of true love never did run smooth,' but I am sure that in our case——"

"Hush," exclaimed Evy, hastily. "There is Judith."

"By Jove, who is she?" inquired Jack with interest. The young lady in question had advanced from the house only so far as the flower-bed, where she discreetly occu-

pled herself in gathering a bouquet, without taking notice of the lovers. She looked exquisitely beautiful, yet perfectly unconscious of it—or at all events unconscious of the fact that she was being admired. Her usual morning-dress had been exchanged for one somewhat smarter, and perhaps more becoming; and her magnificent hair—and her head had no other covering—had been arranged, as any woman would have seen, with more than ordinary attention to effect.

"She is Mrs. Hulet's niece, Miss Mercer," said Evy; "is she not lovely?"

"For a brunette, yes," said the captain, who had recovered from his momentary enthusiasm, and who, though ingenuous, was by no means ignorant of the art of pleasing. "You know, my taste does not lie in that direction, and she is certainly a great contrast to her cousin."

"Nay, I am not really her cousin," said Evy, softly; "though I am supposed to be so. She is no relation to any of us—only a very intimate friend."

"Is she a foundling?" inquired Jack, his mind involuntarily reverting to what Mr. Hulet had said upon that subject.

"Hush! Yes, I believe so, poor girl. Judith, dear, pray come here, and let me introduce to you Captain Heyton."

Thus addressed, Judith looked up with an air of pleased surprise, and came towards them.

"I beg your pardon, Evy," said she, "for coming into the garden, but Mrs. Hulet sent me to get her some flowers."

This unnecessary apology for her presence, and her tone of humility, touched the impressionable captain, as perhaps they were intended to do. "I am but a dependent," they seemed to say, "and would not have ventured to have interrupted the tête-à-tête of a daughter of the house and her lover, but for the orders of my patroness, which are supreme."

To see so much grace and beauty compelled to act the part of Cinderella (and in such a very becoming dress too) was almost more than man could bear.

"I think I had the pleasure of meeting you in the lane as I rode up," said he. "You were gathering flowers there also, I observed."

"Wild ones, yes," answered she.

You would have thought by her subdued voice, and down-drooped eyes, that if she had been caught plucking a rose upon her own account in the grounds about Cliff Cottage, she would have been whipped.

"What a beautiful horse you were riding, Captain Heyton," added she; and here, again, she seemed to say, "At its rider, of course, I did not look. It would have been a great liberty in a young person in my position to take notice of any gentleman visiting at this house."

"Was that Walltopper?" inquired Evy, turning to her lover. "The one you are going to ride to-morrow in the steeple-chase."

"Oh dear no," said Jack, smiling.

"It would tire it so, my dear," observed Judith, gently.

"To be sure," said Evy, blushing rather uncomfortably. It was very stupid of her not to have thought of that; but Judith need not have reminded her of an objection so obvious.

"No, this was Mignonette," continued Jack. "A little mare of mine that carries a lady beautifully. I hope you will do me the honour of taking a ride upon her, Evy."

"Oh, I am sure I shall be most pleased," said Evy; "that is, if I am not dreadfully frightened. I have not been on horseback more than once or twice in my life."

"Oh, a child might ride Mignonette," answered the captain, "and besides, of course I shall be by your side to take care of you."

"Ah, then I shall feel quite safe," replied Evy, simply. Her loving confidence shone forth in her sweet face, even more plainly than her words expressed it; and Jack, upon whose arm she leant, acknowledged it with a mute pressure. Mute as it was, however, Judith observed it, and over her face stole a tender melancholy smile such as a portionless orphan might well feel, who, herself debarred from such bright hopes, beholds two lovers happy.

"Do you ride, Miss Mercer?" asked the captain in his chivalric sorrow for her unhappy state. He did not reflect that patronless orphans, unless when professionally employed in circuses, are not as a rule much accustomed to equestrian exercise. "What a blundering idiot I am," thought he directly the words had left his lips; but it was too late.

Judith gently shook her magnificent head.

"Oh, no, Captain Heyton. I have never so much as mounted a horse, not even a rocking-horse, for my childhood was not gilded by toys."

"Then it is high time you should be taught to ride," said good-natured Jack.

"There are plenty of ladies' horses to be got in Balcombe, and you shall come out with me and Evy; shall she not Evy?"

Of course, Evy assented; but it must be confessed with no very good grace. The saying that "two is company and three is none," has an equal force when folks are on horseback as when they are on foot, and Evy would have preferred to ride with Jack, attended by a groom, rather than accompanied by her young friend, who, moreover, she shrewdly suspected of being much less afraid of a horse than herself, and therefore likely to appear to better advantage. It would be wrong to say she felt jealous of Judith—for she would have scouted such an idea as preposterous, but she thought that Jack had made himself rather unnecessarily civil to her. Of course, he had behaved so out of compassion; but how absurd—to say no worse—it had been in Judith to have excited that feeling. It was not fair towards her uncle, by whom Judith was treated exactly the same as his own niece—except perhaps that with the former he used a more studied politeness—nor was it pleasant even as regarded herself.

For the first time it struck her that the unanimous opinion of her own sex, and the intuition of her uncle, with respect to Judith, might after all be correct, and that she had been mistaken in standing up for her. More especially did she feel convinced of one fact, that Judith Mercer was very well qualified to stand up for herself.

And yet when the day was done, and Jack had gone, and Judith coming to her chamber threw her arms about her, in sisterly fashion, and congratulated her upon her happy choice, the praise of her lover was so sweet, and the sympathy with herself apparently so genuine, that all her displeasure vanished, and her good word, if it had been asked for, would have been as much at Judith's service, as her good offices had been of old.

ORPHAN SCHOOLS.

BEING THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCE OF AN ORPHAN.

It has lately been questioned, whether the method of electing candidates to charities by the votes of subscribers is the best that can be devised. The committees and directors of the various charities for the most part maintain that it is the best method; but then arises the question: are these committees and directors the best judges of what is wanted? And this again

leads us to inquire whether they are the proper people to administer charity. They are no doubt mostly benevolent people—some of them perhaps devoting their lives to the interests of the particular institution they happen to serve—but their very benevolence may cause them to be led by their feelings rather than by their judgment. There is something pretty and romantic in the idea of a dozen benevolent-looking old gentlemen arranging the affairs of an orphan school which may contain some two hundred girls and the same number of boys, but it may well be doubted whether those good old gentlemen really know the requirements of the little girls and boys.

I have been an inmate of four orphan asylums, in two as pupil, and in two as governess; also I have been for some years a subscriber to an orphan asylum, and have had a great deal of experience in canvassing for votes. There is, I suppose, a stage in life when one ceases to be an "orphan." I may consider my period of orphanage over, as I have been for some time happily married; but this enables me to look the more calmly at my past life, and to write dispassionately of the advantages and disadvantages of living in an orphan asylum. And if I tell some strange things, let it not stop the benevolent reader who was about to put his hand to his pocket or his cheque-book. It is not the manner of giving, but the manner of using the money that requires reform, and this will take time. Meanwhile, orphans must not starve.

Of the first orphan school in which I was placed I have little to say, as I was too young to understand much about it. Being left an orphan at four years old, I was taken in charge by my maternal grandfather (a member of a well-known old family), who, I have since understood, intended to educate me. But he had some unmarried daughters living with him, who were very active in helping children into orphan schools, and they proposed so to dispose of me. And here I may remark that the mixture of classes in such schools, perhaps arises in this way: there are influential people who have no difficulty in obtaining votes, being, perhaps, themselves subscribers, and having many personal friends also subscribers. These people may find themselves with some orphan relations to provide for—nothing is easier than to stow the children away in an orphan school. On the other hand, they may, perhaps, lose some favourite old servant, butler, or steward, or gardener;

then if there is a family left, the ladies (it is generally the ladies) are busy again canvassing for votes. Or a tradesman in the neighbourhood, or even the clergyman of the parish, may die and leave a large family: it is all the same, the children are placed by these busy benevolent persons in orphan schools. Some people may say that as all equally need the charity, they are equal; or, again, some may urge that the charity is greater because it imposes no condition of rank. But I would point out that as there are so many orphan schools, surely they might in some way be classified. A certain education must be given in a school, and to all alike; and the same education does not suit the children of all classes of society.

The school in which I was placed at four years old was rather a good specimen of its kind. As far as I can remember we were well-fed and well-clothed; but we were left almost entirely to the care of nurses—about two dozen children to one nurse—and my nurse was the terror of my life. We had no holidays, and we were to leave the school at eight years old. Some of my relations came occasionally to see me, but I found it difficult to remember who they were. In time I lost reckoning of when my birthday would be, and was always wondering when I should be eight years old. I used to long to get away from my despotic nurse. I remember her fierce dark face to this day. And as I seldom was spoken to by any "grown-up" person but my teacher and this terrible woman, I had a very gloomy idea of grown-up people in general. We never went beyond the gates of the school, but I have some remembrances of a pretty wild piece of land in which we played, where I could sometimes find a corner to hide from the nurse's cruel eyes. One day, which proved to be my eighth birthday, the nurse called me in from play and told me I was "fetched." We very well knew what that meant, for sometimes in the midst of our play a favourite little companion would be suddenly taken away, and told she was "fetched." And then there would be great grief among those left behind that the little favourite was so suddenly removed from them, without the consolation of talking over the parting; but children's grief soon vanishes, and new companions are found. When I heard I was "fetched," a curious feeling came over me, and I found it difficult to walk. The nurse took my hand, and had to lead me through

some long corridors to dress me, and I could not make my feet go; but I remember that some cold water on my head, and a sharp box on the ears, soon made me feel better, and I was taken down-stairs in my bonnet to a relation who had come for me. Then I passed outside the gates of the school. It seemed so curious to be outside in the world, so odd to be in a world of "grown-up" people; and I was surprised to find that every one was kind. And, oh! the delight of having a frock to wear of a new colour; for I had worn the same colour, like all the other children, during the four years I had been in the school. This question of sameness of dress and colour, simple as it sounds, is very important. If the children have a new gown every year, why cannot the colour be changed every year, or, indeed, why need all the children wear the same colour? I think that the colours taken in by the eye have a great effect on the mind, not to speak of their absolute physical effect. I remember that at the school of which I have just been writing, there was a very stately and handsome matron, who used to wear caps with pretty ribbons. We only saw her at dinner time, but we always looked forward to seeing her cap ribbons, and wondered what colour she would wear.

After I had seen the wonders of the world for a few weeks, I was sent to what I was told was a boarding-school. Here I was happy enough for a few months, quite unconscious that I was soon to be placed in another orphan asylum. Some of my schoolfellows were much older than myself, but they were very kind to me, and taught me many things. I had so much to learn, not in the way of spelling or the multiplication table—I had learnt those well at the orphan school—but I learnt the names of the flowers in the garden, and how to dig and sow seeds, and all manner of such little things. I think the big girls took so much interest in me because I was so simple. It was a pleasure to them to have some one to teach. Children like power. But I only caught a mere glimpse of the world which seemed such a delightful one to me. The holiday time came and girls went to their various homes, and I was left alone. Two kind maiden ladies kept the school, and they told me that it was not convenient for me to go home just yet, but that I should go soon. So I wandered about alone, and wondered why I could not have holidays like the other children. And one day an old servant of

my grandfather's family came to see me, and told me that I was going home for one night, and then I was going to another school. It was in vain I pointed out that my present school was such a nice one, and that I was so happy. The next morning I was taken early to the new school. I was not quite nine years old, and I had to remain there till I was fifteen. I don't think any one can imagine the dreary monotony of those six years.

On the day that I arrived at the school I first was taken to a room where my hair was cut quite close to my head, with the exception of a very small piece on the forehead, which was allowed to be long enough to reach behind my ear; then I was stripped of my clothes, being very roughly handled, and put into water to be washed in a sort of wooden trough, which I learnt afterwards was a place for washing the clothes. Then I was dressed in very rough clothes, the uniform of the school. And here I think it necessary to describe the clothes, to show how much money was expended on so much discomfort and ugliness. The under linen was made of a coarse strong linen (on the day of arrival it was put on unwashed and was very "scrubby"), although calico is quite as lasting as linen for such purposes, and is only one-fourth the price. The petticoat for summer was of brown nankeen; this material was, I suppose, used because it would not show the dirt; whereas a washing petticoat of cheaper material would have answered as well, and of course it would be much wholesomer for children to wear washing clothes. A suitable petticoat could have been bought for a fourth of the price, and the difference might have been used in laundry expenses. The stockings were of a beautiful material, but dark blue, to match the dress, and not show the dirt. Again, I say, the money should have been spent in the laundry rather than on material. The frock was of dark blue, of an excellent material, and was worn for one year, both summer and winter. Then there was an apron with a bib like a housemaid's apron; the pattern was a blue and white check, like the dusters of these days; but it was real good linen. Then there was a cap of fine lawn, made with a large crown, starched so as to stand up well on the head, and plaited in front. This covered the whole of the head, except the little bit over the forehead, where I mentioned that the hair was left a little longer. To the best

of my remembrance, we had two clean caps during the week, but even supposing it were only one, it represented in washing a third of the expenses of the laundry for each child. And yet it was a perfectly useless article. I think I may say that, taking the material of the clothes altogether, it cost about four times as much as was necessary; and that it would have been better to have used less expensive material and to have increased the laundry expenses. This question of clothes will sound trivial to some people, but those who have had much to do with children will know how important it is that the strictest cleanliness should be observed.

On the question of food, too, some will sneer, and say that charity children should be content with what they can get. But I say that the same money, spent with care and wisdom, might produce better results than were attained in my time at all events. We had good mutton and beef, but it was steamed, and every particle of gravy steamed out of it. When cooked, it was placed on a side-board and carved by the housemaids, who cut it in any way that happened to be easiest to them, and the result was that each child had a piece of steamed unpalatable meat, hacked from the joint and placed on her plate without gravy, and with a potato. No vegetable or fruit besides the potato was ever provided, except once a year, when a piece of lettuce was served round as a great treat. We all know the importance of vegetables as an article of food, especially to children, and any one who has had experience of children in the country knows how they will eat, as if by instinct, certain sorts of grasses and green stuff from the hedges. Now we had no chance of eating stuff from the hedges, as we never went out of doors, except into a walled playground. We had some trees in our playground certainly, thirty-one trees standing in a row under a high wall. I dare say now I should think them miserable stunted things, but in those days they were very dear to me, and seemed the brightest things in the place. I had no idea what sort of trees they were, as it was never considered worth while to point out a tree to us, and tell us its name; but I gave my trees names, and used to talk to them. There were several acres of ground in front of the house, which was prettily laid out with flower-beds, lawn, and shrubs; but we were not allowed to walk there. So our daily existence was passed between schoolroom, playroom, and playground,

one day differing from another only by the different lessons and dinners; for there was a set dinner for every day in the week, and it never altered, winter or summer.

I found I should have to remain at this school six years and a half, that is to say, till I was fifteen years old. And I was to be known by a number during that time, instead of by my name. My name would no longer be required for any purpose whatever, unless some kind stranger visiting the school, and passing through the rooms, should notice me and ask who I was. And any one who has not been imprisoned in the same way, cannot understand what pleasure it is to a child to be thus noticed. You will see the little face flush up and the eyes sparkle at a few kind words; and what a treasure an apple or a sweetmeat was, from the pocket of some passing visitor! There were no holidays; or rather we never left the school for holidays. There were a few days at Christmas and Easter, when we had no lessons. But after a time it was deemed advisable to allow the children to go home for a fortnight in the summer; but the friends of the children were not compelled to take them. About three-fourths of the children used to be taken home, and when the list was completed of those who were to go, and the secretary brought it into the schoolroom to read, it was listened to with breathless interest. Some children had kind mothers and friends who occasionally wrote to them or visited them, and they knew their names would be read; but others were uncertain, and listened in hope. I was one of the unfortunates left behind; at least during the first few years. And here I must say a word of the secretary. Of his work I know nothing. No doubt it was well done, but when he appeared in the school (it was seldom he had occasion to do so), he came like a bit of sunshine amongst us. He had such a handsome bright face, with always a kind word, that he must still live in the hearts of many of us. There were a few others whom we must always remember; and if I mention their little kindnesses it may induce others to follow their example. One good old gentleman, a member of the committee, would sometimes come suddenly into the playroom with his coat-tail pockets much distended, and he would dive into those pockets and manage to produce a large number of apples, so that nearly every child had one. Another kind member of the committee with his wife used to come every Sunday

to our service in the private chapel; and they brought always a basket of flowers and a packet of sweetmeats to be divided amongst those children whose birthdays had occurred during the past week.

It is difficult to realise the intense pleasure which these things gave the children. It was not simply the flowers, and sweetmeats, and apples that were valued, but the presence and kind words of these people. It prevented us from feeling utterly neglected. This kind old couple who came to our chapel on Sundays were something to look forward to every week; we used to watch for the pony carriage and old fat pony that brought them up the long drive through the grounds every Sunday; and if they didn't come, it was a black Sunday indeed. They were the only people in the chapel besides the inmates of the school, and I am afraid we fixed our eyes and thoughts on them more than on the chaplain. Then some good people would buy us skipping-ropes and hoops, and other things, which were a great resource to us.

When a visitor looks over a school of this sort, he is expected to drop a subscription into the box before he departs; but I say let him spend the money on something that will give happiness to the children, for their life is, for the most part, dreary enough. But my life at the school did not continue to be so dreary as I anticipated. When I had been there about four or five years, the head-mistress, of many years standing, was suddenly dismissed for drunkenness. How glad we were! She had been a cruel mistress to us, and used to cuff and knock us about in her drunken fits. Her successor was a young clever woman, who had been educated in the school some years before. She seemed to us to be perfect. We idolised her. We were no longer unhappy, and counting the days till we should be fifteen years old—the time for freedom—we were willing slaves to our new mistress. She knew our miseries by experience, and tried to alleviate them. There was to be more ventilation and light, and a change of food and dress, and we were to have plots of flower-garden. She would have done much more had she the power; but she met with opposition from some members of the committee. They did not like what they considered to be her new-fangled notions; it was better, they said, to leave things as they were. But the brave woman did not mind opposition; she fought our battles well. And so we gradually had many

changes. The barber was no longer to crop our heads after the fashion of convicts: we were to be allowed to grow two or three inches of hair. And when our hair was sufficiently grown to be no longer unsightly, we were told one day that we need not wear our ugly caps. I suppose there is always a certain amount of vanity in the female human being; I know that the leaving off of those caps was a moment of pride with us. They had always been hateful to us. Then our horrid duster-like aprons were changed for brown holland pinafores, and our ugly frocks for something prettier. These changes were very gradual, and there was a battle between mistress and committee over each, but our mistress was determined to win, and nothing disheartened her. She changed the whole course of education by degrees, as well as the general tone of the school. She taught us to be honourable and straightforward, to be above telling a lie, and to be morally courageous. She tried to give us physical courage, but that was almost impossible with the lives we led. Living always within walls, seldom seeing human beings, never seeing horses or dogs, or any of the traffic of the world, we could not be physically courageous. I am sure that those years of confinement have made me nervous for life; and I dare say it is the same with many of my schoolfellows. But there was one good change; we were allowed occasionally to walk (in file) round the grounds in front of the house, so we sometimes caught a glimpse of the road outside. Whether, after I left school, the children were allowed to ramble about the grounds as they pleased, I don't know. I can't help thinking that the fine Grecian edifice, with its show gardens in front, would have looked far better with the children let loose in the grounds; and I think I would rather see rows of cabbages in those grounds than know that the children could never taste a cabbage. Many more changes our new mistress made in time. I remember her saying that it would take her ten years to get the school into order; and she did take ten years, and then retired; and I suppose the school is now as perfect as any existing school of the kind; but there are still necessarily many faults, as there must be while such places are managed by a self-constituted committee. No doubt, to begin with, the mode of electing children by votes of subscribers is wrong: it leads to many evil

practices, and the most deserving cases seldom come to the front. I, as a subscriber to the institution in which I was educated, receive numerous applications from candidates. Many of the cases, from the particulars given, seem equally distressing, therefore I am puzzled to whom to give my votes. I generally give them to any friend who happens to be interested in a case, more to oblige my friend, than to do any good; and I am sure that many subscribers do the same. Sometimes I am asked to give my votes to some friend who wants to change them for "Infant Orphans," or "Incurables," or "British Orphans," &c. I oblige my friend, and do not consider what will become of my votes. But enough has been said and written on this subject of votes during the past weeks, to show that some other system of election is necessary.

Then a great fault of these schools is, that where there are so many children living together, it is almost impossible to care for each individually. I would have all these great institutions divided into a number of houses, and not more than twenty children living in each house, with a responsible person in charge of each group. They might meet in one common school-room, or rather the school and class-rooms might be common to all. But in domestic matters, it is bad that so many children should be herded together. When there are several hundred children in a dining-room, it becomes necessary to make a certain allowance of food, and every child's appetite is counted as equal. The hungry child does not get enough, and the delicate child cannot always eat her breakfast of dry bread. Then there is generally an order that nothing is to be left on the plates at dinner, and one child turns sick at a piece of fat, and not being able to leave it on her plate, conceals it in some way until she can throw it away; whereas another child would be glad to eat it. Now if there are only twenty children sitting round a table, their appetites can be considered, and the person in charge of them becomes accustomed to their various constitutions and dispositions. And it must have a very different effect on a child to know that she is thus cared for, than to feel that she is simply a unit among hundreds. And in other domestic details, into which it is not necessary to enter, the same thing applies. The child would be in daily intercourse with the person in charge of the house, and would not be afraid to complain of illness or anything

else. Such a state of things would in some measure represent home life.

In the Times of April the 4th, 1873, occurs the following paragraph:

OPHTHALMIA AT THE ANERLEY SCHOOL.—Mr. Henry F. Limpus, of the Cloisters, Windsor Castle, writes to us:—"In visiting the schools of workhouses and other large institutions, I have invariably found ophthalmia and whitewashed walls going together. People whose eyes are not very strong know the effect of walking for an hour or two in the snow, and one can imagine what it must be for these little children to spend the greater part of their time surrounded by nothing but a dead white. Of course if any Board of Guardians can bring forward instances of ophthalmia with coloured walls my suspicion will be unfounded, but till then I shall think that the disease is caused by the blinding glare to which these little creatures are constantly exposed."

I quite agree with Mr. Limpus, for I spent many years of my childhood with only whitewashed walls to look at. In the orphan school of which I have been writing there were whitewashed walls with windows so high that it was impossible for the tallest child to see anything outside.

If plaster cannot be put on the walls, it is easy to wash the bricks with a soft colour, and to paint patterns on them, as has been done in Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum. But if the children live in houses as I suggest, there would be no difficulty in giving a homely look to the place. It would be better to pin up cheap prints of a cheerful description on the walls, than to have nothing for the eye to rest on. And as what we are accustomed to see in youth remains for ever on the mind, a few good texts, either scriptural, Shakesperian, or general, would be useful, and would not cost much. I know that at the orphan school at which I was educated there was no expense spared in painting the names of the subscribers of thirty guineas or upwards on the dining-room walls. How well I remember all those names! What a pity they were not texts from Shakespear! (of whom I never heard in those days) they would then have been some use to me. But perhaps some reader will say that the subscribers were of use to me. I suppose they were. I know that I was often reminded that I should be very grateful to my generous patrons. But somehow I was not grateful. I was made to feel that there was a great gulf between me, a charity

child, and other people. More especially so when I left the orphan school, and went to a private school for two years to be "finished." The girls all laughed at me. I found that so far from being ready to be "finished," I had not even begun.

The first day that I went for a walk with the girls, I heard a donkey bray, and asked what the noise was. I had never hardly seen a donkey, and couldn't think what the noise meant. How the girls laughed! and how injured I felt! Why hadn't I been taught such things, I wondered! How could I feel grateful? Years passed before I could shake off the effects of life in the orphan school; and I am afraid that in some cases the effects were far more serious.

It is only two or three years since that the papers were full of the murder of a woman, who as a girl had been intimately associated with me. She had often sat next to me in class, and had slept in the bed next mine in the dormitory. I was once unjustly punished for some act of hers. From the time she left the school I heard no more of her, until I read of her as the mistress of a man who was hanged for murdering her.

Another of my schoolmates was some six years ago charged with the concealment of birth and murder of her illegitimate child. I cannot say that these two women went wrong because they were brought up in an orphan school; but I cannot help thinking that our life in the school was a bad preparation for our entrance into the world, and I am not surprised that children so brought up should not do well. Life should be made as pleasant to children as circumstances will permit, and monotony in anything should be avoided. A set meal for every day in the week is bad; and economy can be better observed in varying the meals. The dress should not be always the same colour; a different colour might be provided every time that a new frock or bonnet is required. The walls of the rooms, as I said before, should be of some colour that is not trying to the eyes; and the windows of the playrooms, if not of the schoolrooms, should be sufficiently low to throw strong light upon the children (for like plants they require light), and allow their eyes to travel beyond the walls of the room. That they should walk beyond the limits of the school-grounds is of the utmost importance, and a change at holiday time is desirable. But orphans and friendless

children have sometimes no kind friend to receive them. Does it ever occur to rich people to take a child from an orphan school during holiday time? I know it has sometimes occurred to people who could hardly afford to do it.

In these days of cheap books there might be a library in every school; not a library to look at, as is too often the case—rows of well-bound books in fine bookcases—but a good useful one, with books of all sorts; fairy stories for the little ones, and stronger stuff for the elder children. It is of no use keeping books of fiction from children. If you do they will only read them all the more eagerly when they get the chance. Give them good wholesome fiction while they are young, and they will have no taste for harmful books when they grow older. I had no chance of reading while I was in the orphan school, but when I left there and went to a private school I generally had a book concealed in my pocket. Reading books of fiction seemed a delightful thing to me, but it was a long time before I could read without feeling that I was doing something dishonest.

But I have said enough. I do not want to discourage those who are charitably inclined, but I wish to point out the evils that I know to exist in connexion with charitable institutions, in hope that it may help towards amendment.

I am afraid that the institutions too often form comfortable homes for the officials and servants employed in them, rather than for those for whom they were intended.

TO PSYCHE.

THROUGH what soft veil of purple mist,
Most like to vaporous amethyst,
In what still light of even-fall,
Most world-withdrawn, most mystical—
How shall dull song at all declare?
But seen as by desire intense.
Of inwardly awakened sense,
Beyond all sight, how fair
The vision, shap'd of pulsing air,
Purer than lily breath, yet quick
With life to which the sluggish creep
Of this distraught and dreamful sleep
Is deathlier than the dreary tick
Of laggard Time in midnight watch!
How shall unwinged senses catch,
Or speech ensnare in web of words,
The subtle soul that inly gleams
Through shadow-heart of all our dreams?
Love's lute notes, wildest trills of birds,
Are less unspeakable than this,
That passes picturing, yet is
The core of hope, the heart of bliss.

What amaranth splendour wreaths that brow
Seen fitfully in pauses low
Of spirit silence, when the whirl
Of sense-seen things is wholly still,

When weakness slippeth from the will,
 And Death is but a warder dim
 Beside a gate of pearl?
 So still, so white, I see thee stand,
 Ah, Psyche! with uplifted hand,
 That pointeth—whither? Though I yearn
 With uttermost desire to learn,
 I cannot strain mine eyes to see,
 I may not shape my lips to tell;
 Yet, while thou standest it is well,
 Oh silent prophecy!

White warder of a wondrous land,
 Silent—for that those lips divine
 So sweetly grave, so softly strong,
 Seal glorious secrets that demand
 A subtler speech, a mightier song,
 Than any that to earth belong.
 What speech shall life's last veil remove?
 What woven words shall Beauty prove?
 What song shall search the heart of Love?
 But radiant eye, but lifted hand,
 Are they so hard to understand?
 Sweet Psyche, though chill waters roar
 For ever round life's island shore,
 And though the darkness evermore
 Around us closes;
 Though bliss hath root in bitterness,
 And earthly love and loveliness
 Are but as riven roses,
 Drifting adown a shoreless stream,
 Though joy is but a broken beam,
 That heralds no full flush of morn,
 But makes the darkness more forlorn;
 Yet thy dim vision through the night
 Is dearer than assured sight
 Of earth's most full completeness;
 Is sweeter than serene delight
 Of life's most perfect sweetness.

So stand, sweet Psyche, ever stand
 Mist-girt and amaranth-garlanded,
 Though voiceless as the silent dead;
 That fadeless wreath, that lifted hand,
 My heart interpreteth.
 Stronger than darkness or than death,
 Mightier than spectre fear art thou;
 The Shadow's touch, the Slayer's breath
 Reach not that radiant brow.
 That shining beacon hand, unstartled,
 Pointeth to things unseen, unheard,
 That lie beyond thy shinning mist,
 Most like to vaporous amethyst.
 Full orb'd Beauty beameth there,
 Nor suffereth shadow of eclipse;
 And there the seraph Love with lips
 As pure as prayer,
 Lord of all rapture strong and still,
 Rules all the chords of heaven's attuned will.

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

VII. A BUCOLIC HAVEN.

On a Sunday evening the Green Dragon does a roaring trade. Its great glass windows send sheets of light across the road, its pewter pots clink merrily, showers of coppers fall into its till, the ivory handles of its beer-engines are for ever bobbing up and down. Demands rapidly succeed each other for "Another quartern of gin, hot," or "Just a two of rum;" the swing doors bang to and fro without ceasing; the landlord and his potboy quite glow and glisten like their pewter, while the buxom hostess

supps tranquilly with a select circle of cronies, among garlands of tankards in the inner room behind. Sunday evening and Monday morning are the busiest periods in the week for the Green Dragon, for over the bar of that enormous edifice—which looks for all the world like a flaunting, dissipated workhouse, with a taste for Brummagem ornamentation—farmers, salesmen, and drovers may be lodged and boarded by the day or week, and usually elect to be taken in and done for, from the latter part of Sunday afternoon until about eleven o'clock on Monday morning.

The Green Dragon occupies an eligible situation in the immediate vicinity of the Great Cattle Market, away beyond the Brecknock, beloved of cabmen, in the wilds of Camden Town, and hangs out all kinds of fascination in the shape of flaming announcements, in red and gold, offering Whitbread's superior three X's, cordial ginger brandy, and cream gin, combined with excellent beds, to such bucolic gentlemen as shall resist the blandishments of the Blue Boar, the Crown and Anchor, or the Pig and Shovel. In this age of progress bucolic gentlemen are not to be easily taken in; they have learned to temper their innocence with a little cockney cunning, and so, knowing very well when they are well off, they turn not to the right hand or to the left, but chew their bit of straw, with nose pointed neutrally in mid-air, until they arrive at the Green Dragon, where they know that good accommodation is to be had for man as well as beast. And what better accommodation could heart of man desire, be he farmer, salesman, or licensed drover? Verily, in that great house there is space for all. There is a cosy back room on the ground floor nestling under the stairs, with clean sand in lieu of carpet, and squadrons of spittoons under the smoke-stained settles, where the farmer may disport himself, in company with his pipe, his hot gin, and his fellow-man; or dine or sup, at set times and seasons, upon samples of animals from over the way. There is a large apartment across the yard, not quite so clean, nor yet so trim in its arrangements, where the licensed drover may quaff his pint of ale, unstrap his numbered badge from off his arm, and fix a fresh nail of dreadful sharpness in his wooden rod. Up-stairs there are acres of bedrooms, small, but very clean and neat, for the bucolic mind of upper class is very particular; is much too well accustomed to lavender-scented linen at home to brook

metropolitan dirt and jaundiced surroundings, such as we grubbers get used to perform in town. So, while the drover drinks his beer, cutting his hunch of bread and meat with his clasp-knife, his betters occupy a long table in the common room, making merry over ale and steaks, served on homely crockery, upon a coarse, but unimpeachably snowy table-cloth.

On a certain Sunday evening I travelled to the Brecknock, and pattered through fast-falling rain past Blue-Boar Scylla and Pig-and-Shovel Charybdis, as far as the Green Dragon. Not a soul stirred without, not a sound was audible but monotonous drip. Even the street-lamps seemed to glimmer more feebly than their wont, whilst the half-deserted neighbourhood, with its brand-new houses rising here and there out of white vapour, seemed, in the pervading darkness, some forgotten relics of a submerged town on the margin of the world. The Great Cattle Market, standing on its slope of hill, was a shining desert, a wilderness of tiny lakes, netted all over with a cobweb of empty pens surrounding a dark shapeless spider with a tower on his back, from which, from time to time, clanged forth the hours, reverberating spectrally in the heavy silent air. No living thing was moving. A superincumbent weight of drowsiness seemed to hang over everything, crushing it into poppy-laden sleep, and yet, before dawn, the spot would be alive, teeming and seething with bustle and hurrying feet. It was strange to think upon. I found mine host of the Dragon rather gloomy, settling up his bar for a good evening's work. The potman sat on the floor among a heap of tankards as shiny as himself, scalding them in boiling water from a pail. The buxom hostess was busy in her sanctum, weighing out tobacco previous to screwing it up in small squares of paper. They took no notice of me, and I felt awe-struck at being thus, as it were, admitted behind the scenes. I felt inclined to seize a towel, and dust the woodwork, or prepare to make myself generally useful, until the landlord, seeing me irresolute, and not recognising in me the strong useful lad advertised for on his window-pane, ushered me into the cosy parlour underneath the stairs.

"Nobody coming? Lord! yes sir, lots. All my rooms up-stairs are taken; they'll drop in one by one as the evening wears, but, being such a bad night, they may be a bit later than usual. The bar closes at eleven, you know, being Sunday, and then

they'll have their bit of supper in here before tumbling off to bed."

True enough, they did drop in one by one, all equally soaking, all their boots squelching equally like sponges, all sprinkling water-spouts from off their hats upon the floor, all disseminating a similarly odorous vapour of mouldy cheese and rotten hay.

Everybody seemed to know everybody else, as indeed of course they did, being for the most part regular weekly visitors. They talked about the weather, discussed possible breaking of the clouds, compared notes of crops, inquired into missus's health at home, divulged with mysterious circumlocution dread secrets about the morrow's sale, and finally shouting out for Joe the potboy, ordered that industrious youth straightway to fetch their slippers. Their conversation wore a bewilderingly algebraic aspect, made up as it was of "twenty-fives" and "thirties" and "foreigners," which I afterwards discovered to refer to beeves of different value, and to foreign cattle. One old gentleman appeared by common consent the father of the flock, everybody hanging on his words whenever he chose to speak, which was so very seldom that his sentiments might have been jewels of price, he was so chary of them. Strange to say his name was Christmas, and I could not help thinking that with his long white beard and venerable aspect he must indeed be the original Father, come before his time.

Eleven o'clock. Time to shut up shop and prepare for supper. Having no slippers and no interest in "foreigners," except in the form of beef, I migrated across the yard into the drovers' den. Very few were there, most of their number having gone into the country to drive up cattle for the market; such as there were lay snoring in a poisonous atmosphere on frowy rugs, or devouring chunks of meat or cheese, a melancholy spectacle of degraded human nature. Dirty, sodden, neglected mortals were these, God's image well-nigh wiped away from their low, receding brows and heavy hanging under-jaws; already half transformed to beasts in awful retribution for their daily harrying and bullying of animals. The room presented a whimsical likeness to the monkey house in the Zoological Gardens, minus its plants, its tasty floral arrangements, and its fresh air. The palm for intelligence, too, must certainly be awarded to the monkeys, who are certainly superior to the drovers in the matter of language. Otherwise the resemblance

was strong, two or three lying together in heaps, coiled head on shoulder, one or two mumbling to themselves, others champing food. One almost expected to see them jump up with a scream, perform a trapeze movement, and hang head downwards by their tails. But as they didn't, and no window was open, I returned to supper, where by this time the bucolic gentlemen were getting through quantities of steak, and comparing notes about lumbago. Twelve o'clock! High time to go to bed, considering that market was to be in full swing by five. Good-night, gentlemen—pleasant dreams.

My own dreams were not pleasant. The monkeys were singing down below. In fitful slumbers I thought the Huns were invading Rome, razing her palaces, shattering her temples, destroying women and children by fire and sword, driving into captivity her kine, her flocks, and lowing oxen. Flocks and lowing oxen! I woke with a start. The three roads branching out before the Green Dragon were alive with beef and mutton, hurrying hither and thither, scampering up by-ways, recalled by yelping dogs, by shouts and curses and patterning of staves, bleating, lowing, crying out to Heaven for peace, calling down vengeance from the skies on wicked, cruel, gluttonous, carnivorous Man. The market was already half-filled with animals; streams of them still flowed in, seemingly from the uttermost quarters of the earth. Men on horseback galloped about, superintending the disposal of their wealth, scurrying to and fro as though endeavouring to re-form a routed army. Half-past four clanged from the tower, a bell clattered all over the house, causing even flies on the window to shiver and be sensible of nerves, and in the twilight we were presently imbibing rum and milk before the bar, preparatory to facing the nipping morning air.

Really the market looked quite picturesque thus at early dawn. Its upper end was a sea of sheeps' heads, so tightly packed as to form an opalescent parterre tipped with high lights on delicate, moist noses. The lower end was a glorious confusion of bullocks' horns, and heels, and flapping tails, as they struggled with all their might against being half-choked by too short ends of rope. Bang, batter, smash went the drovers' rods, serving out indiscriminately to all a shower of blows, and kicks, and tugs. Footsore dogs sat with open mouths, adding their yelping to the

general din, wagging their tails feebly, in delight at having at length accomplished an onerous task; and footsore they might well be, for some of them had capered and barked round a flock of sheep all the way from the North of England. Now and again an energetic beast would break away, scattering his tormentors to the right and left, running a muck against a grove of brethren, who would low and kick in terror until the truant was reclaimed, and with a bang, batter, smash, tied up again. Bang, batter, smash, curse, kick; the rods were never quiet, hammering unruly victims, prodding peaceful ones, stirring up weary ones, until the next change of scene to the slaughter-house would surely be a happy release. "Now then, master, stop her—turn her, will you? What the blank do you mean by letting her go by? Why the dash could not you turn her?" And so amid the confusion the only thing to do under the circumstances is to transform yourself into a continual semaphore, spreading out your arms, and plunging at anything which may chance to come your way. But even then you are so sure to be deluged with opprobrious epithets, that perhaps it is as well to stand aside and let the poor things have their way.

Beyond the market lay enveloped in haze the still sleeping suburbs, from behind which rose slowly a red sun, flooding the terrified animals with light, casting long shadows over the miry stones. "Hi! You there! Don't you see? Yonder a young bullock has fallen down; is throttling himself; will be trampled by the others." Bang, batter, and he is dragged up again, half by the tail, half by one horn, and then given a final poke to teach him better behaviour in future. Salesmen hover around their own stock, peering at them critically with one eye and head on one side, to ascertain if all is in readiness for the coming of the butchers. Sheep are ranged symmetrically in pens, here a dozen or so, all marked with a purple cross; there a batch decorated with bright green, further on some more rejoicing in sienna top-knots. Beasts are displayed to the very best advantage, like wares in a shop window. One fat old gentleman, very bad with gout, who ought to be snugly at home in bed, swings on his crutches, discoursing to his drovers, and glancing, from time to time, down the still empty roads. Another, palsied and very shaky, gravely tickles up some lambs, poking his finger into the meat, with which

his toothless gums may never cope. Others walk up and down impatiently, turning every moment to the clock. "Sister Anne, Sister Anne, are they never coming?" Yes, see, far away on the road, a splashing of mud, and presently a host of gigs and light carts bearing men in all kinds of costume. High hats and frock coats, cut-aways, and wide-awakes, linen coats, besmeared with grease; the respectable, the seedy, the shabby-genteel, the ostentatiously dirty. The carts, the gigs, the vans are ranged in rows, displaying legends on their backs. "Snuggins, butcher, Bermondsey;" "Stubbs, butcher, Knightsbridge;" "Hoskins, butcher, Kensington;" and so on ad infinitum; men from the north, from the west, from the east, from the south, all come to replenish their stores for the next few days. And now, what prodding and poking, what feeling and frowning, what shakings of heads and scratchings of pates, what voluble discourse, what wheedling, persuading, arguing! "Stay now, as you're an old customer, you may have him for thirty; I take my oath no one else should have him under five pounds more. What, you won't? Hi! Peter, bring him out, he can't be seen. He's choked up there. Twenty-eight. My good sir. I should die in the workhouse, and deserve it, if I did such a thing. There, there! You are in such a hurry. Twenty-seven, come, although it's ruin to me. Mark him, Peter, cut the hair off his tail; Mr. Snoggins has got him, and a prime beast he is." "Mr. Stubbs, look here. Ain't them lambs picturs? I brought 'em up a-puppus for you, and dirt cheap. Scraggy! Nothing of the kind. Where's gratitude?"

The public bars are by this time full. Butchers, drovers, farmers, salesmen, jostle in a common throng to obtain a cup of coffee from dishevelled Hebe, or to wet their whistles with "a go of brandy cold." Urchins, half town half country mouse, scurry backwards and forwards, bearing trays of tea with a rasher under a tin cover, and a new roll. Drovers vary their occupation of prodding and swearing by hawking new milk fresh from the cow, a mugful for three halfpence. Strange beings, ragged and grimy, spring up from somewhere with trifling articles for sale: curry-combs, portions of harness, sieves, rat-traps. Vendors of india-rubber display mackintoshes or gig-aprons spread artfully upon the stones. One by one light carts are filled with calves or lambs, and, being securely netted, are driven off. Master

butchers retire in state, leaving their foremen to complete their purchases. And by eight o'clock the great market-place is once more desolate.

At eight the dwellers at the Green Dragon dropped, one by one, into their little back room in various stages of exhaustion, some hoarse as well as cross with fruitless expenditure of breath, some beaming with quiet satisfaction, some in a noisy condition of high glee. Joe, the glistening pot-boy, arrived with a substantial breakfast, the landlord took one end of the long table, his smiling better-half the other, and Joe gave the signal, "Gents, please fall to." What sensation is more delightful than the prospect of a good breakfast after four hours of morning air? How one exults in the toughest scrag of mutton, washed down with the birch-broomiest of tea, vowing it to be a feast fit for any king! Why, only yesterday we lolled dyspeptically in bed till eleven, then rose, made wry faces at our first-rate bohea, and only regained our wonted flow of spirits after sundry effervescing potations; and now, behold, that liveliest of drinks, fresh air, has set us up, blithe and fresh, as early as eight, A.M.

Meanwhile, in the sequestered yard, feeding time had come for the monkeys too. Glittering Joe, having placed a deal table with a few benches, proceeded to lay out some dozen or two mugs, a kettleful of coffee, and a huge dish of smoking eggs and bacon in the yard, round which the drovers settled like a swarm of unclean bees. They now looked more like criminals in an exercising-yard, than denizens of the great establishment in Regent's Park, save for an unwashed, unshorn appearance, and a liberal plastering of mud, such as would be tolerated by no prison regulations. But they had done their allotted work, and is not the labourer worthy of his hire? They had wandered philanthropically through rain and slush, had plodded for many a weary mile, that we might have our favourite joints, leaving their dogs to do the real labour, confining themselves chiefly to the ornamental department of battering, cursing, smashing, and kicking, and, their work done, they had returned, some few pence the richer, to enjoy the morning meal, and lay in a fresh store of strength for future bullying. And how they put away the coffee and the bacon! How rapidly they emptied the dish, and poured the steaming mess down their throats, accompanying the operation with a chorus of hoarse laughter and broad jests! But now

their aspect changed again to one too much resembling swine at their trough to be pleasant in connexion with fellow-mortals—their brows seemed to grow even narrower, their jaws to increase in volume for better reception of their food. By-and-bye came uncouth efforts at a toilet made by means of a triangular fragment of mirror, and five teeth from a discarded comb. But these attempts smacked too much of mockery of decent human habits; and so I sped away, leaving the now tranquil neighbourhood to its periodical repose.

FORTY YEARS AGO.

WHAT is the difference between popularity and fame? "Popularity," said Lord Mansfield, "may be obtained without merit and lost without a fault." Not so with fame, which is neither to be won nor lost without good reason. It is thus a small thing to be popular, but a great thing to be famous. The advantages of popularity are that a man has it while he lives, and that it puts money in his pocket; the disadvantages of fame are that it is, for the most part, posthumous; and consequently pays no baker's, no butcher's, no tailor's bill; and may give no crust of bread to that man living, to whom after death it may give a very considerable stone, with a magniloquent inscription upon it. Popularity is the fashion of the hour; but fame is for all time, or, to speak more correctly, for that comparatively short period of time which the busy world, with its new names and its new wants continually sprouting up, can afford to bestow upon the heroes and heroines, or the great and the good, or the wise men and women of the years that have departed. The first Napoleon asked a portrait painter who was engaged upon a canvas that was to hand down to posterity the lineaments of the great man, how long the aforesaid canvas would last, and was told that with care it might last about five hundred years. "Five hundred years!" exclaimed the emperor, with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders. "And people call that immortality!" But, as the world goes, five hundred years is an enormously long period for any man's name to remain visible and comprehensible on the page of history or tradition. Even fifty years is a great stretch into futurity for many reputations that loom large in their day and generation. Sometimes fifty days (not to speak of nine days' wonders) are

often more than sufficient to draw the veil of oblivion over the names and deeds of men and women, who once strutted their brief hour upon the stage of life, and fondly thought that the eyes of all the world were directed towards them.

Forty years ago, people were as familiar as they are now with the names and performances of the eminent men and women who played conspicuous parts in the history, the politics, the law, the literature, the arts, or the fashion of the time. But they were not so familiar with their faces, as we are with those of our contemporaries. There were, in those not very remote days, from which our own are so dissimilar, and seem so far removed, no illustrated newspapers and periodicals, and the sun had not been enlisted in the noble army of artists. There was consequently greater curiosity on the part of the public than there would be in our day to see the "counterfeit presentment" of the celebrities of the time; and when Fraser's Magazine, which started in 1830, commenced a series of literary portraits, it struck out into what was at that day a novel path, and achieved for its conductors a gratifying success. Eighty of these portraits were published between the years 1830 and 1838, and have just been re-issued,* with the original memoirs by Doctor Maginn, and illustrative notes by a modern hand, who has executed his task exceedingly well, and produced a volume that should be even more attractive now, than at the time when the portraits first saw the light, dealing as it does with persons and personages of whom the actual generation may have heard much, but of which it knows little. The portraits, light airy sketches, and with the slightest approach to a gentle and piquant but by no means ill-natured caricature, are all by one hand, sometimes, but not invariably, signed Alfred Croquis. They were in no instance taken from actual sittings, but were sketched furtively, or from memory, by one who afterwards became a Royal Academician, and one of the best artists of his time—the late Daniel Maclise. It is wonderful that under such circumstances, and with no aid from photography—not then existent as an art—or in some instances from published engravings, such admirable likenesses as these should have been possible to take. Of these eighty persons, ten are yet in the land of the living, seven gentlemen and

* A Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters. London: Chetto and Windus, successors to John Camden Hotten, 1873.

three ladies, and all taking a part more or less prominent in the literature of their time. The seven gentlemen, taken alphabetically and without precedence of rank or merit, are William Harrison Ainsworth, still writing good novels with undiminished fire; John Baldwin Buckstone, still delighting crowded audiences with his inimitable drollery and consummate art; Thomas Carlyle, still teaching the nations how to live, and denouncing "shams;" George Cruikshank, still wielding as deftly as ever his admirable pencil; Benjamin Disraeli, poet, novelist, statesman; the Reverend G. R. Gleig, of Chelsea Hospital; and Earl Russell, Nestor of his party, who published a book only last year, and who is very likely writing another. The ladies are, Mrs. S. C. Hall, with a pen as facile and beneficent as in the days of yore; Miss Harriett Martineau, working possibly, unseen but not unfelt, in the columns of a daily paper; and the Honourable Mrs. Norton—the Sappho of her time—not contented to rest upon her past laurels, but ambitious to win new, and not only winning but deserving them.

These portraits originally appeared at a time when our present race of novelists, male and female, were either at school or in the nursery, or had just begun to nibble at the great apple of literary fame; when Charles Dickens was making his first tentative efforts; when William Makepeace Thackeray had never been heard of, out of the office of the *Morning Chronicle*, and had been scarcely heard of there; and when the thousand and one estimable ladies who now spin novels, instead of spinning cloth, as the ladies of five hundred years ago were accustomed to do, were in their boarding-school days, if indeed they were in this world at all. Forty years ago, fame was not easily to be won, but it was won more easily than it is to-day, when so many trumpets are blown into the deafened ears of a much enduring public, that it cannot well distinguish one blast or one instrument from another. But, nevertheless, among the men and women of those days were many great men and women, as any one, even moderately acquainted with the history of English literature, can discover if he looks over the portraits in this volume. Among the number were Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Campbell, Thomas Moore, William Wordsworth, Samuel Rogers, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, John Wilson (Christopher North), Edward Lytton Bulwer (Lord Lytton), Pierre Jean de

Beranger, Prince Talleyrand, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Brougham, Lord Lyndhurst, William Godwin, Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, and many others, who for political or personal reasons, or mere accident, were omitted from Fraser's *Walhalla*.

Among the lesser lights—great lights in their day—whose names have scarcely come down to the newer folk of this generation, the first in Fraser's gallery is a conspicuous example. William Jerdan, editor of the *Literary Gazette*, was once a power in the Republic of Letters. It was thought that he could make and unmake literary reputations, though he could do nothing of the kind, and he was flattered and feared accordingly by all the smaller fry of literature. He was not unhonoured by the greater fry; for he was hospitable, generous, cordial, and the best of company, and lent a helping hand to young and struggling genius whenever it came in his way. Another of the little great men, who seemed great enough for Fraser's purposes, was Louis Eustache Ude, the author of a cookery-book, an artiste who could really cook, and that is saying much. Nobody knows about him now. He has dropped into the deeps of oblivion, dethroned by Soyer, who was in turn dethroned by Francatelli, who still lives, a prosperous gentleman. Who ever heard of Don Telesforo di Trueba y Corio, who is here immortalised? Or of Grant Thorburn, or the gentleman called the Tiger, or the Earl of Munster? But why go over the list? There may be people still living who thought Don Telesforo and the others were very great men; and it is of no avail, even if it were kind and gracious, to dissipate their illusions.

Among the portraits that are particularly good in this collection—and the writer gives his opinion from personal remembrance of his old friends—are those of Thomas Campbell, the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*, and of some of the very finest lyrics in the English language, in his habit as he lived; and of Samuel Rogers, the author of the *Pleasures of Memory*, *Human Life*, and many other little gems of poetic art. Rogers, who lived to the age of ninety-four, was accused of saying ill-natured things, and of being unable to restrain a malicious jest, at whose ever expense it might be emitted; but the world, for the most part, did not know, or forgot to say, that his hand was as liberal as his tongue might have been venomous; and that he never tired of well-doing, not

ostentatiously in the eyes of the world, but privately, and in a manner that enhanced his beneficence by the delicacy of its bestowal. He had a great contempt for the professional critics, and used to say that he never but once took a hint from, or learned anything of them. "When the Pleasures of Memory first appeared," he said, "a critic in a monthly review"—there were no weekly literary papers in those remote days—"quoted the opening lines of the second canto :

*Sweet Memory wafted by thy gentle gale,
Oft up the tide of Time I turn my sail;*

and remarked that the alliteration would have been better and more complete if the line had read :

Oft up the tide of Time I turn my tail.

I saw the force of the objection at once; and, on reconsideration, determined to amend the passage. Time, I said to myself, is not a tide that ebbs and flows, but a stream that is constantly running down into the great sea of Eternity: so I amended the simile, and dislocated the alliteration by one blow, and in my next edition the line appeared,

Oft up the stream of Time I turn my sail.

This was a manifest improvement, though I certainly owed no thanks for it to the critic."

The portrait of Wordsworth is also exceedingly good, that of a man wrapped up in himself, like Buddha, absorbed in his own excellence, and with a mind so full of its own resources, as to be quite independent of companionship. The portrait of Beranger, the great song writer of the French, is absolutely perfect. The good old Pagan—for Pagan he was as much as Anacreon or Socrates—is represented to the life, as he sat in the prison to which he was condemned for a song that hit the Bourbons rather hard in the days of Charles the Tenth, surrounded by all the good things of this life, with which his friends took care to supply him; calm, serene, and utterly unambitious either of fame or fortune, as happy in singing as a lark in the morning sky, and as utterly careless of the future. He had, in his later days, but an income of twelve hundred and fifty francs (fifty pounds) per annum; but he made it suffice for his modest wants, though he confessed that it was supplemented by presents from known and unknown friends and admirers; and that he often received a case of Pommard, his favourite wine, from an anonymous

benefactor, whom he could never discover, but whose health he religiously drank every day while his wine lasted.

Among the most characteristic of these portraits is that of Thomas Hill—unknown in our day, but well-known in his own—the original who sat, very involuntarily no doubt, for Paul Fry. It used to be a joke against Hill, that the registry of his baptism was burned in the Great Fire of London in 1666. He was a familiar presence in every place of public resort in London, picking up little scraps of gossip and information, which he sent every Sunday to the Morning Chronicle for insertion in that journal on the Monday, not be it understood for money, but for love of the Chronicle, which, next to gossip, was the delight of his life; and possibly for the reward of an occasional dish of early peas or strawberries from the grateful fruiterers in Covent Garden Market, for a puff in his favourite journal. In the central alley of the market, his figure and business were as familiar to the dealers as their own shops. Christie and Manson, and the once more noted George Robins, knew him as well as they knew their own hammers, and always gave him their choicest bits of information. He swore by the Morning Chronicle, and thought it immortal. Happily for his repose, he died while that once great journal was in the maturity of its fame and prosperity, and before the fatal canker that was to bring it to an untimely end had displayed itself. Hill was a small Mæcænas in his way, and delighted to bring out poetasters and poetasteresses. If he had lived in our days he would have had many more chances in this direction than he had in his own.

It is curious to look back upon the portraits of Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Ainsworth, and Lord Russell, still living, and on that of Lord Lytton, recently deceased, to see what smart young gentlemen they severally were. What an Antinous was Mr. Harrison Ainsworth; what an Adonis was the present leader of the Conservative phalanx, what an elegant was Lord John Russell; and what a guy, to use a modern but expressive vulgarism, was one of the astutest intellects and greatest wits of his age, the famous Talleyrand!

Among the portraits of a class of literary men which it is to be hoped will never pass away, there are one or two of a class which is happily obsolete. Among these latter stands conspicuous that of Charles Molloy Westmacott, formerly editor of the

Age, who died recently in Paris, after having disappeared from London life for more than the third of a century. The face and figure are those of a strong, burly, handsome, determined man, whom it would be dangerous to provoke, and who was more than capable of holding his own in any physical encounter that might be forced upon him, or that he himself might seek. The newspaper which the burly man conducted, and of which he was the presiding spirit, if not the all in all, dealt in scandal, as an article of trade, to such an extent as to have rendered it a public nuisance. Both the Tories and the Liberals of those days had their organ of defamation—the Tories the *Age*, and the Liberals the *Satirist*: an abominable pair long since gone to their graves, and of which no revival is possible in our day, or which, if revived, would receive their final quietus in less than a month, at the hands of the outraged law of the land, as well as the equally outraged laws of decency and propriety. The once well-known Doctor Maginn, who wrote the original notices or memoirs which accompanied the Fraser portraits, saw nothing to blame, but much to praise, in Westmacott's mode of doing business, and wrote of him as a "plucky little fellow" (he looks big enough in the portrait), "who has pushed his way actively in the world, though he is desperately neglected in a quarter which owes him the deepest gratitude; for he fought in his paper the battle of the Tories as openly and as freely as he could; and that is openly and freely enough in all conscience."

But Maginn was almost as great an offender in this way as Molloy himself, and wrote of every liberal politician with a gross personality which would not be tolerated in our time, and which it is sad to reflect should ever have been tolerated at all. His portrait in this collection represents a quiet, studious, intellectual-looking person, and by no means the ranting, roaring Irishman which, in a well-known ballad, he declared himself to be, a description which his friend John Gibson Lockhart, the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, and for long years editor of the *Quarterly Review*, and who is responsible for the appended memoir of his friend, affirms to be correct. It was thought at the time when Maginn flourished, that a cheap press and the abolition of all taxes on paper and on newspapers, which some daring

reformers of those days very ardently advocated, would lead to unbridled licentiousness, to attacks on private character, and to a general pollution of the public mind. Never was prediction so happily falsified. It was the high-priced newspaper or periodical of the old days that was licentious and even brutal. With cheapness came in modesty, decency, propriety, respect for the sanctity of home, and if not always respect for the public character of public men, a mode of speaking of public men without libelling them, and without ransacking the secrets of their private lives, to degrade, to persecute, or to levy black mail of them.

The libels and perversities, the ill-natured allusions, and the incomplete information of Maginn—which have properly been preserved in this interesting volume as characteristics of the age, and materials of literary history—have found their antidote and correction in the ample, judicious, and generous notes of the editor, Mr. W. Bates, Professor of Classics in Queen's College, Birmingham, who has contributed a vast mass of curious information relative to every one of the characters portrayed. To compare his notes with the memoirs of Maginn, is to compare the present with the past, greatly to the advantage of the taste of our time.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XLVIII. RELEASE.

I WAS ringing Mr. Monck's office bell. But the door did not spring open with the old prompt magic. I rang again and again.

Suddenly I perceived Vickery inspecting me through the cloudy panes of one of the ground-floor windows. He nodded, quickly withdrew, and after a little pause, during which I heard him unfasten the chain and bolts of the door, I was admitted.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Nightingale; pray come in. I hardly expected you so soon."

"Are you ill, Vickery?" He was very pale, and his manner was certainly agitated.

"Thank you, Mr. Nightingale. No. I'm pretty well. I'm in my usual health, I may say."

"And Mr. Monck? You have good news to tell me of him, I trust?"

He did not answer for a minute or so. He was hesitating, I think, whether he should or not reproduce the old formula I

knew so well, to the effect that Mr. Monck was in, but particularly engaged, and was not likely to be disengaged very immediately. He decided, however, that, so far as I was concerned, this reply had ceased to be of any avail.

"No, Mr. Nightingale, I am pained to say that I have no good news to tell you of Mr. Monck. He is very ill indeed."

"And Miss Rachel?"

"Need you ask? Poor Miss Rachel!" And he turned from me.

The office looked very bare and desolate. The boy had departed, it seemed. I never saw him again. All necessity for his further services had ceased. No business was going on. Old Vickery had resumed his seat at his desk, but there was now no litter of papers before him. His inkstand was empty. He was without pens. He sat still upon his high stool, leaning forward upon his elbows, with both hands pressed upon his forehead, lost in thought. He looked ill, and very old, and intensely sad.

I unlocked my desk, and peered into it, by way of doing something. It contained little beyond scraps of paper, old letters, and a dusty crumpled coat I had been wont to assume in office hours. In my absence the moths, I found, had made very free with the garment.

The office bell rang. The wires which communicated with the street door, enabling any one to open it without quitting the office, had snapped I perceived, worn out with age and rust.

"Never mind," said Vickery, with a depressed air; "it's nothing, I dare say. They'll ring till they're tired, and then they'll go away. If it's papers, they can slip them under the door. There's no need to see who it is, Mr. Nightingale." The sound of his own voice, or the exercise of speech, seemed to cheer him a little. "You see, Mr. Nightingale," he went on, in something more like his usual tone, "it's vacation time now, the heart of the vacation, I may say, and there's but little doing in the law. All the offices are closed. Counsel are not at chambers. Chancery-lane is quite deserted. It's almost a pity you hurried back from the country; that is, of course, if you were happy there. I never cared for holidays myself, though I know that many people do. Your absence did not inconvenience us. You have not been wanted. Though I'm glad, of course, to see you again, looking so well, too—quite stout and sunburnt, I declare. The change

has done you good. Change does some people good. But for my part, I never found it agree with me particularly. It's a good thing, I always think, when one has quite made up one's mind as to what agrees with one and what doesn't. I've done that, now. It was time, perhaps, at my age. And London—by which I mean this office, my seat here, the law—suits me better than anything else I find."

After this he relapsed into silence. I wrote letters to my mother and to Tony announcing my safe arrival in town, and setting forth various matters that I thought might interest and amuse them. Somehow we always have so much more to write about immediately after quitting our friends than when we have been a long time absent from them, however important may be the events that have happened in the interval. But letters depend for their existence mainly upon small and intimate matters, and to these prolonged separation is almost fatal.

Vickery was now stirring himself to make a show of business. He had spread various papers before him, stuck a pen behind his ear, and he held in his mouth a piece of red tape, which had been wound round certain of the documents he affected to be engaged upon.

"We don't work so hard in the vacation, Mr. Nightingale; we take things rather more easily than at other times. You needn't trouble yourself to return to your desk after dinner, for instance, Mr. Nightingale; not just at present, at any rate. By-and-bye, of course, it will be different, and we shall have our hands full, very full, indeed, I've no doubt. And in an office like this there's always a something going on, however slack we may seem to be. Perhaps when you've a spare moment you'll just check the additions of this bill of costs, and see if you make my totals correct. But there's no hurry, no sort of hurry, about it. They're Chancery costs. Perhaps you may find it instructive to cast your eye over the indifferent items, and see how we deal with such matters."

He placed a pile of papers upon my desk and quitted the room. He had so expressly stated that hurry was unnecessary, that I did not venture to disturb them, or even to look at them. Presently he returned.

"Miss Rachel would like to see you, Mr. Nightingale, for a few minutes."

I found her in the large dingy front

room on the first floor. She advanced to meet me with her small soft hand outstretched.

"I am glad to see you again, Mr. Nightingale. And yet I'm sorry, too, that you should come back to so sad a house as this."

"Mr. Monck——"

"He is very, very ill. He is in extreme danger. I may now scarcely hope for his recovery. And yet I do hope still." But the sigh with which she said this was despair itself, I thought. That she was suffering acutely was very apparent. Her eyes seemed dimmed and weary with incessant watching; the lids drooping tremblingly over them, as though longing to close and veil them in sleep; while yet in the eager, hungry, almost gaunt expression of her face there was something that forbade the thought of rest. She was the prey of intense anxiety and consuming dread; there was a quick nervous pulsation in her wan cheeks; her voice sounded faint and parched. I was greatly distressed to see her thus. I thought of what Tony had said of her: that she was a lily shut up in a law book. The poor flower was now crushed and broken indeed. I murmured vague expressions of sympathy and comfort. Probably my words were not very intelligible; but she could see that I meant kindly. And something of a faint plaintive smile trembled for a moment about her pale lips.

"You found your friends well, I trust, Mr. Nightingale, and left them so? How pleased they must have been to have you with them again. And—my cousin—Tony?"

I explained how it was that Tony had not returned with me.

"He is ill—is that what you mean?" she asked, with a look of alarm.

"Not really ill. Nothing serious I am sure. But he is not very strong. A little rest in the country air will surely restore him. And there is nothing to require his presence in town."

"Nothing—no one," she murmured faintly. "He did well to stay."

"He had been working too hard before he left. He deserved a holiday. And he will be well cared for, be sure of that, Miss Monck. My mother treats him as her own son."

"She's a good kind woman, your mother, I'm sure of that, though I have never seen her."

"She has grown quite fond of him. I

left them the closest friends. Indeed, Tony has endeared himself to us all."

"I can well understand that," she said, in a musing, almost unconscious way. Presently there was something of suspicion and mistrust in her glance as she demanded, "You are certain that there is no danger?"

"I may say so, indeed. I feel assured that there is no danger."

"You are not hiding anything from me? If so, believe me, you are doing wrong. You may think it kind to keep the truth from me. But it is cruel kindness. I want the simple truth. I can endure. I am no coward when I really know my danger. I have learnt—I have taught myself—to be brave, and to suffer. And I have suffered—I am suffering still, Heaven knows! Forgive me. I am talking wildly. My head aches terribly to-day, and I hardly know what I say. But I have been unjust to you. I see that. You would not deceive me in this matter. But—he sent no message by you?"

"No. But he will write to you, of course."

"He will write? When? Why has he not written? You have not hindered his writing? There was nothing to hinder his writing? Forgive me again, Mr. Nightingale. I don't know what possesses me to talk in this mad way. But I have been so longing to hear from Tony. I have laid quite a foolish stress upon having a letter from him. My life is so sad and secluded—I'm not complaining, but it is so—that the merest trifle makes a great difference to me. If you had brought me but a few lines in Tony's writing, they would have cheered me so much. But you couldn't know that, and he, poor boy, never gave it a thought, I dare say. There was so much about him that was fresh and new to interest and occupy him; he didn't feel his time to be quite at his own disposal. No wonder he didn't think of me. Why should I trouble his thoughts? I'm but a sad subject; he would only have grown sad, perhaps, thinking of me. And I wouldn't have him sad."

"But he did think of you, Miss Monck, and speak of you often, and always kindly and affectionately."

"He was always kind and affectionate. He spoke of me—and he said—something you may tell me, perhaps, Mr. Nightingale, if it be only a word of what he really said?"

I answered with some hesitation:

"He mentioned how much he owed to

you; how kind you had always been to him. That you had been to him as a sister, always."

"Yes; I have been his sister. He has been to me as a brother. Thank you, Mr. Nightingale."

She spoke in a faint voice, sighing, with her eyes gazing at some far distant object, as it seemed to me. Mechanically she gave me her hand again; it was feverish and trembling; I pressed it lightly and quitted her.

The next day I was again at the office. I sat at my desk, now toying with the additions of the bills of costs Vickery had handed me, and now engaged upon a series of fancy sketches in pen and ink. I remember, too, making many experiments as to the most advisable method of signing my name, and the especial signature I should decide upon adopting, unchangeably, thenceforward. I devoted much time to this inquiry. "Marmaduke Nightingale" in large, bold, black letters had its merits undoubtedly; but there was a good deal to be said for a fluent "M. Nightingale," with a dashing flourish beneath. If I ever became famous, I judged that posterity would know me familiarly and playfully as "Duke Nightingale;" but I could hardly as yet assume that abbreviated form for my established signature.

Vickery was very silent. He did not affect to occupy himself with any office work. Now he sat mute and motionless, leaning his head upon his hands, staring vacantly at his inkstand, holding between thumb and finger a pinch of snuff he had forgotten to apply to his nose. Now he was seized with a restless fit, and shuffled hither and thither in and out of the room, muttering to himself, rapping his tin snuff-box, waving his yellow handkerchief, and taking snuff with nervous noisiness and frequency. He seemed to be waiting for something or somebody, and to have grown almost crazy from the cruel overtaking of his patience. Then he would relapse again into stillness, and rest upon his high stool in a state of abstraction—almost of torpor.

The office door was ajar. All was very quiet. The ticking of the clock seemed unusually loud, and I could plainly hear the footsteps of passers-by upon the pavement of the street without.

What was that? A cry, or rather a feeble, painful moan from one of the upper rooms of the house. Vickery leapt from his high stool.

"Don't stir," he cried to me, almost fiercely.

He hurried from the office, and with utmost haste mounted the stairs. I heard the sound of a door closing behind him.

I sat alone for an hour as I thought. It was in truth but a very few minutes. Would he never come back? I asked myself. I was strangely excited. I felt that my eyes and mouth were wide open.

Vickery was descending the stairs again. "What has happened?"

"The worst, I fear." He was as white as a sheet, and trembling all over. He gasped for breath. "The doctor—I am going for him." In his agitation and bewilderment he could not find his hat, though, as I observed afterwards, it hung upon the peg it had occupied for years. He took up my hat, without knowing that it was mine, or perceiving that it did not fit him in the least. It was strange that, even at such a moment, a thought of the ludicrous figure he unconsciously presented darted across my mind.

He turned on the threshold, and in a husky, passionate voice, said:

"You will not quit the office? You will not go up-stairs? Promise me you will not as you are a gentleman!"

"I promise. I will not quit the room until I am specially asked to do so."

He darted off without closing the street door after him.

I could not sit still. I paced up and down the office, stopping now and then to listen. Was that Vickery returning? No, not yet. It was only some one passing in the street. Stop; was that the moaning cry from up-stairs again? It was fancy wrought upon by memory and appearance. All was very still. Mr. Monck was dying. That was only too plain.

Vickery returned, bringing with him a young man, whom I understood to be a doctor's assistant. The doctor, it appeared, was absent at the moment, and his services could not be secured.

Vickery and the assistant, whose name I afterwards ascertained to be Pitfield, mounted the stairs together. The one, I noted, was all anxiety and eagerness, was pale and very tremulous; the other was sufficiently cool and collected. He was a young man, but he had acquired something of the deliberate and self-contained manner of his profession. He found time to run his fingers through his hair, and adjust his side-locks before he went up-stairs.

I waited, listening, at the office door.

"He has never moved!" Rachel was the speaker. Her voice sounded harsh and shrill, almost as though, in the intensity of her fear and suffering, it was some relief to her to cry aloud.

A pause. There was some movement in the room up-stairs—the back drawing-room as I judged.

"Take her away."

It was Mr. Pitfield's voice. Then came a most heart-broken wail, followed by quick sobbings and half-muffled moans of acute anguish. Poor Rachel!

I found myself trembling with excitement; my hair was wet upon my forehead; my heart throbbled with painful violence.

They were coming down-stairs again; Vickery and Mr. Pitfield.

"I could do nothing," the latter was saying, in a calm tone. "There was really nothing to be done—all must have been over before you came to me. But even if I had been here sooner it would have made no difference. Nothing could have saved him. He has been a doomed man for a long time past. I have often talked over the case with Viner." Pitfield was Mr. Viner's assistant. "Viner made no secret of his opinion. He was surprised the patient had survived so long—of his recovery Viner never entertained any hope whatever. It couldn't be, you know. There was a reasonably strong constitution to work upon; but then—softening of the brain of long standing! The plain truth is, as you must very well know, that the poor man has been stark mad this many a long day."

"I knew it. She did not," said Vickery, with touching simplicity. "At least I tried to hide it from her as well as I could. Perhaps she knew it too—and we were trying to hide it from each other. Poor Miss Rachel!"

"Yes, it's sad. But still, if it's looked at in the right light, it should, perhaps, rather be called a happy release."

"It's so easy to say—a happy release!"

"There was no hope."

"Perhaps not. But he lived. She did not ask for more than that. It did not seem so much to ask. But he's taken from her now. Poor Miss Rachel!"

I observed that now all was over, Vickery had resumed something of his usual composure of manner, although there were still tears in his eyes, and his expression was very sad. He had entered the office with Mr. Pitfield, and as he stood near his desk, old habits reasserted their rule over him. He began collecting scattered papers, and winding red tape round them. And took snuff again, proffering his tin box to Mr. Pitfield, who availed himself of the opportunity, and sneezed very freely afterwards.

"You'll want a certificate of the cause of death, I suppose?" said Mr. Pitfield. "There will be no difficulty whatever about that. I can give it to you. I'm qualified, you know. I've passed the Hall, though just now it's convenient to me to be with Viner as his assistant. 'Softening of the brain of long standing.' That will be enough, I should say. Although, if need be, we might add something about attacks of acute dementia.' Let me see; Mr. Monck, I suppose, was about——"

"Fifty-six last June."

"Not more than that? I thought him years older. Viner will be sorry to hear of his death. Good morning."

"Mr. Nightingale," Vickery said to me presently, rousing himself from a reverie, and suddenly discovering, as it were, the fact of my existence. "Mr. Monck is dead. There will be no occasion for you to come here any more."

So I was released from my articles; without ever having seen, dead or alive, the solicitor to whom I had been bound!

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGBERD," "A PERFECT TREASURY," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XIX. THE STEEPLE-CHASE.

THE steeple-chases at Balcombe are by no means the splendid spectacle we behold at Liverpool, or the Curragh. The grand stand is a very trumpery affair, built to serve for the occasion only, and with bills stuck on it addressed "To timber merchants and others," notifying that the materials will be on sale the ensuing day. The majority of the races are local; confined to horses that have been regularly hunted with the Balcombe fox-hounds, or to those belonging to farmers in the neighbourhood. The jockeys are local too, and so are the tailors who clothe them. Their smart jackets are bulgy at the back, and if their buckskin breeches look like another skin, it is that of the wrinkled rhinoceros. Instead of three or four rows of carriages lining both sides of the "run in," there are but a few score vehicles in all; for the "views" in vogue at Balcombe are antagonistic to sporting "events," and when that annual abomination, the steeple-chase meeting, is about to take place, its pulpits rarely fail to give forth a warning sound. Upon the present occasion there were but a handful of really creditable "turn outs," among which the drag of the regiment quartered at the neighbouring assize town disputed the palm for neatness of appointment, with a waggonette and four from Luculus Mansion. Mrs. Hodlin Barnby did not give in to the Balcombe "views," but always organised an expedition to the course, thereby affording to her husband his whitest day in the year. As he sat on the box-seat of the elongated vehicle, "tooling"

its four greys with all the skill of Plato's pupil in the fable, the fatal heath of Newmarket, the deadly downs of Epsom, were forgotten, and he seemed once more to have his own again, and to be spending it. Notwithstanding that some of his guests held up their hands against this wickedness, the waggonette was more patronised to-day than usual, through a sort of esprit de corps. For two members of the table d'hôte, namely, the Captain and Mr. Paragon, were to ride for the Balcombe Cup, the only prize to be contended for by gentlemen riders. It had not been the latter's original intention so to do, but the fire of rivalry had been kindled within him by the speculations and talk about Walltopper.

He wished to show the public that he also possessed an animal worthy of their attention in his black mare Nemesis, upon which, too, he had an idea that he himself looked rather an attractive object in a white cap and scarlet jacket. His chief motive, however, in putting in this striking appearance was the wish expressed by Judith to see him in the costume in question, which he had rashly confided to her that he possessed; for she had of late attained over him a marvellous ascendancy, born of her beauty, but strengthened by the fact that she was now in independent circumstances, and need not accept him unless she pleased. As to her Augustus, he had never heard of him, and would have been in no wise jealous of any such poor devil, if he had. A man might paint a sheep ever so well, he would have argued, had the existence of such a rival been suggested to him, but he could never be put in competition by any sensible young woman with a rival who possessed forty thousand real ones, with the wool on, upon the fertile

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plains of Morumbidgee. And Judith, with a little bouquet of scarlet and white geraniums—of which no one but herself and Mr. Paragon knew the significance—was on the course, in Mr. Hulet's carriage, along with that gentleman and Evy. Mrs. Hulet had expressed herself strongly against patronising races, whereupon her husband—who in reality objected to them more than she did—had instantly determined upon being present, and upon taking the two girls with him. Distressed as she always was to see her aunt and uncle quarrel, Evy was not sorry that the dispute ended as it did, for it would have almost broken her heart to have missed seeing her lover ride the race. At the same time she was consumed with apprehensions for his personal safety.

"That wide jump in front of us is surely very dangerous," said she to Mr. Hodlin Barmby, of whom she was a great favourite, and who had come to the side of the carriage, expressly to give her information about the proceedings of the day.

"Not a bit, my dear Miss Evy; or at least not to the riders, about whom (or at least about one of whom) I conclude you are more solicitous than about the horses. No, no—if there is danger anywhere it is at that double fence in the hollow. An earth-wall and two ditches are in my opinion too much 'for a fly,' and it wants a clever horse to take it in, 'one, two.' But it's an easy course from first to last, and in my opinion the most speedy nag will win."

"And which is the most speedy nag?"

"Oh, old Walltopper, without doubt. He used to be a flat racer, but being of an infernal temper, he broke away from his horses one day at Ascot, and cleared the rails, and they do say the people's heads, so splendidly, that Dirleton (or rather Heyton, for he is master of his uncle's horses, you know), made a steeple-chaser of him; but he is not much of a jumper in my opinion. Paragon's Irish mare is worth a dozen of him, except for timber, but you must not tell the captain that—and here he comes."

A black velvet cap, top-boots, and a great-coat are not a costume calculated to set off the human form divine to the greatest advantage; yet Evy thought she had never seen Jack looking so charmingly. His easy air, with the prospect of so many dangers before him, the confidence with which he spoke of Walltopper, and above all his behaviour to her uncle, which had liking in it as well as respect, transported

her with pleasure. So far from grudging Judith her few artless questions to the captain about sporting affairs, it pleased her to find that being to the point, and by no means exhibiting a ridiculous ignorance, they seemed to interest him. She quite felt for the poor girl when that foolish Mr. Paragon, wearing no great-coat, and who in his scarlet jacket and white cap looked distressingly like a monkey, came up and joined them, and began paying her compliments, which it must have been embarrassing for her—in the presence of one who was acquainted with her engagement—to receive. Whatever she may have felt, however, Judith showed no trace of confusion, and, indeed, exhibited a coolness of judgment in a certain bet which she made with her admirer, that drew forth the captain's warmest approbation.

"Come," said he, "Miss Mercer," when that gentleman had gone to be weighed, "you have made a very pretty book of this race. Do you feel inclined to hedge a little and back Nemesis against Walltopper?"

"No, indeed, Captain Heyton," answered she significantly, "unless at least you laid me very long odds."

"But the betting is even," remonstrated Jack.

"I know that," responded she; "but having my own opinion of the merits of the rider, I should require several points above the current quotation."

A reply which, while it evidently pleased the captain, was unintelligible to poor Evy, who knew nothing whatever of "points," "quotations," or racing matters of any kind. For her part she was convinced that Jack ought to win, and would have bet ten to one upon his doing so against the field.

The local race, which was to have preceded that for the cup, did not come off, through an insufficiency of entries, so the contest between the gentlemen riders became the first on the card. The field was a large one, consisting of eleven competitors, each of whom took his preliminary canter up the course. Evy's face lit up with loving pride as Jack went by them on his bay, and even Mr. Hulet acknowledged that that young fellow looked well on horseback. Mr. Paragon, also, knew how to ride, and the black mare he bestrode attracted much commendation.

"Barring accidents," explained Mr. Hodlin Barmby to Mr. Bullion, who had happened to take a walk that morning in

the direction of the course, and would have enjoyed the spectacle very much, but for the reflection that it would be impossible to conceal the fact of his having beheld it from his wife, "barring accidents, the race will be between the bay and black."

"Barring accidents," repeated Evy, in horrified accents. "Do you expect there will be an accident then, Mr. Barmby?"

"Well, yes; there's sure to be somebody rolled over, you know; there always is in a big race like this. But we've had a great deal of wet, and it will be soft falling."

This was no more comfort to Evy than the information that there was "snug lying at the Abbey," was to Bob Acres; and when Judith observed rather maliciously, "Oh, I think a little danger makes it all the more exciting," she turned round on her with the severest speech she had ever made in her life.

"You are like the girl in the Last Days of Pompeii, Judith, who wanted to see the wild beast kill the man."

Judith laughed, but did not reply, for at that moment the horses were being marshalled for the start, upon the hill at the back of the carriage, in one long undulating line of colour; there was a silence, during which all the spectators seemed to be standing on tip-toe, and then the flag was dropped, and the horses came down the slope like a rainbow that had become a whirlwind. A shaking of the turf, a thunder in the air, one flash of colour, and they had passed by, and were nearing the water jump. The distance had been so short that they were still altogether as they took it, when in an instant there were three gaps in the hurrying line, which showed that that number of horses had fallen; two of them, however, with their riders, soon scrambled up again, and pursued the rest, while the third was led away. Evy heard some one expressing sympathy as if for some catastrophe, but tender-hearted as she was, she had no compassion, no attention, no eyes, in short, just then for any object save one—a certain yellow jacket and black cap, upon a noble bay, which was gradually drawing ahead of the other competitors.

"Take this, Miss Evy," said good-natured Mr. Barmby, handing her his race-glass, "and see how the captain is making the mud fly. If he can keep that pace he will distance the whole lot of them. I only hope that the consciousness that somebody's bright eyes are watching him may

not make him press Walltopper too much before he gets to the double fence. See, he has cleared those hurdles like a bird."

"Oh how beautiful it is," cried Evy, in a rapture, and scarcely hearing what was said by those about her. "I never knew what a horse could do before! I am sure I don't wonder that you gentlemen should be so fond of— Oh dear, that is the dangerous place, is it not, which he is coming to now?" The glass shook in her hands, so that she could hardly watch the progress of her lover as he drew near the fence; but there seemed to be no abatement in the horse's speed.

"He will not be so mad as to take it at a fly, I do hope," muttered Mr. Barmby. "Is he over yet, Miss Evy? for I can't make him out at this distance."

"Yes—no. Oh, good Heavens, Mr. Barmby, he is down."

"My dear Evy, pray don't make a scene," remonstrated her uncle; "people who ride steeple-chases must expect a tumble now and then." Mr. Hulet's face was troubled notwithstanding his words, as he snatched the glass, which indeed had become useless to her, from his niece's trembling hands, and gazed through it attentively. "He is not hurt, Evy," said he, confidently. "He is on his legs, though the horse is down."

"Oh never mind the horse," cried Evy, half hysterically; "are you sure that he is on his legs?"

"On two legs, yes; but he wants to be on four," observed Mr. Hulet, who was rather ashamed of himself for having exhibited apprehension upon the captain's account. "He is trying to pull his horse out of the ditch. There's Paragon on the black mare flying over his head from the bank, which must be deuced unpleasant; the others seem to be looking at it. What do you make out of the situation, Barmby?"

Mr. Hodlin Barmby took the glass, and after gazing through it attentively for a few moments, handed it once more to Evy.

"There's a sight which will do your eyes good, my dear young lady. Heyton's up, and after them."

Eight out of the eleven starters had in one fashion or another got over the double fence, Nemesis leading them by a whole field; and the captain himself was once more mounted, and in full pursuit.

"He's a good plucked one, Hulet, that young fellow, is he not?" continued good-

natured Mr. Barmby, glad to have an opportunity of praising Jack.

"He has plenty of determination," answered Mr. Hulet, dryly, "though it's a pity he should waste it upon steeple-chasing. I suppose the young fellow has no chance now," added he presently, with an interest that rather belied his former didactic tone, "or else, by Jove, he seems to be picking up."

The course was a circular one, and the horses were now all well within sight, taking their fences separately, and with considerable intervals between them. "He is picking up," answered Mr. Barmby, confidently. "He has passed four of them, and will make it hot for the rest of them, except Paragon."

"Mr. Paragon's horse looks more tired than his to my eyes," observed Judith, quietly.

"Your eyes are very good, young lady," returned Mr. Barmby. "He has pressed the mare too much up the hill, and when there was no occasion to do so. I always said that Paragon couldn't ride; but he has got too much ahead to be caught, I fear."

"The bay is going faster every moment," exclaimed Evy, eagerly, who had not wasted her attention upon any of its rivals for a single second. "I'd give—oh what would I not give that Walltopper should win."

"What does Miss Mercer say to that?" inquired Mr. Bullion, archly, who, on the rare occasions when he escaped from his wife's surveillance, was given to playfulness of remark.

"I wish Captain Heyton to win," said Judith, coolly.

"It would please him very much to hear that, no doubt," said the banker, "and I shall certainly tell him; but what would Mr. Paragon say if I were to tell him?"

"He'd say he did not believe you, I suppose," said Judith, naively. At which both gentlemen laughed.

"I dare say he would," answered Mr. Bullion. "He has—ahem—confidence enough for anything. He actually offered, in the presence of Mrs. Bullion, to bet me—me—a ten-pound note upon this race, and expressed a wish to see the money down."

"He has passed them all except the white and scarlet one," exclaimed Evy, enthusiastically, on whom this little talk had been utterly lost. "There is only half a field between them."

There was really a possibility of the race being a near one after all, for the superior speed of the bay had brought him past the other horses one by one, and into the second place; though, to be sure, he was not a good second.

"That black mare is a wonder," observed Mr. Barmby, "considering how Paragon has pushed her; she hopped in and out of that double fence like a bird. If the captain had topped the wall instead of clearing it, he would have been at the post by this time. What a pace Walltopper keeps up; if that last fence was a severe one, instead of a bank and hedge, it would not be such a 'moral' for Nemesis, even now—by Jove she has refused it."

A roar of voices—some in applause, some in disappointment—here burst forth. The leading horse, which to practised eyes had already shown signs of fatigue, had swerved at the hedge, and his rider had to take her back again for the jump. Through this mishap he lost nearly half a minute, and Walltopper, urged with whip and spur, was coming down upon him like a greyhound slipped at a hare.

"That young man rides like a madman," ejaculated Mr. Hulet, in genuine apprehension at this increase of speed. "One would think there was no fence before him at all."

"He intends to win or break his neck, that's what it means, sir," whispered Mr. Barmby in the other's ear. "When I was in love—and if Letty had been looking on—I should have done just the same at his age."

"But other people are looking on," observed Mr. Hulet, peevishly, "and it makes my heart go—for one—to see such things, and it's excessively thoughtless of him to try people's constitutions in this way. By Heaven he's over."

"Then he's a dead man," muttered the other with an oath, which, however, he intended for a prayer.

"No, no, he's over the fence, I mean. The horse took it in his stride."

"Well done, Walltopper," cried Mr. Barmby, excitedly, and waving his hat. "Heaven help poor Paragon, if the captain catches him in the straight."

And the captain did catch him in the straight, just as he was flying past Mr. Hulet's carriage. The excellent black, as she heard the thunder of her enemy's approach, made one desperate effort, aided by every art her rider knew; but the bay, covered with foam, and black as herself with sweat, flashed by her and

reached the post two lengths ahead, and the next instant the shouting crowd had rushed in behind them, as water closes behind the hand.

FLITTING.

WHEN we look upon it through a tender haze of intervening years, there is a good deal of poetry about the "move" that exercised our spirits most sorely perhaps at the time. But in practical earnest, there are few more trials laid upon erring humanity that are heavier to bear in the present, than the position of the heads of a house from the day that the board is up.

In the first place, even if the move be an advantageous thing for us, no human being, with anything like a heart, can contemplate quitting for ever the place that has been "home" to him or her for many years, without a qualm. In Martineau's charming picture of the Last Day in the Old Home, though the pain and misery of a fine old family house being broken up is placed vividly before us, it is only the stately side of the sorrow that is shown.

The artist has studiously avoided painting the pettinesses which add poignancy to the big grief. On that canvas there is grandeur in the grief of the old matron lady-mother, and the heart-sore refined wife. And there is redeeming grace and light-heartedness about the debonair handsome young spend-thrift who has brought them to this pass, and who sits with his gallant little son at his knee, uplifting a glass of sparkling wine on high, and toasting his parting glory. A poetic, if a painful, part of the day has been selected for portrayal. But in real life the last day in the old home is all pain and no poetry generally.

We leave those who are leaving the homes of their ancestors and their youth, the exclusive copyright in this peculiar sorrow. We, who have sojourned in, and paid rent for a house for two or three years only, feel a certain pang when about to quit it "for ever."

It is in these two last words that the real pang lies—the real romantic pang that is; the practical agony shall be treated of later on. We must have been frequently very happy, and very wretched, in this place in which we have dwelt for every length of time. Hopes have been born and have died in it. Friends have been made and lost. Anxieties have trailed their slow length through many of the

months probably. Here we have had our victories, and suffered our defeats, many of them being patent to the world, and many, many more being very sacred to ourselves, and known to none. In this darkened corner we have bent under the burden, and mentally laid down our arms, and surrendered to some of the light skirmishing bands of Fate which have been lurking near us unsuspectedly. In this sunny alcove we have rebounded under the influence of some sudden stroke of good fortune, which has made us feel so able, so full of endurance, so charged with better resolves for the future, that we can but love the place for ever which witnessed such happiness, and the birth of such good intentions, however short-lived they all may be. Down that staircase which we have trodden carelessly some thousands of times, a pet child prostrated himself on one occasion. We remember this now that we are about to quit it "for ever," with something akin to the same throbbing dread we felt that day, when we picked the child up fearing he might be dead.

Thousands of recollections throng upon us as we roam in an unsettled mood through the partially dismantled rooms. Recollections that bring the heart up unpleasantly high in the throat, and teach the feet to tread the floors tenderly, no matter whether they be of joy or sorrow. For it is a fact that there is an element of sadness in looking back, whether it be upon a vista of pleasure or of pain. Whatever it was, it is over now. It belongs to that inexorable Past which never renders up a moment he has seized. It is in vain we pray gentle Time to give back to us one hour that he has taken. And probably the impossibility of his doing so is a blessing. A second edition of this coveted home would most likely be as disappointing to us as it was to the imaginary maiden whose request Time granted:

And gentle Time he heard her prayer,
He touched the hour she cherished;
He brought it back to her—the day,
The hour that long had perished.

He brought her back the same sweet sky,
The flowers around her growing;
Shedding their gracious fragrantcy,
As though they still were growing.

But still she cried in accents meek,
"All blessings on the spirit,
But where is He for whom I seek,
Whose love I do inherit?"

And Time he answered mournfully,
"Poor maiden, all is over!
Thine is a woman's destiny,
My power has changed thy lover.

It is many and many a year ago since I read these lines—which possibly for that reason I may have quoted incorrectly. But at any rate I have retained their meaning fully enough to illustrate my own—namely, that it is a very good thing for us that detached portions of even our happiest Past cannot be restored to us, however golden it may have been.

Even the cats of the household seem to understand that a change is coming. And as for the dogs, I firmly believe that they read that their residence was “to be let or sold” the instant the board was put up. For they are strangely tolerant to the miscellaneous herd who inquire within, as to the capabilities of the house, and who embrace the opportunity of finding out what we are like behind the scenes, and in the secret corners of our establishment. One of them (the dogs) who passed through the trials of his puppyhood here, would have been less forbearing than the golden pair who merely follow our strange visitors with their scornful sad eyes. For he was of a bright, bold, domineering spirit. But he died one dark winter’s night, that is still an anniversary of gloom in our family, and is buried out in a corner of the garden, in a grave that is overgrown already with trails of ivy and rich waving grass. When the board is taken down and the new people come in, will they level that grave, I wonder, and laugh at the sentiment which could squander feeling and flowers over the grave of a dog?

Prowling round the place which will soon know us no more, it is very desolating to the spirit to come to the empty stables, and to find a couple of fussy hens clucking, and generally “chortling” in their absurd joy at having achieved the laying of an egg between them, in the stall that was once occupied by the handsomest chestnut mare that was ever true in grace and wickedness to her colours. Desolating to see the dimmed harness, and the vacant saddle-trees, and the bins innocent of corn, and the universal air of “Going, gone!” that hangs over everything. Desolating to feel that the days are gone for ever which shall witness our exit from this special yard, on horses that we have broken in ourselves, behind dogs we have bred for long happy hours of that coursing which only the owners of greyhounds can thoroughly appreciate.

From the moment the board is up, how all these trifles magnify, and make themselves disproportionately important to

us. “No more by thee, my steps shall be. For ever! and for ever!” As we recollect these words we are inclined to howl, for that the fact we have striven hard to compass—our removal, namely—has come to pass. And probably as we come back into our tenement from that which was the horse’s, we are saluted with the information, “A gentleman and lady to see the house, and please would it be inconvenient for them to see every part of it.”

Of course, it is inconvenient to us that they should peer, and prance, and pry into the remotest corners of our domestic stronghold. But it behoves us as citizens of the world, as people who may shortly be keen on the discovery of the shortcomings of our own possibly future home, to bid the intruders kindly welcome, and give them a free pass all over our fastness. The worst of it is that we can tell at a glance those who come in a spasm of idle and easily gratified curiosity, from those who come in good faith, hoping that here at last they may find rest for the soles of their feet. And though we can thus easily distinguish between the false and the true, we are compelled by the exigencies of good society to treat them both alike.

Every one who has once moved must swiftly recognise the different types—must surely mark down with unerring eye, those who come in idleness!

How well we know the elderly gentleman who circulates freely through the land in the late summer and autumn months, with a pugger round his hat, no matter how chill be the winds that are blowing, or how little sun has the heart of grace to shine. As a rule he is a retired military or naval officer, and he bears down upon those unoffending ones at whose gates the board is up, with all the pomp and majesty of a man who holds discipline to be Heaven’s greatest gift to fallen mankind. He speaks in short commanding sentences with an air of affable superiority, cavils at the accommodation, or rather at the lack of it, denounces the folly of the fool who built a house that would suit him in every respect if it had three more reception, and five more bedrooms. He declares open war upon anybody’s imbecile supposition that he is going to be tricked or “humbugged” into hiring a house that is grossly inadequate in its arrangements to his needs, and finally goes off in a whirl with many fierce shakings of the head, and twirlings of the stick, treating the harassed occupants as if they were a nest of unsuccessful

ful spiders, who had sought to lure him, a wide-awake fly, into their net.

He is infinitely to be preferred, however, to the middle-aged, keen-visioned ladies who come in couples, and between them detect all the weak places in your household in the course of their leisurely progress. These sweep in upon you ruthlessly as you are reading, or writing, or resting from the fatigue consequent on the raid made upon you by the last invader. They poke their umbrellas at the cracked paintwork; they glare at the discoloured papers on the wall; and openly look upon you as an unjust steward, in a way that makes you feel inclined to go mad at them on the spot, and thoroughly frighten them.

But the possible, though highly improbable, tenants who exercise one's spirit most severely, are the happy pair who have recently married; who come in with a most oppressive air of recently-married freshness and satisfaction about them. If the others have nearly driven one raving mad, these nearly steep one in supine idiocy after a few moments' observation. They entwine their foolish hands before the eyes of your giggling servants. They address inaneities, at which they both blush furiously, on the subject of the disposition of the upper portion of the house, and of the nursery of the future especially. He affects to kindle into animation when he hears there is a "capital wine cellar." She does the same thing when she hears there is "no linen press," and wonders, with all a raw school-girl's delicacy of breeding and perfect tact, "how we can have lived without one so long." They cause one to reflect savagely, that however sweet love's young charm may be to the ones who are dreaming it, that it is a detestably mawkish spectacle to lookers on. They goad one by their tomfoolery into a repellent demeanour, which they by-and-bye assert to have been the cause of their not having pushed inquiry further respecting the house. They openly "wonder" at your allowing large dogs to lie about in the drawing-room, telling each other that such an iniquity shall never be committed in their house. They call one another "darling" in accents that are not decently suppressed. And finally they go away to carry on the same little interesting game, probably, in the next house they may see where the board is up.

The last days come, and your household gods are in the hands of the men who

are moving you, and you must stand by uncomplainingly while these latter shy about your cherished old china and glass, with what looks like disdainful carelessness, until you discover that they never break anything, and that the carelessness is in reality consummate skill. The carpets are withdrawn from under your tired feet—the chairs and sofas are sitting in the vans outside—the curtains are rolled away round some statuettes, and the sun glares in scorchingly unchecked through the windows—the children are crying for the toys that are carefully packed away in the heart of one of the biggest cases—the dogs are whining for the mats on which they have been wont to lie—your voice echoes through the dismantled rooms—dirt, confusion, disquiet reign in the place that is your home no longer; and you turn your tired mental vision with an effort to the abode of the future, and thank Fate, for that the anarchy is nearly at an end which has reigned from the hour the board was put up.

THE AGE BEFORE MUSIC-HALLS.

MORE than five-and-thirty years ago enterprising persons in London began to establish public-house and tavern concerts for the working class, to which their wives might be admitted. The larger "free-and-easies," such as the Coal Hole and the Cider Cellars, were too late and too aristocratic for the mechanic, and the necessity of such resorts began to be felt as the taste for music increased.

The earliest pianists at these cheap concerts were, for the most part, broken-down music-masters, who had drifted into shallow water, clinging to a dilapidated "Broadwood's grand." As these men were generally blind, or nearly so, they made little progress with new music, as all their accompaniments were by ear; and the singer who aspired to novelty had to intrust his new song to the players to take home, where some son or daughter would, by dint of hard work, beat it into their memory.

The concert-room at the date we mention was generally the first floor of a public-house, sometimes enlarged by throwing in two or three bedrooms. The decorations were often conflicting, as the tastes of previous proprietors had differed, so that it was not unusual to see the Flight into Egypt facing the Fight between Cribb and Molyneux; and as the kitchen chim-

ney was the main support of the room, the portion of the apartment which abutted on it had to be avoided by the guests from the excessive heat. Occasionally, as at the King's Arms, in the Coal-yard, Drury-lane, the proximity of rival amusements jarred upon the general harmony, and produced strange combinations of sound. Under this concert-room was a skittle-ground, and many a pretty ballad was marred by the crash of a "flooer," the smash and rumble of the nine pins, or the warm cheer that welcomed their downfall. The enchantment of skittles, also, sometimes wiled away a singer till the very moment before he was wanted, and the pianist would have to dash off an extra tune while "Mr. Prosser went against two," which feat having been accomplished with more or less success, the eminent vocalist would return to the room in the act of putting on his coat, followed by his flushed partner in the game, and, mounting the platform, would sing Hurrah for the Road, or the Ice-clad Alps, in his very best style.

These humble concert-rooms were open three nights a week, generally Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. The Mogul, in Drury-lane, now the Middlesex Music Hall, the St. James's Saloon, in Swallow-street, Piccadilly, and the Grapes, in Old Compton-street, Soho, at last ventured on nightly performances, but at first with very indifferent success.

At the first public-house concert-rooms established, the conductor was generally a comic singer, who also served as a waiter. He received a percentage of one penny a pot on all beer he sold, and the same amount on all glasses of spirits, mixed or neat. As late as in 1838-9, this somewhat humiliating custom prevailed at such rooms as the Union, at the corner of Baker-street, Bagnigge Wells-road, where an old reciter, known as Jemmy Gibbs, used first to perform and then hand round the pots of beer, and at the Standard, at Pimlico, where a clever comic singer, named Bob Fisher, would not give an encore till he had sedulously filled his noisy patrons' pots and glasses.

At this period the sentimental songs, full of love and romance, were derived chiefly from old and new operas. The ballads were those sung by Madame Vestris or Mrs. Honey; the comic songs were either by James Hudson, the Dibbins, or Moncrieff, with occasionally some popular ditty, such as Solomon Lobb, or the Miller's Ditty, which Sam Vale had warbled into popu-

larity at the Surrey Theatre. Gradually new comic songs were in request, and fresh authors rose to supply the wants, Messrs. Prest, Bruton, Hall, Freeman, Humphreys, and Labern, writing clever songs on passing events.

One of the earliest tavern concert-rooms was The Chequers, in Abingdon-street, Westminster, the chief attraction a comic singer, Mr. John Herbert, better known as Jerry Herbert, who afterwards attained some celebrity at Sadler's Wells as a low comedian, and was exceedingly popular there in Greenwood's farce *That Rascal Jack*, of which he was the original hero.

To insure the proper carrying out of these entertainments, it was of course necessary to engage, in addition to the pianist, a company of vocalists, the general number being four—a lady, a gentleman sentimental, and two comic, the latter being as dissimilar in style as possible. The time of nightly engagement was from half-past eight, when the concert commenced, until its conclusion at half-past eleven, and no singer was allowed to appear at any other room during those hours without the permission of the landlord. A fine of sixpence or a shilling, as agreed on, was levied on all who did not take part in the opening chorus, all salaries were paid nightly, and a week's notice on either side terminated the engagement.

The scale of remuneration ranged from three shillings to five shillings a night, according to ability or popularity, and, in addition, a refreshment ticket was allowed, which represented the amount of sixpence, to be taken out according to the fancy of the singer. In the case of the male singer, there was a further bonus in the shape of a screw of tobacco.

Inconsiderable as this remuneration may appear at first sight, when it is taken into consideration that none of the performers were strictly professionals, that is, singing for a livelihood, the reader will perceive that three or four nights a week of such supplementary income made a goodly item in their weekly earnings. As a rule, the majority of male vocalists were mechanics, shoemakers and tailors preponderating, with here and there a lawyer's clerk and a compositor; while the ladies plied their needles in the daytime as dressmakers or milliners, and hat and shoe-binders, and many cases could be recorded where a well-educated girl descended to concert-room vocalism to uphold the broken fortunes of an invalid father or mother, or to

support one or two orphan brothers and sisters.

The prices charged for admission were in most cases one penny or twopence: some few, indeed, charged threepence, but the price was no argument of respectability, one or two of the best conducted keeping to the one penny, with which they originally started. The Standard, in Vauxhall Bridge-road, the Fox and Bull, at Knightsbridge, the Swan, at Hungerford Market, and the Spread Eagle, in Kingsland-road, all charged threepence admission, and the two former adhered most despotically to one annoying announcement, "No servants admitted in livery!" Such a rule, it may be conceived, could but be offensive in those neighbourhoods where plush and powder "most did congregate;" so, to soften it down as much as possible, dress-coats were held in reserve by the proprietors, which were kindly lent in exchange for the livery ones quietly laid aside in the bar-parlour, and John and Thomas were thus enabled to escort Mary Jane or Jennima to the realms of harmony upstairs in full evening dress. What was the reason of this restriction no one could learn, for at the same time another establishment, the St. James's Saloon, in Swallow-street, cordially received the proscribed class, and during the opera season at Her Majesty's, it was nothing uncommon to see in its concert-room fifty or sixty servants, in full livery, whiling away the interval between "setting down" and "taking up" their masters and mistresses at the theatre. The Nag's Head, in Oxford-street, was also much patronised by servants; the "knights of the whip" doubling in number the "gentlemen of the cane" in that quarter.

In addition to the hard-handed vocalists we have spoken of, there occasionally appeared a species of professional parasite, whose origin was a mystery to all: such a one was "Mr. Wilson, extemporaneous singer," or "Tub-thumping Wilson," as he was more generally called. He was one of those unblushing specimens of humanity who, however brow-beaten and buffeted, can never realise the fact that their presence is not wanted: he was a smug-looking man of about five feet six, and combined in his half-prim, half-dirty exterior the seedy copying-clerk merging into the fourth-rate mute, or vice versa. His stock in trade consisted of two love ballads, which he warbled in a finicking

style, an "extemporaneous" song, copies of which he would sell, with instructions for its adaptation to any company; he also carried papers of blacking and packets of tea, which he sold in the rooms between the songs when opportunity offered; and as a climax to all this, he held forth on Sundays as street preacher in the pens of Smithfield, and it was in special recognition of this last practice that he acquired the cognomen of Tub-thumping Wilson.

No matter in what part of London a benefit concert was announced, Mr. Wilson was bound to turn up, and watching his opportunity—for no one would "put him on" if they could help it—perhaps in the absence of some one announced in the bill, he would force himself before the public, and on leaving the platform commence hawking his tea and blacking amongst the audience. Mr. W. always had a benefit coming, and if the party solicited to purchase a ticket of him was unluckily leaving town, he would kindly inquire the date of their probable return, which having acquired, he would suddenly remember that he had another benefit about that time, and so foist his second dirty slip of card on the victim whom he had thus entrapped.

But genius, however exalted, will sometimes overreach itself, and this was at last the case with extemporaneous Wilson. He had announced a benefit, as usual, to take place on a certain evening at a public-house in Mercer-street, Long-acre, and had engaged two vocalists and a pianist to assist him in the entertainment; the room was opened, a few ticket-holders had arrived, and the overture had been duly thrown off the Broadwood's grand, when a messenger, almost breathless, mysteriously beckoned the beneficiare, and told him his presence was required immediately at the Kean's Head, in Russell-court, where some more fortunate holders of Wilsonian vouchers were anxiously awaiting his arrival. The truth seemed to manifest itself to him in an instant, for diving into his pocket, and looking at a pink card, he suddenly announced the astounding fact that he had so far forgotten himself as to have two benefits on the same evening.

No way abashed, this great man at once concerted his plans, and concentrating in one body pianist, professionals, and audience—having first planted a man at the door to direct all fresh arrivals to the Kean's Head—he marched at their head to

the second rendezvous, where, on arrival, they found Deaf Burke and Jerry Donovan, two pugilists, on the platform, having a "set to," that being the "entertainment" the landlord, Mr. Chubb, an ex-country showman and sporting man, had arranged for the delectation of those present, pending the arrival of Mr. W. and his supporters. The good-natured audience: all audiences were good-natured in those days: enjoyed the joke, and with the assistance of a few good singers, who dropped in to oblige, the evening was passed in a very pleasant manner. It is many years since our "extempore" friend disappeared from active life—what was his end no one knew, his final exit being as mysterious as his many entrances had been.

The Hope Tavern, in Blackmore-street, Drury-lane, was about this time much frequented for its concerts by the working-class, as well as by men about town; and at the pretty landlady's annual benefit, the Marquis of Waterford was generally conspicuous. It was at this house that, in the year 1840, a movement was set on foot which resulted in great benefit to the concert-room singers of London. It had long been matter of regret to the more respectable members of that body to see, upon the death of a singer, a petition going the rounds of the concert-rooms for funds to bury the deceased, and the movement had its origin from this feeling, assisted by the following circumstance. In 1839, and the early part of 1840, many gross attacks on private character appeared in a certain scurrilous periodical, amongst whose victims were persons well-known and respected in public and private life, its chief mark being concert-room singers. Meetings for suppressing this nuisance were held every Wednesday at the King's Head, Old Compton-street, Soho, under the presidency of Mr. James Willy, a solicitor's clerk, and a great friend to the profession, and a fund being raised for prosecuting the proprietor, an action was commenced in the Common Pleas. On the suppression of the paper the action was withdrawn, and the balance of the fund raised for its prosecution was given as a nucleus for the Harmonic Benevolent Society, none but persons employed in the concert-rooms being admitted as members. Mr. Willy was its first chairman, and during its twenty years' duration some hundreds of pounds were dispensed in relieving the sickness, and providing for the funerals of its members. While the

society was held at this house a book was kept at the bar, showing the nights its members were disengaged, so that those unemployed could attend of an evening in case of a call—the proprietors and conductors of concert-rooms giving the preference in engagements to its members, on account of their presumed respectability. The Hope soon became a regular professional rendezvous, many theatrical and other celebrities attending for business and pleasure. After many struggles in its later years, the society was dissolved in 1860, through want of funds, and the money in hand was divided amongst its remaining members.

Our notice of these public-house concerts would be incomplete without some mention of a clever singer whose oddity and original humour, first developed at these places, won him for a time an extraordinary popularity, though his songs were vulgar and gross, and his life was shameless. John W. Sharp first appeared at the John o' Groats, Webber-street, Lambeth, about 1839. It was a rough public-house chiefly frequented by engineers, who looked in at the concert on their way home from work. The audience was dingy, and the clouds of tobacco smoke rendered it difficult to distinguish the features of the vocalist on the platform. The proprietor, a Mr. Bendon, was rather proud of a domesticated vocalist, that was located in the tap-room, a blackbird which would whistle three parts of the tune *The Girl I left behind Me*, while hopping up and down in his large wicker cage. When his audience were anxiously listening for the missing notes of the tune, the bird would mutter quite audibly "Don't you wish you may get it," and looking artfully at the surrounding faces, would remain immovably fixed on his perch, until the fit took him for another exhibition of his musical powers. Sharp was at this time a supernumerary at the Victoria Theatre, and he used to slip out between the pieces, black his face, dress in the kitchen of the public-house, and appear as Jim Crow, which Rice had made familiar at the Surrey Theatre, and "chant" *Such a Gittin' Upstairs*, which was then acquiring equal celebrity through the singing of Harper, another clever American artist, whose style, though equally good in its way, was quite dissimilar from that of his great Yankee rival.

Sharp soon transferred his services to the Queen's Head, Charlotte-street, Blackfriars, till he was engaged as property man

at the Queen's Theatre, Tottenham Court-road, where the afterwards celebrated clown, Dick Flexmore, was acting as call-boy. Sharp occasionally sang between the pieces, and soon began to get popular. He was then engaged at the Swan at Hungerford Market, at that time the most respectable concert-room in London. Here he first employed the talent of John Labern, a clever comic song writer, whose songs, the Yankee Pedlar and Life of a Cadger, were written expressly for Sharp, and soon established him as a public favourite. Labern also wrote new verses for Sharp's Jim Crow, full of political allusion, and the best of these were purchased by Rice, who was then performing at the Adelphi, although Tom Dibdin was still constantly supplying Rice with new stanzas.

It was during this Swan engagement that Sharp took the fancy of Mr. Green of Evans's, who at once engaged him to sing nightly from twelve to two. He abandoned the Swan in a short time, and devoted himself entirely to Evans's. To say that he improved the morality of that Cave of Harmony would be difficult to prove, but he increased the amusement of the town, and the not too particular town was grateful. Sharp became permanently engaged at Evans's, retaining to himself the privilege of singing at concerts, institutions, and public dinners, at which, through Mr. Green's influence, and in company of the Evans's glee choir, he soon had an immense connexion. His next step was into the open air orchestra of Vauxhall Gardens in 1846, and so great a feature was he considered in the programme at that fashionable resort, that his salary was raised to ten pounds a week, which with six pounds a week at Evans's, and the extras above hinted at, formed no inconsiderable income. To say that he was a favourite at Evans's at this time would convey but a poor notion of an established fact. When he arrived of a night from Vauxhall about half-past eleven, with dress-coat, white cravat and gloves, the place was in an uproar, and the tumult of applause which followed Mr. Green's announcement, "Gentlemen, I claim your attention to a comic song from Mr. Sharp," accompanied as it was by the rattling of hundreds of knives, spoons, and glasses on the tables, will not easily be forgotten by those who were present on such occasions. It was a sight to see how the waiters surrounded him on his descent from the stage with innumerable half-crowns for copies of his songs, the

orders for which, with the addresses they were to be sent to, had been taken by those worthies previous to his arrival.

At this time Sharp and his congenial poet, Labern, lived in the same house in North-place, Hampstead; and when a facetious idea struck the singer during the day, he would jot it down and slip it under the poet's bedroom door, who threw it into rhyme by the time his popular colleague had arisen on the following day. For these songs the poet received a guinea each, and so much for every copy he wrote out. In this way Labern, by one of these songs alone, is said to have made thirty-four pounds in three months.

At the zenith of his popularity, Sharp, intoxicated with success, fell into bad habits, from which he never extricated himself. He became unpunctual in his engagements, drank hard, and absented himself from Evans's. His mind grew unsettled, his memory weak. At last, his house in Grafton-place, Kentish Town, was closed. Sharp had gone no one knew where. Found in pawn at a coffee-shop near Euston-square, he was redeemed and taken care of for some months by an old friend till he somewhat recovered. He then became managing director at the Lord Nelson Music-Hall, Euston-square, where he grew popular by two songs, the Corsican Brothers and Paul Pry, which he sang in character. Another mad rush into vice, and then rapidly came the final crash, delirium tremens, and an utter prostration of the faculties.

The rest is soon told. No one would engage him in London; for when he tried to sing he would run the words of one song into another, and in a short time he sank into a shoeless, drivelling pauper, and but for the kindness of another old friend, who allowed him to sleep for some nights on the hearth-rug in front of the fire, he must have gone to the Union.

One more chance offered—an old friend, who had a music-hall at Deal, offered him an engagement at that place, hoping that change of scene and abstinence from drink might help to restore him; Sharp commenced his duties, and for a night or two was sober, then falling into his old habit of intemperance, he stood on the platform the laughing-stock of the audience, was dismissed, and eventually wandering as far as Dover workhouse, died there on the 10th of January, 1856, aged thirty-eight years. Alas, poor Yorick!

At the old concert-rooms of a higher

order, such as Evans's, the Coal Hole, Offley's, and the Cider Cellars, the singing was always unaccompanied by music, and the first attempt to introduce a piano at Evans's created quite a revolution among the old habitués, though its use in filling up intervals with lively music was soon admitted. Gentlemen amateurs, at all these places, struck in now and then with favourite songs, and even the professionals mingled with the general audience.

The original entertainment at Evans's was exceedingly primitive; Mr. Evans sat in the chair, surrounded by a few of his most staunch supporters, occasionally obliging them with his favourite song, the Pope he leads a Happy Life; Messrs. Matthews, James, and Bailey, the glee singers, sat a little below him on the left; Tom Martin, the comic singer, was among the visitors at the centre table; and Charles Sloman, the celebrated English improvisatore, and Herr Von Joel, the wondrous imitator of the feathered race, were seated in different parts of the comfortable old room, ready to respond when called upon; the whole thing being as unprofessional as can well be imagined. No charge was made for admission—no persons were admitted unless suitably attired—no money was taken for anything supplied until you were coming away, and his must have been, indeed, a clear intellect that could keep pace with, or dispute the reckoning of the head-waiter, who stood sternly at the door, and announced the sum total to those departing.

Whether the modern music-hall, with its gilt and colours, is any real improvement on those old public-house haunts, it is difficult to say. There is less open grossness, it is true, and less drinking; but the songs, if not so objectionable, are, for the most part, very foolish and inane, and the dangerous gymnastic feats and second-rate dancing, which now-a-days occupy such prominent places in the music-hall programme, are neither amusing nor edifying. However that may be, it is certain that the old-fashioned concert-room is gone, never to return.

GROWING UP.

Oh to keep them still around us, baby darlings, fresh and pure,
 "Mother's" smile their pleasures crowning, "mother's" kiss their sorrows cure;
 Oh to keep the waxen touches, sunny curls, and radiant eyes,
 Pattering feet, and eager prattle—all young life's lost Paradise!

One bright head above the other, tiny hands that cling and clasped,
 Little forms, that close enfolding, all of Love's best gifts were grasped;
 Sporting in the summer sunshine, glancing round the winter hearth,
 Bidding all the bright world echo with their fearless, careless mirth.

Oh to keep them; how they gladdened all the path from day to day,
 What gay dreams we fashioned of them, as in rosy sleep they lay;
 How each broken word was welcomed, how each struggling thought was hailed,
 As each bark went floating seaward, love-bedecked and fancy-sailed!

Gliding from our jealous watching, gliding from our clinging hold,
 Lo! the brave leaves bloom and burgeon; lo! the shy sweet buds unfold;
 Fast to lip, and cheek, and tresses steals the maiden's bashful joy;
 Fast the frank bold man's assertion tones the accents of the boy.

Neither love nor longing keeps them; soon in other shape than ours
 Those young hands will seize their weapons, build their castles, plant their flowers;
 Soon a fresher hope will brighten the dear eyes we trained to see;
 Soon a closer love than ours in those wakening hearts will be.

So it is, and well it is so; fast the river nears the main,
 Backward yearnings are but idle; dawning never glows again;
 Slow and sure the distance deepens, slow and sure the links are rent;
 Let us pluck our autumn roses, with their sober bloom content.

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

VIII. "BORDERING SHADOW LAND."

IT was evening when my cab drew up in a retired crescent situated between Islington and Holloway. The houses were all small, like tenements in Lilliput, the trees were tiny, the strip of grass, enclosed by baby railings, stretched like a green hearth-rug before the fifteen doors, each one like the entrance to a doll's abode; the steps were low and narrow, the windows were formed of little panes, the very plate of glass announcing that No. 10 was Mrs. Pawker's boarding-house, was of extremely limited dimensions. The bell gave a little tinkle, and I was presently admitted into a little hall, half blocked up with an ancient upright piano, by a little old woman, palsied as to her head, who said that all was right, I was expected. My room, she observed, was at the top of the house, with a charming view, and she trusted that I could carry up my own luggage, as she would otherwise have to call in the baker's man, two doors

down, which might annoy him, the hour being late. I professed myself quite capable of transporting my own baggage, but hinted that it could remain in the hall till bedtime, and that I should be much pleased by an introduction to my fellow-boarders. Would I take anything—a cup of tea and an egg? No! Then I had better follow into the parlour, where all were assembled save one, an eccentric ex-captain of the merchant service, who was morose, and preferred his own to ladies' society. In a dingy front-room, furnished with crazy furniture, each leg of which seemed struggling to kick the other; each curtain of which looked like funereal drapery in honour of a dying patriarch; the frame of whose every picture was fantastically festooned with cut-paper fly-catchers; sat three old ladies, and another who by contrast might be called young, although she would never see her fiftieth year again. Her hair, just streaked with white, was roughened on her head, like some venerable cocoa-nut tied up with a dirty ribbon; she wore a cotton dress without a waistband, and was minus collar or cuffs. Her face was puffy, her nose turned up and doughy, her chin, and cheeks, and brow were thickly besmeared with powder, so that at first sight she much resembled a mealy potato well cooked. This was Mrs. Rosy, the landlady's daughter, a widow seriously juvenile, given up to pets and good works when not occupied in squabbling with "ma." Ma had by this time sidled in, sat down rickettily, with a cough like creaking furniture, and taken up her work, making thus the fourth old lady sitting silent. Apparently, a genteel almshouse composed of old wrecks awaiting summons to another world. Each one of the fair was between seventy and eighty years of age, all of them were tolerably hearty save one, the eldest, Miss Jenkins, who bowed down with the weight of seventy-nine summers, sat crouched over the empty grate, in a huge horsehair-chair ornamented with nails, which looked like a great coffin many times too big for its corpse, awaiting only its lid, to be shunted off to the churchyard over the way. Miss Jenkins being somewhat helpless and solitary, is the victim of the other three, a target for their jests and evil humours—for the harridans, by ever showing up her exceeding feebleness, thus hold a foil to their own lively ways. Miss Jenkins bears all quietly, crouched into a heap of black silk cap, loose jacket, and list slippers, gazing for hours together at the gilt waterfall

of paper falling down the chimney, one gnarled white hand crossed tranquilly upon the other, whistling through sunken lips from time to time, like a veteran breeze through a rusty keyhole, "I'm very old, very old!" and then relapsing into seeming death, belied only by bright black eyes that once were beautiful. She is not happy, for she feels the taunts and gibes, but answers not, finding it less pain to bear than to reply. If she could she would move elsewhere, but she is alone, a broken waif on the confines of two worlds, and having naught to gain, who would pack her things, and seek another lodging for her? A sad, sad spectacle of neglected age, friendless, solitary, attached to no one, barely endured, not loved.

On the other side of the cold hearth sat a thin old lady, strangely muscular in wrist and fingers, sparsely but powerfully built, her sinews playing below her cuffs like whip-cords; sitting very still, also with crossed hands and a repose of countenance that is only given to the blind. She, from her strength, gained her living as a madhouse nurse, rising ultimately to be matron, a position of trust which she filled for sixteen years, until one day a lunatic came upon her unawares, dragged her to the earth by her hair, and hacked at her throat with an old broken spade left about by some careless servant. After a hard tussle for life, keepers came to her assistance, deposited the lunatic in durance, and laid the matron bleeding on her bed. The shock resulted in nervous fever, from which she eventually rose as strong as ever, but blind for life, and subject to fits of shivering, and palpitations of the heart, which render quiet essential to continued existence. Here she has lived for years, pensioned off, her sole amusement occasional passages of arms with Mrs. Jerome, ex-matron of an hospital, whose system cannot be made to agree with hers, one being a fervid homœopath, and the other a stern champion of allopathic treatment. Mrs. Jerome is the leading spirit of the party. Tall, large, of redundant health, though seventy-four years old, kindly but brusque, with a broad Scotch accent, a small face like a crab-apple, surmounted by a front of curls and a wondrous catafalque of ribbons and chrysanthemums, the ex-matron rules the others with a rod of iron. They have no opinions but hers, no tastes but hers, no will but hers. She bustles about like a great light-house decorated for a holiday, cutting the

bread, ordering the dinner, snarling at her blind rival, gibing at Miss Jenkins, bullying Mrs. Rosy, ignoring Mrs. Pawker's existence altogether, clattering among cupboard doors, jingling keys, driving every one to and fro with a masculine good humour, as though she still had fifty nurses under her, and hundreds of unruly medical students to chaff and fight, and tread under her large feet. Though shrewd and clear-headed, Mrs. Jerome, as many other clever people do, managed the affairs of others better than her own. After years of honest labour she had snugly in a savings-bank a modest sum, but, strong in a conviction of her own sterling worth, she failed to perceive that the house-surgeon, twenty years her junior, had ulterior motives beyond those of pure affection in tendering her his hand and heart. She married only to find in him a reckless libertine who lived on her as long as she had aught to give, then departed for a better sphere, assisted from this evil globe by copious libations of rum and brandy. She continued to work steadily at her post, which fortunately she had not abandoned, and now, retired on a pension, rules old ladies instead of men. Her conversation is generally of the West-end, and by some intricate web of argument she has firmly settled in her mind that the district between Islington and Holloway is "vera central," the West-end paradise being attainable by omnibus for fourpence—time in Mrs. Jerome's present condition being no object.

Mrs. Pawker, the landlady, possesses little character, and may be styled a negative old lady. She is nothing if not rickety. Her head shakes, her curls shake, her nose moves up and down like that of the tapir at the Zoological Gardens. Her lower jaw protrudes, rising and falling as though champing air; her very teeth even are not firmly set in her jaws. Daughter of a dissenting minister, she once in her life girded up her loins and showed decision by eloping with a tripe merchant, or, as she would more genteelly put it, with a pork butcher. But that adventurous act of firmness not having turned out successful, she makes no further effort, deciding for herself no more. She never makes up her mind without first glancing at Mrs. Jerome, except when she wrangles amicably with her daughter, who invariably pulls up the argument with a full stop, by crying out "Ma! don't insinuate."

"When I entered the room all looked up and peered at me through their spectacles except Miss Jenkins, who only shivered at the draught, and drew a shawl closer round her, rocking herself backwards and forwards, muttering like an old raven, "I'm very old!" Mrs. Jerome rose with a smile, made a grand inclination, and with a fine intimation that she hoped our acquaintance would improve, returned to her work, the application of a frill to a chaste garment which shall be nameless. Mrs. Rosy, who was in a bad temper, was swinging a gorgeous pink bonnet by its strings, and glanced petulantly at me as if I were an intruder, then thinking better of it, put out a damp hand, with the announcement:

"How do you do? I am the daughter of the house. Now, ma, be quiet, do; you know we don't want another servant at all. You cook the meat for dinner; I make the pudding. Everybody makes their own beds, except Miss Jenkins, the lazy, obstinate thing, who won't, though she knows how; her stubborn ways puts us all out. Now don't insinuate, ma! Don't insinuate. I hate obstinacy, that I do."

Stubborn! poor Miss Jenkins, sad, meek, suffering wreck. She made no answer beyond looking round shyly for an instant, and murmuring, with a sigh:

"I'm so old—so very old."

A ghostly voice, uttered gruffly from a dark corner of the room, "Don't insinuate!" and I turned to see that there was a parrot winking in its cage, emulating the sentiments of its mistress.

"Aweel, aweel," cried Mrs. Jerome, rising abruptly, and packing away her chaste garment along with scissors and thimble, "it's jest time for giving the captain his grog before he goes to bed. I'll see after it, Mrs. Pawker; I've put the kitchen kettle on to boil, and I'll jest make myself a little negus; its vera comforting at night with a wee bit toastie."

Again Miss Jenkins looked up, and gathering her draperies, said wearily:

"It's bedtime. Very cold. My old blood runs slowly, though it is so thin. Your parrot, Mrs. Rosy, is shivering like me. You're fond of it, and ought to give it some fire, if you won't give me any. Polly and I are very cold."

"We can't begin fires before October," answered Mrs. Pawker, querulously, "as you'd know very well, if not so indifferent to price of coals. You'd be the ruin of all of us if you were allowed. Fires,

indeed! A pretty thing. All the bother of cleaning grates, and black-lead, and all for you! Go along, it's against nature—nature don't like it. It's out of patience with you, and so am I!"

Quite flustered with this long harangue, there is no knowing, being fairly started, where she would have stopped, had not Mrs. Rosy flung her bonnet at her mother, with—

"Don't, ma! Don't, don't insinuate. Though of course fires now is ridiculous. Why can't you run about a bit, or do some work? You are so awful obstinate and lazy, never sweeping your room or doing your bed or nothing. I wonder, for my part, how you can look us in the face, I do, and eat your victuals."

Miss Jenkins did look her in the face sorrowfully, but quietly, and feebly protested:

"I can't run. My working days are over. I must just sit and wait."

"Wait! what for?"

"Death."

"Don't, Miss Jenkins. You talk so strange, you make a body jump."

"Don't insinuate," croaked the parrot, straightway standing on his head, hanging by one claw from his cage roof, the better to observe, from a new point of view, the phenomenon who could thus tranquilly speak of our grim master without blenching. But seeing nothing but a little old woman like an untidy bundle of soiled linen, he instantly righted himself, expressing his strong disapproval by strange grimace and harsh croakings like a badly-greased door hinge.

"Perhaps, sir, you'd like to see your room," suggested Mrs. Rosy. Second door at the top of the highest flight. You'll find it open. Here's a match to light your gas. Don't be frightened," she added, with a giggle; "Polly and I live next door, and whatever you do, don't make a noise, that old sea captain is so nervous. Only think! Once we were so very full that I asked him, as a favour, to occupy a room next door, taking his meals with us. Finding a crucifix fastened to the wall, he rang for the servant, swearing he would not live in the house of a Roman Catholic. 'Missus isn't a Roman Catholic,' the servant persisted. 'She bought that as a work of hart in furrin parts.' But he wouldn't be persuaded, and hanging up his shirt on the objectionable ornament as a protest against its presence, he barricaded his door with a chest of drawers, lest he

should by some process be converted in the night. That's absolutely true. Oh! he's a queer customer. He was once robbed of a hundred pounds abroad somewhere, and never goes out now without double-locking his door. He's lived with us now nearly two years, and since then we've never seen the inside of his room. He does it up himself, makes his own bed, and sweeps once a week; but no one but himself ever goes inside. There's Mrs. Jerome taking his grog up-stairs. Listen."

We heard Mrs. Jerome knock. Presently there was a Newgate-like undoing of bolts and bars, and a voice said, "Thank you. Good-night;" after which the bolts and bars were drawn once more. Then Mrs. Jerome strode in among us again, very hot and red, crying out:

"Now, leddies, bedtime. Ain't you going up to bed, young sir? Miss Jenkins, ye say ye're so auld and feeble, ye ought to have gone off long syne. Vera cauld, are ye? Well, well, for once ye shall have a drop of my negus. I'll bring it to you. Now, be off."

And, each with one match in hand, we creaked up the stairs, warily crawling past the prison-door, and the house was quiet, though it was barely ten o'clock.

My room was a very garret, queerly low in ceiling, queerly inclined in walls. From out my window there was quite a grand view as I gazed at it by the light of early morning. An expanse of trees, of market-gardens, of peach and nectarine-houses; here and there three or four tall houses standing alone, like a few stray beads shredded from a necklace moved elsewhere. One house boasted of a garden, some twenty yards of weeds and rubbish, enclosed by a high wall. Ladders and piles of bricks reigned in other gardens; rutted roads led to blank walls or vacant coach-houses; cocks and hens emulated a country street; a gentleman in an arbour tried to exhibit Colin-like proclivities, by playing sad strains upon a flute. The prospect presented a general appearance as of some new town, its materials being gathered, about to set to work at pulling itself together. I moved stealthily down-stairs, boots in hand, lest I should wake the nautical ogre, unlocked the hall-door, and started on an exploring expedition.

Islington is aggressive, as all suburbs are. It aims at possessing glories unattainable by its parent London. The houses are of all shapes and sizes, scorning uni-

formity, because elsewhere enforced by the Board of Works. Its principal street is absurdly wide, as though to prove that unlike other portions of our choking metropolis, space is no object; at the same time, as if to show that land is valuable, Islington huddles up its bye-streets until they nearly swell over and smother the miserable court-yards behind. Education flourishes tremendously in houses holding themselves unnaturally straight, to prove to passers-by that buckram and backboard are yet British institutions, let scoffers say what they choose. Awful globes, big and portly, raise their backs above first-floor window levels; "Seminary" cries out from brick, and wall, and plaster; women in spectacles glare over muslin blinds; young ladies brush their back hair behind tiny glasses, with a worn, over-educated look. Finery, exaggerated and overdone, in proportion to distance from postal district W., lines the shop-windows in amazing hues and tones; furniture, for the same reason, assumes such brilliancy of colour as to cause the eye to wince, the soul to shudder. In one place a street is shut off from the rest by an iron grille at either end. Within the sacred space all appears tranquil, cloistered, set apart for the culture of peace and brotherly love. Not a bit of it. Your echoing steps reverberate down its secluded pavement. A suburban fury hails another opposite from her bedroom window in picturesque but over-forcible language; ginger-pop appears the general though explosive beverage; pictures from the Police News flare from divers pigmy shop fronts; while one house, more murderously garrisoned than the rest, displays as many placards as a street in a pantomime, each one breathing awful threats about "debts recovered," "goods appraised," "lost creditors pursued and prosecuted." Verily this suburb of Islington is a blatant place; whatever business it may have in hand it shakes in your face like a red rag, swearing that you shall not lose sight of its virtues, shall appreciate, whether you will or no, its peculiar advantages, shall bow the knee to its loftiness of aim.

I was glad to return to my almshouse and to the earthy quarrels of my female patriarchs. Mrs. Pawker was in a desperate fuss, because her coals were being discharged into her cellar while her mind should be otherwise occupied with breakfast. Mrs. Rosy protested that the coalman was a fright, as she occupied herself

with unswathing Polly's cage from the recesses of a flannel, which had evidently once adorned her virtuous limbs in guise of a short petticoat. Mrs. Jerome hurried in as the clock struck half-past eight, declaring that punctuality was an unappreciated virtue; that the world was going to the bad; that she alone understood duty from its proper aspects; calling upon the blind lady to witness that in hospitals, military precision was enforced.

"Not but what," she added, "lunatics were different, subtly inoculating their disease until the superiors, who should teach them better, became as mad as they, playing at medicine by distributing sugar pills, instead of honouring the established rules of the Pharmacopœia."

"Don't make such a fuss, ma, give me the tea-pot if it makes you shake so. Give it to me, do, and let—"

But the remainder of her speech was drowned by Polly, who catching sight of sugar and bones, set up such a creaking as even Temple Bar, closing hurriedly. Her Gracious Majesty's approach, would be snuffed into a gurgle in attempting to rival.

"Pretty Polly—pretty Polly—don't insinuate." And then a tapping and hammering, a jumping up and down, accompanied by all kinds of antics, a plucking out and scattering of feathers, as though suicide at least were intended unless instant sop were prepared, a scream like a slate-pencil scratching on a slate, until Mrs. Jerome's patience could bear it no longer, and she called out, "I'll throttle that devilish bird if ye don't take it out," whereupon Mrs. Rosy glowered, and put out her floury cheek for the mollification of the offender's outraged feelings.

Everybody received his or her portion of bread, a cup of pallid tea, and a slice of a hideous gluey compound that did duty for brawn. Mrs. Jerome, being of independent views, boldly produced her pot of jam, spurning household manufacture, papering up the pot, and sucking well her spoon when she had done, lest the weird, mildewed maid-of-all-work should, like a tiger first tasting blood, be tempted by a stray single drop of sweetness to invade the property of her betters. And what a terrible woman is that maid-of-all-work! She has a slate-coloured face and wicked eyes, extremely dirty surroundings, grimy hands, very light hair like tangled silk cocoons, the brightness of which, unextinguishable by dirt, makes her face look

like a crape mask, and a satyr-like look of intelligence, impossible to account for until, by her wild actions, and sounds like steam blowing off from a river steamer funnel, you arrive at the fact that she is deaf and dumb.

What a mad breakfast party to be sure! The landlady palsied, worried with household cares; her daughter a sadly grim phantom of long-past juvenility; three old ladies, all tottering on the grave's brim; and the weird party waited on by this uncanny girl, whose appearance is so strange, whose manners savour of something so unearthly. It seems as if they had already done with life, and, shut out for ever from aught appertaining to human youth, were awaiting in an inscrutable limbo their last summons!

"Did you see the Shah when he was here?" I asked, endeavouring to awaken them to some mortal interest.

"Indeed, we didn't do any such thing," answered Mrs. Jerome for them all. "He was a foreigner and a heathen, as all foreigners are. I hate foreigners and their dirty habits. They never employ water in any form, and I am told, when they find them, use antimacassars as pocket-handkerchiefs."

"I have lived within London precincts for seventy-eight years," whistled Miss Jenkins in an undertone, "and have never seen corn-fields, or the sea. I should like to see them, but it's too late. I'm too old, too old."

"Have ye seen about the newspaper?" demanded Mrs. Jerome of the blind lady. "It is your turn to-day, you know, and by forgetting it last week you put all our calculations out, causing no end of trouble."

Upon inquiry I discovered that, by an ingenious combination, the old ladies manage to procure jointly the satisfaction of a larger number of journals than would otherwise be within their means. Five days in the week Mrs. Jerome buys the Daily Telegraph, paying also two separate halfpennies in conjunction with another for numbers of the Family Herald and the Christian World. Thus her weekly subscription amounts to sixpence, her fellow-boarders contributing a like sum to be invested in the Graphic and Illustrated News, which, after due perusal, are flattened out in state under the sofa mattress, thereby sowing fruitful seed for future quarrels as to ownership, should any event arise which might bestow value on any

particular print. When common subjects of interest are scarce, this incubation of petty squabbles is an admirable method of securing a certainty of general conversation.

"Why don't you eat your brawn, Miss Jenkins? I made it," demanded Mrs. Rosy, eager for the fray.

"I don't like gristle," was the meek reply.

"Go along, you're a—you're a—epicurean, that's what you are."

"I've got no teeth, and can't bite it, as you know. Don't tease me, I'm tired with dressing, and will lie down."

"Miss Jenkins!" put in Mrs. Jerome, "what awful manners ye have, to be sure, bounding about in and out of the room before the cloth's removed. I'm ashamed of ye."

"Don't insinuate," spectrally observed Polly, looking reflectively out of one eye, with head on one side, and a bone in one claw.

"I'm very old. Oh, so old, so old!" And the long-suffering lady tottered off with a sigh.

"Lazy thing!" called out Mrs. Rosy after her. "Won't make her bed, indeed. Always grumbling, and growling, and dissatisfied. But the devil finds plenty of growling for idle hands to do." With which triumphantly apt quotation she proceeded again to display the potato cheek for Polly's delectation, who either not appreciating it, or exasperated at too constant calls to admiration of one object, proceeded to nibble viciously at it with his already bread-poulticed beak.

"Now, young man," shouted Mrs. Jerome to me, "I've told Mrs. Pawker that young men fresh in town may perhaps sometimes be late. So here's a latch-key for ye, which ye must not abuse, mind!" and the wonderful old lady gravely taking me to the door, put me through military exercises with the key. Present arms. Unlock. Open. Shut. Bar-up. Attention. Stand at ease. Having inoculated me into these new and unaccustomed mysteries to her own complete satisfaction, she proceeded with the frilling of her chaste garment, diversified with allopathic sallies for the benefit of the still figure with closed eyes opposite.

I did not think it necessary to point out to Mrs. Jerome that latch-keys and I had been on familiar terms for some years, or that it was very unlikely that I should remain long enough in Islington to avail

myself very often of the particular weapon in whose use she had so fully instructed me.

A PEEP AT BRITTANY.

THE tourist who makes a rapid flight from Paris to Rennes, suffers no great loss by flitting by night. The region traversed is what the French call "un beau pays," a fine country, with no pretensions to scenery, with an horizon of low wooded hills when not absolutely flat, fertile, well cultivated, populous, very pleasant to own or to occupy, but somewhat monotonous to travel through.

But in railway travelling by night, "the more the merrier" is by no means the rule. At starting from Paris, we were four, one of whom, a veteran wanderer, filled the carriage door with his portly person, while a second protruded his bald and shining head to close the entrance more effectually. Those tactics answered. The train began to move. Each member of the quaternion, chuckling in high glee, was in indisputable possession of his comfortable corner, with liberty to stretch out his limbs at full length.

We had triumphed, and in ordinary times might have retained the victory. But the National Assembly had just been dissolved; but the school vacation had just commenced; everybody was rushing out of Paris, ready for any amount of rural or maritime discomfort. At Versailles, to our disgust, a lady forced her way into our stronghold. Ugh! Why couldn't she go with the Dames Seules? Unwillingly and ungraciously we made the least possible room to allow her to take her place, when she quietly, clearly, and decidedly observed, "I am sorry, messieurs, to disturb your first sleep, but we are several."

Several! Yes; several they were! Husband, daughters, maid, bags, baskets, cloaks and rugs, umbrellas and walking-sticks, besides a personage who seemed a cross between an uncle and a grandfather. Six added to four, make up ten; and ten we were, instead of four. Railway law, happily, allows no more souls (unless in arms) to be packed in one second-class compartment, but the law puts no limit to travelling personalities; so that bodies combined with baggage made a respectable squeeze, promising what society calls a delightful evening.

Our Cerberus, baffled, protested gruffly

against the amount of portable property introduced. For some minutes we held a Hyde Park meeting, threatening, we four, to shift into another carriage, although we well knew there was none to be had. We were almost as bearish as the National Assembly, and I thought gesticulation would end in a fight; but the clear-voiced lady was too much for us. The storm subsided into quiet, and we gradually dropped into attitudes which you may see on the stage when gangs of robbers are supposed to be slumbering.

Those attitudes don't look comfortable or cosy; no more was mine or anybody else's except our invaders', who made themselves at home at our expense. A remedy for sleeplessness is to count a hundred. Not having Doctor Droney's sermons, I tried it, but caught myself repeatedly running off into "Four and six make ten; four and six make ten." Whether it brought on sleep I cannot aver; which suggests the probability that it did.

At four - twenty - five of that August morning, the city of Rennes and daybreak were reached. The ladies are not so good-looking as they were overnight by lamp-light, and the men much less distinguished in their appearance. Not being able to see myself as others see me, I cannot tell whether night has worked in me a like "sea change." But the return of day would console for all that, did not a cold envious mist prevent our looking out of window. Nevertheless, although we have been running away from the rising sun all night long, he will be sure to catch us. And here he comes at last, as bright and warm as ever. Away go the mists. And this is Brittany!

There is buckwheat, called blé noir because its flowers are white, in never-ending blossom—we shall taste its leathery cakes and crumpets by-and-bye; there are endless flat many-furrowed fields separated by scrubby hedges not seen in other parts of France; but—was it worth while to come so far to see so little? To suffer dust and international hot-pressing during a whole dead-long Nox Railwayana?

Civil words are exchanged between overnight's disputants. They converse, astonished to find each other mutually agreeable and intelligent.

"That's pretty, madame, that bay, though the tide is out. Those valleys, too, are fresh and green, only they might be a trifle deeper, longer, and wider. But we must take what we find, as I am obliged to,

settling down here after leaving Alsace. Everybody wants land, that is, rock, stones, and heath, such as you see, but nobody cultivates it or will let anybody else cultivate it. There, madame, stands a shepherdess. She is keeping perhaps a dozen sheep, but you would hardly sing her charms in a madrigal. The people, madame? Well; your true Breton is devout and thirsty, given to confession and tipsyfication, otherwise called dramography. He will walk in a pardon-procession at noon, and be unable to walk home at night. Neither in women's nor in children's litanies do you find, 'From alcohol in all its forms, the Holy Saints deliver us.' Wages, madam? A farm-woman servant hereabouts earns seven or eight francs a month, and is content with coarse and humble fare. Her wages being small and her board costing nothing, you have no right to complain that she knows nothing, that she can neither iron linen, sew, cook, nor——"

"But why does the train stop? We are not at a station," madame inquires, a little uneasily.

"Is there a doctor in the train?" the conductor asks, running from carriage to carriage.

A doctor is found, and taken possession of. What is the matter? A "welcome little stranger," or an old gentleman choked with buckwheat pancake? After half an hour's waiting, the doctor comes back, folding up his instrument case, and coolly informing us:

"Crossing gate-keeper stood in locomotive's way. Lucky escape. A few fingers squeezed; that's all."

"The Bretons, madame, I was saying, finish religious observances with worldly enjoyment. Look at the bill stook up at this station. 'Grand Pardon at Saint Renan, on Sunday the 17th of August, 1873. Public dances in all the Places or open spaces. Varied sports; Retraite aux Flambeaux. Grand Ball at seven o'clock.'"

"Morlaix! Mor-r-r-laix!" shouts the railway guard.

We halt, suspended aloft as if in a balloon. Beneath and athwart us runs a deep valley in the direction of the sea, lined with dark green foliage sheltering clumps of grey houses. At the bottom of all runs a sinuous stream to which the valley owes its depth if not its existence. What sustains us on high is a wonderfully bold viaduct bestriding the chasm with two stories

of arches, which, being on them, we cannot see.

"Morlaix! Mor-r-r-laix!"

"Here we leave you," says the lady head of the intruding party; "sorry to have made you pass an uncomfortable night——"

"Sorry I was so cross about it," interrupts Cerberus. "I am for Morlaix, too. Mention my name at the hotel—don't be afraid of asking prices—and they may receive you on more reasonable terms."

Yester evening's quarrel is cancelled with hand-shakes. A night passed together puts travellers on an easier footing than two or three days' journeying by sunlight. They have shared the discomfort as well as the fun of travel.

"I wish I could do like you," I sigh; "for I came straight from Calais, and am going on to Brest."

"Without stopping at Paris!" the husband exclaims. "It is only the English who make a rush like that."

"And you? In one night from Versailles to Morlaix?"

"Madame is English, though she speaks without accent. My daughters, consequently are half English, too."

"Ah! that explains all: baggage, baskets, bibelots, and the rest."

"If you return to Morlaix, come to our hotel. A pleasant journey!"

Stretched limbs and basket-breakfast help wonderfully to the appreciation of pretty scenery. Those hill-sides, heaped with ivy-clad boulders, all garnished, like dishes of fruit at dessert, with tufts of ferns and sprigs of leaves, are absolutely charming in their wildness. When you, gentle reader, take this trip, on arriving at Landerneau shift to the side of the carriage where people get in and out. On passing the station of Kerhuon, you will see before you, on the other side of the water, enormous rocks springing up from a bed of bright green copse-wood. They are the rocks of Plougastel, justly famous and well worth a visit. At their foot you find the rare Tunbridge film-fern, which carpets the rocks, mixes with the mosses, and even climbs up the tree-trunks. From their summit you command a valley, for the like of which you must cross over to Wales.

Brest, the Princess if not the Queen of Brittany, is enthroned on an eminence commanding delicious prospects by sea and land. Of all known French fortified towns, Brest is the least shut up and suffocated.

Its enclosing ramparts lie mostly beneath it. The streets are long, straight, and airy, many terminating, not in a blank wall or an ugly house, but with a view of the bright sea and the hills beyond it. The public walk, the Cours d'Ajot, possesses admirably umbrageous elms for a maritime town. Its elevated site allows the breeze to sweep in direct from the Roads, which but for their communication with the ocean, by means of the Goulet or the Gullet, might be taken for a magnificent hill-bound lake.

It is here that the *bonnes* or nurse-maids of Brest sit in permanent committee, safely discussing in their Breton tongue the demerits and chignons of their mistresses, the merits of their masters, and the comparative weights and tempers of their sucklings and nurslings. Here, too, the travelling naturalist can classify Breton caps according to their species and varieties. It is for him to determine whether it was by natural selection or independent creation that *bonnes'* caps assumed the forms of an extinguisher, an egg-shell with a white swelling at the end, a roll of music, a butterfly, a flying fish, and a ship in full sail.

Brest, however, is a populous town of eighty thousand inhabitants, and though in, is scarcely Brittany. Town life, in Europe at least, is similar, if not exactly the same. Human nature is everywhere identical. Is there a city in the world in which dirty boys do not get up behind smart carriages, nor slide down the hand-rails of public staircases? Brest shows plenty of brilliant toilettes. If open-air gatherings are so bright and gay, what must the salons be? There is a praiseworthy paucity of flies, and an absence of gnats which leaves nothing to desire. Armaments may be active, but trade is slack: the mercantile branch of the navy does not flourish. Consequently, in Brest, there are no monkey-shops, no parrots imploring you with wistful eyes to buy them, no cockatoos screaming to attract your attention, no love-birds fascinated by each other's charms, no tiny Indian feathered bipeds crowding together with half-shut eyes and pining for a hotter climate—all because no merchantmen put into port. Land, nevertheless, is exceedingly valuable. The ground on which our excellent hotel stands, and the whole Champ de Bataille in front of it, is worth eight pounds the square metre.

North-westward, ho! The *calèche* is at

the door at early morn, and we start for Argenton, our favourite and most primitive watering-place, where, until the late calamitous rise in prices, you could be boarded and lodged for three francs a day, and get lobsters and prawns for less than nothing. The roadside hedges are often ill-natured, shutting out what view there is, but the luxuriant tall-stemmed furze that tops them tells a tale of mild and frostless winter, and forms by its dingy green a fitting background for the venerable grey of the granite crosses. We might take the peasants we meet for priests, clad as they are in black with broad-brimmed hats, but unclerically garnished with a velvet band passing through a large steel buckle behind, and flying off in streamers resembling what young ladies used to call "*suivez-moi, jeune homme.*" Here is one driving a cart in company with his calf, and now another on foot carrying a chicken in his arms as tenderly as if it were a child.

The coast, which we reach at last, is an endless series of pretty little bays, protected by rocky islets from the breakers of the ocean, but rendering navigation difficult and dangerous. In front of some bays, as Porsal, there is a complete archipelago of rocks; and on land, granite rocks sprout up from the surface almost as thickly as they do at sea. Ocean is gifted with an ever-gnawing tooth, but earth, in Brittany, offers it a hard crust to bite. The land is granite; and granite is made to serve all sorts of incongruous purposes. Out of it are fabricated mangers, clock-weights, drinking troughs, hedges, slabs for washing linen, posts, stiles, dogs' feeding platters, fences, temporary walls—a man will pull down a wall to let his favourite cow pass through, and will then build it up again. Finally, granite furnishes tombstones; in which tombstones hollows are carved, some in the shape of a scallop-shell, to receive holy water on fête and pardon days. On ordinary days they are often filled by the rain; and well does it augur for the repose of the soul whose body is there beneath interred, if the little birds come to drink of the sweet raindrops so caught from heaven.

Such a coast is the very place for a stroll, whether you are simply idle, or plant or insect hunting. Basking in the afternoon sun, with a rock between the wind and your nobility, you see the clear waters of the sparkling tide advance, dancing gaily, as if they never could be treacherous or homi-

cidal—could never rage and howl in pitiless fury. The fisherman's boat sculls to and fro. The smoke of dried seaweed, burning for kelp, steams along the ground in expanding volumes. Aloft on the horizon the village church points with taper spire to heaven. That spire, though built of solidest material, looks as light as if cut out of card-paper.

As the sun declines, the rocks, in shadow, assume the aspect of fantastic ruins. Ruins, indeed, they are, whose dilapidation began before man was born to witness it. Their obstinate resistance marks their age. Other rocks have been melted or ground down, and then compressed or baked into rocks again; but these remain to tell the tale of ages when the world was still untenanted by life. Our stroll inn-wards, to dinner, takes us now and then over carpets of seaweed spread out to dry—green, yellow, pink, brown—all to be consigned to the furnace for ultimate conversion into iodine and soda.

We dine. It being Sunday, every nook and corner of the *Hôtel du Cheval Noir* is full to overflowing with excursionists from Brest, in spite of the "vastes écuries et remises" set forth in its programme. A heavy strain is put on its "*Table ouverte à toute heure*" and its "*Repas sur commande faite douze heures à l'avance*." The supply nevertheless contrives to meet the demand. They have a fish-box into which you have only to thrust your hand to pull out a crawfish or a lobster, and a meat-safe from which when a joint of mutton goes, another immediately replaces it. Sundry natives reel around the premises full, not of Bacchus, but of Bacchus (and perhaps of Ceres) distilled. Trying to effect an entrance, they are repulsed, without politeness, if quarrelsome. Some young people who prefer dancing to drinking (at least for the present), get up a Breton round in the coach-yard. Music being absent, we have the spectacle which has been said to suggest the idea of a madhouse. Jumps and evolutions are vigorously performed without any apparent motive. The dancers at times set up a howl which the utmost good nature cannot accept as a melody. As soon as dusk darkens into night, the landlord turns them all out of his yard, and shuts the gates. The performance over, we retire to bed, if wooden partitions can constitute retirement.

A back chamber, secured by favour, in this the best (because the only) inn, contains one bed on a bedstead and one on the

floor. The latter my room-companion describes as a lobster-feather bed. The blankets or counterpanes on both, seriously suggestive, as is common hereabouts, are dark green bordered with black, to remind you of the turf which will one day cover you, and of the mourning which, for a short while, will publish your loss. There is one nail on which to hang one towel, besides a second nail, considerably knocked into the wall, to sustain the clothes of two full-grown people. There is one stool, a great indulgence in a bedroom, because people don't go into bedrooms to sit. Indigenes and the commonalty dine seated on benches; stools are allowed to well-to-do people; the aristocracy only are promoted to chairs.

There is one table, one bottle of water, and, in place of washing-stand, a little doll's table not so high as my knee, at which you may wash either seated on the stool or kneeling at your morning devotions. Window curtains are replaced by an outside crust on the glass, discreetly compounded of salt spray, dust, and rain. The antique end of a cigarette and three or four hairpins indicate that, at some previous epoch, the apartment had been occupied by a past generation of bucks and belles. The mantelpiece is garnished with a broken basin, two coffee-cups, three beer-glasses, two effigies of the Virgin (one serving to hold holy water), a coloured photograph of the Pope as if he were one of the family, two rusty keys, a brass knob once the handle of something, and a bouquet of artificial rosebuds saved from a wedding button-hole. The thick granite walls insure protection from the weather (though the house opposite was unroofed, last winter, by a single gust of wind), but the wooden inside walls and the drum-like stairs permit me to hear simultaneously all that is going on, above, below, and around.

On peeping through the window-crust, the yard is seen to be filled with carriages and carts, wicker lobster-traps, fish for breakfast, Bretons in sabots with a wisp of straw to replace socks or stockings, ladies such as you see in fashion prints, and smart children mingling with little natives who have no experience of smartness, not to mention cleanliness. A friendly voice hails me. A lady authorises me (as I have no looking-glass, and must dress by the reflection from the whitewashed wall) to enter her room and beautify there. The morning mist gradually melts into sun-

shine, and I go down-stairs to see what change night has worked on the face of Finistère.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XLIX. THE COMIC MUSE.

My career as a student of law had terminated. I had for some time been thoroughly conscious that my profession possessed no charms for me; that, in truth, I could never become a lawyer. Yet I had been unprepared for the sudden death of Mr. Monck. I am surprised now, when I think how little I had contemplated that sad event. I knew that he had been very ill; I had gathered that but faint hopes could be entertained of his ultimate recovery. Still it had seemed to me that he might possibly long survive, although in an invalid state, tenderly nursed by his fond Rachel; with his faithful old clerk, his efficient substitute in the office; while I remained at my desk articulated to the employer I was never to see. In such wise, I thought, things might go on for a long while as they had been going on.

But now all was changed. I might finally close my law books, thrust from me my law-papers. I did this with a sigh, however. Not on their account; but I felt that, quitting them, I was quitting Rachel too. When the door of the house in Golden-square closed against me for the last time, it would separate me from Rachel—perhaps for ever. I should go on my way and see her no more. Our lives would be sundered; we might remain thenceforward completely ignorant of each other's fate. To her this might be little enough. To me it was very much. Altogether I was unspeakably depressed. And so I lingered in the office; regarding it almost fondly, now the time had really come for quitting it. Thoughts of Rachel rendered it precious in my eyes. And it was most painful to me to know that she must be suffering acutely, plunged into the deepest distress of her life, probably, the while I could do nothing in any way to lighten the heavy burden she was doomed to bear. At such a time, of course, there was almost profanation in the thought of my approaching her. In her all-absorbing and profound grief she had probably forgotten my very name. I was nothing to her. The articulated clerk of her dead father. Less than nothing. How I wished that Tony had come up to London

with me! He was her cousin, and she loved him. She would not feel so utterly helpless and abandoned to despair, if he were by her side.

Vickery, treading very softly, went in and out of the office. I could hear him close the shutters of all the front windows. He bandaged the door-knocker so as to muffle its sound. He was very silent, but perfectly composed. He seemed relieved by the thought that now he knew the worst; that fate could have no unkindlier blow in store for him. His cat-like method of moving to and fro stood him in good stead. Every now and then he went stealthily up-stairs.

"Miss Rachel?" I inquired of him in a low whisper.

"She is a little better, I hope. I have persuaded her to lie down and try and sleep. I will do all that can be done for her, do not fear, Mr. Nightingale. I shall not quit the house while I think she may possibly want help from me. She has known me all her life, and trusts me, as her father did, poor man. There is no fear that I shall fail to do my duty towards her. But you, Mr. Nightingale——"

"I am going directly." And then I said something about Mr. Monck's representatives, to whom, under the terms of my articles, I believed myself still legally bound. Vickery hesitated for some moments.

"The late Mr. Monck has left no will. I am in a position to speak confidently on that subject. Indeed, as a rule, lawyers do not leave wills; that is my experience. They make so many wills for other people, perhaps they learn to distrust wills. And as to administration," he checked himself. Presently he resumed: "What I say is in confidence, you will understand, Mr. Nightingale. You already possess some information in the matter. I know that I may trust you further. My opinion, as I am at present advised, is, that Miss Rachel should not administer. There are too many liabilities. But in such cases, the liabilities of a deceased person are, if I may so express myself, 'the look out' of the creditors of that person."

I told him that I should certainly call on the morrow to inquire as to the health of Miss Rachel.

"You will not see her," he said, abruptly.

I stated that I did not expect to see her, that I did not seek to intrude upon her in her deep affliction; but that I should be anxious to know how she fared under her severe trial, and that I should be thankful

for any information on that head he might be able to afford me.

"Well, be it so. I shall be here," he said. And he cautioned me to knock and ring very gently.

I saw him on the morrow, and, indeed, each day, until the funeral took place.

Rachel, I learnt, was very weak, was suffering gravely. But she had been able to sleep, and was growing more and more composed. It was a hopeful account altogether. I was informed, too, that, by her express desire, Tony was not to be summoned from the country to attend the funeral of his uncle. I recognised in this Rachel's enduring spirit of self-sacrifice. I knew that she must have yearned in truth for his presence. But she had thought of his ailing health, and had forborne to summon him from the Down Farm. Indeed, she forgot nothing. She sent a message of thanks to me for a little note, expressive of my sincerest sympathy, I had ventured to write to her (I accomplished the task with exceeding difficulty, I remember—it was my first letter to her), and also for some few flowers I had left for her in Vickery's charge. I had thought that their fragrance and beauty might soothe, perhaps, her stricken heart and aching brain. I was very glad afterwards that I had done this. For on the morning of the funeral—which took place in the churchyard of St. Anne's, Soho, where, it seemed, the Monck family had long possessed a vault—I noticed that Rachel, looking deadly pale in her deep mourning, strewed these flowers upon the coffin of her father. Vickery stood beside her, with a third person, whom I decided to be Mr. Viner, the doctor; there was no other mourner. It was a very simple ceremony. But one mourning-coach followed the hearse. An autumn mist floated about the churchyard, screening the steeple, from which the bell was tolling solemnly. The rattle of wheels in the adjoining thoroughfares, the shouts of street-traders, the cries of children playing in the streets close by, could plainly be heard. Still the sound of the earth pattering upon the lid of the lowered coffin was audible enough to me standing somewhat aloof from the little group of mourners, yet certainly sharing in their sorrow for the departed. The clergyman's voice ceased. I could see him close his book, and prepare to move away from the grave. Then came a sad and solemn pause. At length, her eyes to the last turned to the spot where poor Mr. Monck's remains were inhumed, Rachel suffered herself to be led away by

Vickery. For one moment, her fortitude yielded—she stood still, hid her face upon the old man's shoulder, and sobbed bitterly. He spoke no word, I think, but he gently caressed her hand, and then drew her again towards the mourning-coach. So they passed out of my sight, and I slowly wended my way to my lodgings, feeling more miserable than I had ever felt before in all my life.

For some hours I could do nothing but sit musing in my uneasy arm-chair, sorrowing over Rachel's sorrows, and reflecting upon my own unsatisfactory position. My new experiences had greatly impressed me. I began to consider, almost for the first time, the seriousness of life, the awfulness of death. I discovered, however, that time possessed, in a remarkable degree, the power of allaying and abating grief. Presently I perceived, with surprise and some dissatisfaction, that I was not, in truth, nearly so depressed as I had believed myself to be.

A few days after the funeral I called in Golden-square. But though I rang the office bell, and plied the door knocker with some force, I could make no one hear. A servant from a neighbouring area informed me that Mr. Monck's house was now empty, and that it was in vain I sought admission.

It was strange. What had become of Rachel? What of Vickery? But I felt sure that I should hear from him shortly. He was acquainted with my address, and would certainly write to me. Still, that he should quit Golden-square so abruptly was curious enough. Of Rachel I was satisfied I should have tidings, from time to time, through Tony. He would, without doubt, be kept informed of her movements.

Then I went on to Harley-street to visit Sir George.

Mole met me in the doorway, and welcomed my return with exuberant heartiness.

"But you look sad," he remarked, "and you wear crape upon your hat. What has happened? Why these Hamlet airs?"

I informed him of the death of Mr. Monck.

"That all? Come, cheer up. He won't be missed. It's only one lawyer the less; hardly matter for sorrow. There's plenty more lawyers alive, you know."

I begged him not to speak of the subject in that light way. Then we went on to discuss other topics.

Sir George was absent; in Paris, Mole thought, but was not sure. His return to town was expected almost immediately

He had been away for a few days only. He had not taken Probert with him; he rarely availed himself of the services of a valet. Probert was enjoying a brief holiday. He had gone down to Stoke, in Staffordshire, to visit his father.

"Keeps the Seven Bells there," Mole stated; "a highly respectable man, who draws a very decent glass of ale. I've seen *him*, and I've tasted *it*, and I've no fault to find with either. You remember what Boniface says in the play? 'The best ale in Staffordshire; smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy; and will be just fourteen year old the fifth day of next March, old style!' A comfortable house the Seven Bells. Probert looks to inherit it, I fancy; and he's saved in service a tidy little sum of his own, no doubt. But he's not the man to play 'mine host'; he'll never be able to fill out the part. In my hands, now, the landlord of the Seven Bells would have every justice done him, and impress the audience very considerably."

I inquired if there was much going on in the studio.

"Not much," he said. "I'm at work rubbing in a royal portrait or two, otherwise—" he stopped, glanced at me rather curiously, I thought, and then asked suddenly, "Did you come here quite by chance? Your visit had no special object, had it? No. I see it had not. Come upstairs. Sir George is engaged upon a picture you haven't seen. Wait one moment," and he left me.

Presently, from the top of the stairs, he called to me to enter the studio.

A large canvas stood upon the easel, the light falling fully upon it.

"Unfinished, of course," said Mole. "Only just sketched in in parts. The old properties, you see. The classic column and the crimson hangings in heavy folds. We can't get on without them. A portrait with an element of fancy about it though. We call it 'The Comic Muse.' Miss Darlington in the character of Thalia."

"Miss Darlington?"

"Yes. You don't know the name, I dare say."

The lady was represented, life size, emerging from crimson curtains, and descending a flight of marble steps. She carried a mask in one hand, in the other a shepherd's crook decked with flowers.

Her classic draperies did not fall low enough to conceal the slim symmetry of her sandalled feet. A vaporous blue scarf, spangled with silver stars, floated about her. There were strings of pearls round her neck and wrists; garlands and wreaths, roughly sketched, strewed the ground at her feet. She was of majestic figure, of lustrous complexion, with rich coils of auburn hair crested above her forehead, and falling in dark clouds about her white neck and shoulders. Her full cherry-red lips were of perfect form; her hazel eyes gleamed brilliantly beneath her arched, clearly-marked brows.

Another moment, and I was starting back.

"What! You do know Miss Darlington?"

"Yes."

Then—it was like a dream!—musical laughter rang out, the rustling of silk was heard, there was a sense of perfume in the air, jewels glittered, laces fluttered, a screen was thrown down, a figure moved towards me, two white hands rested on my shoulders, two hazel eyes, aglow and dancing with saucy merriment, beamed upon mine. Thalia, warm, breathing, brimming over with life, and health, and spirits, stood before me!

"Duke! You know me?"

What a lovely luscious voice it was! How each tone thrilled through to my heart!

"Rosetta!"

"The screen scene in the School for Scandal was never better done," cried Mole, laughing loudly, and tossing his arms aloft. "I congratulate you, Lady Teazle; I should say Miss Darlington, of the T. B. Haymarket, the new actress!"

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGERD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XX. THE DAY BEFORE DEATH.

In spite of his denunciations of Captain Heyton's foolhardiness as a rider, it is certain that Mr. Hulet's behaviour towards the winner of the steeple-chase was more cordial after that event than before. Unathletic and even averse to all exertion as he was himself, the old valetudinarian could still admire pluck and vigour in another, or perhaps he rightly judged that the virtues of determination and energy which the captain had exhibited in that stern-chase, would not be absent from him on more important occasions. At all events, he now openly favoured the young fellow's suit, while singularly enough, the captain's visits to Cliff Cottage were equally welcome to Mrs. Hulet. Neither of the pair made the least objection to his taking Evy out upon equestrian excursions, which would have been more pleasant to her had not Judith generally joined them. As her heart had foreboded, that young lady did exhibit considerably better horsemanship, or rather she possessed greater physical courage than herself; and was infinitely more apt a pupil in the riding lessons. She always professed herself as "quite ready to stop at home," protested that "her dear Evy would be much happier without her;" but nevertheless—or probably in consequence of such judicious disclaimers—contrived to make one of the party *vice* the captain's groom, left at Balcombe to charm the chamber-maids at Lucullus Mansion. She made not the least attempt to flirt with the captain, but it seemed to Evy that she laid herself out to please him rather more than was, under the

circumstances, quite becoming. For instance, upon the day of the steeple-chase, not content with having told Mr. Bullion (who, nevertheless, she felt pretty sure would repeat it) that she hoped the captain would win, she expressed her satisfaction to him on his victory point blank. "Oh, Captain Heyton, I am so glad you have beaten Mr. Paragon."

The captain was but human, and, to say the truth, was not displeased at this expression of a preference for himself over one who was understood to be an especial admirer, if not the positively accepted swain of Miss Mercer; while Evy, on the contrary, was not a little outraged.

"My dear Judith, how can you say so!" remonstrated she.

"Oh, I am sure I beg your pardon, my dear," answered Judith, with a bright smile at the captain; "but I am not an heiress like you, Evy, remember, and the fact is that twelve pair of gloves—which was poor Mr. Paragon's bet upon himself—are 'a consideration' to me."

It was impossible to be angry with Judith after so naïve a confession, nor did she repeat the offence in question, at all events in Evy's presence. But what annoyed the latter even more than these little infractions upon her own rights of property in Jack was the provoking air of patronage that Judith gave herself—not socially of course, for indeed she still persisted in that rôle of "companion" and "dependent," which had already done her such good service—but in assuming to herself the position of one whom stern necessity had long acquainted with the ways of the world, and in treating Evy as a mere child. Whenever the latter showed her inferiority to herself, no matter whether it was in riding or repartee,

Judith evinced no triumph, yet somehow suggested by her manner—if it were but a glance or a smile—that dear Evy could not be expected to do better. A course of conduct that had the effect of making “dear Evy” nervous, and of depriving her of self-reliance even in circumstances to which she would have been otherwise equal.

It must not be supposed, however, notwithstanding all Judith’s astuteness and policy, that that young woman succeeded in substituting her image for a single instant in the captain’s faithful heart for that of his Evy. He admired the former exceedingly, accepted her pretty speeches—which were even prettier, he noticed, when she chanced to be left alone with him than when her dear friend was present—and allowed to himself that she had the best wits of any girl he had ever seen. But his judgment never failed to the extent of making any comparison between the two, or of doubting that Evy Carthew, for goodness, sterling good sense, delicacy of feeling, and, in a word, for loveliness, was worth a score of Judith Mercers.

The engagement between the captain and Evy had now been made public, and among the first to come over to offer his congratulations on that event was Mr. De Coucy. He had been absent from Balcombe for many weeks, some of which he had passed with his relative, Lord Dirleton, and this was the first visit he had paid to Cliff Cottage. Evy felt just a little nervous at meeting him on such an occasion, remembering that fragment of a love passage between them on the day of the picnic, but the old gentleman at once set her at ease by alluding to it in the most barefaced manner. “You recollect, my dear Miss Evy, that day when I made such a fool of myself in Birbeck Wood?”

Evy blushed, and made a little gesture of dissent.

“Well, if you don’t recollect the day,” continued he, with wilful misapprehension of her meaning, “you recollect the circumstance, for you are blushing for me, as you well may do. I have been doing my best since then to atone for my presumption, by endeavouring to make matters straight for you and Jack. But the old lord, my cousin, is as fixed as a bayonet, and quite as dangerous to tackle. Cousin Tom, I fear, must have Dirleton, though Jack will have something infinitely better—”

“What? Is he disinherited after all,

then?” interrupted Evy. “Oh, why was I so weak as to believe him?”

“Believe what?” cried Mr. De Coucy, in great perturbation. (“Here’s a mess,” thought he; “I wonder what the young fellow did tell her!”) “Jack deceive you, my dear Miss Evy! Impossible.”

“He told me that his uncle, though by no means satisfied with his engagement, had promised him twenty thousand pounds.”

“That’s quite right,” said Mr. De Coucy, with an air of much relief. “I only meant to say that it might have been more.”

“I see,” answered Evy, sadly. “In my selfish love for Captain Heyton I did not consider his position. Twenty thousand pounds seemed to me a great fortune. I did not reflect upon how much more he might have had, had his choice been a wiser one.”

“Nay, a wiser one it could not have been,” answered Mr. De Coucy, positively, “though he had searched the world through for a bride. It was idiotic of me to speak of mere money in a case where money ought not to weigh one feather’s weight. I should have liked to think you were to have Dirleton, I confess; but after all, what does it matter?”

“Not to me, indeed,” said Evy, sorrowfully; “but to him—alas, alas!”—and here she burst into most unaccustomed tears—“what have I done?”

“Made a most excellent young fellow happy beyond his deserts, Miss Evy. Nay, if you take my tittle-tattle so much to heart, you will make me wretched with the thought of what I have done! Look here—here is the ring I promised you, and which I have had made to fit your taper finger; you will not wear it now? Well, in a fortnight hence you will have sworn to obey somebody who shall ask you to put it on. Pray, pray, for my sake, dear Miss Evy, don’t make Jack my enemy by telling him of this stupid blunder of mine! You promise? And with what a forgiving smile! Ah, if I can only bring it about that Lord Dirleton shall see and know you, I am sure his heart would melt!”

“I will do my best for Jack’s sake with Lord Dirleton, if I ever get the chance, Mr. De Coucy,” Evy said; “but I have small hope of being successful. His heart seems very hard.”

“No, indeed, it is as soft as butter, where he takes a fancy. He would give five years of his life, at this moment, to be reconciled to his favourite nephew; only he has passed his word that he will never con-

sent to let him 'intermarry with regicides.' Think of your being a regicide! By-the-bye, where is that confounded picture of which I have heard so much?"

"It is in my uncle's study. You will find him there, and he will be very pleased to show it you, I'm sure," sighed Evy, who in her heart wished the portrait of her illustrious ancestor at the bottom of the sea.

She was glad to be alone to think over what Mr. De Coucy had just told her, though there would have been no need for him to have done so, had she ever soberly reviewed the matter in her own mind.

Of selfishness she had indeed accused herself unjustly, but it was doubtless true that in her rapturous delight at finding Jack her own, she had lost sight of the penalties to which he had subjected himself in order to become so. It was too late now to give him up, even if her heart could have consented to such a sacrifice, but for that very reason it reproached her all the more.

In the mean time Mr. De Coucy had entered the study, and was already listening to the eulogium which Mr. Hulet was always prepared to pronounce upon the original of his beloved picture.

"You are quite sure that that is his portrait?" observed his visitor, when it was quite finished.

"Sure—of course I am!" replied his host, with some indignation. "Why, who else should it be?"

"And you've taken measures to certify the fact—I mean that he did cut the king's head off?"

"Of course I have. It's just as much an historical fact, sir, as that of the execution itself. The only question in dispute is, 'Who was the Martyr?' My revered ancestor, in common with many another illustrious patriot at the Restoration, sealed with his blood.—Confound it, madam, what brings you here?"

These last words were caused by the unexpected entrance of Mrs. Hulet, and were pronounced with uncommon energy. That lady, who "held her own" in all other parts of the house, was not free of the study, the inviolability of which her husband maintained with the utmost rigour.

"Well, I'm sure," said she, stung by his violent tone, and gathering confidence from the presence of Mr. De Coucy, "you need not grin at me like that, Mr. Hulet, showing your teeth like a rat in a corner; I only came for the newspaper."

Mr. Hulet did not reply, he had been ex-

ceedingly annoyed by having his eloquence cut short upon the only topic on which, to do him justice, he was wont to dilate, and his temper was now so exasperated by his wife's words, that he would not trust himself to answer them. This silence Mrs. Hulet took for submission, or at least as a sign that her lord and master was ashamed of himself for his recent outburst, and instead of being mitigated thereby, she thought it a good opportunity for reprisals.

"Well, I won't stop," said she, "where I am not wanted, else I do think, Mr. De Coucy, that it is my duty to rescue you from the infliction under which I see you suffer. It is as difficult to keep that Jack Ketch yonder" (pointing disdainfully to the ancestral portrait) "out of Mr. Hulet's talk as it was to keep the Blessed Martyr whom he butchered out of Mr. Dick's memorial."

With this double-barrelled shot Mrs. Hulet founced out of the study, and sought her bedroom, where she dropped into a chair, and found solace for her excited nerves in restoratives. She took her dinner up-stairs that day, while her husband sat over his almost untasted meal with the young ladies; she was not without well-founded apprehensions of the effect of her own audacity; for the fact was, when their unhappy reunion was agreed upon, it was distinctly stipulated by Mr. Hulet that his historic ancestor—over whom they had had many a quarrel years ago—should be exempt from her satire. And now she had stigmatised him as a Butcher.

Conscious that the conflict could not be postponed for ever, and that her husband's wrath would only be the warmer for nursing, Mrs. Hulet joined the family circle in the evening. The knowledge that she was in the wrong—for she knew that irritation was no excuse for breaking a compact—by no means induced her to own it; for it was a maxim of this poor lady's never to admit herself to be in fault, and especially to her husband. There was a stormy scene between them, scarcely mitigated by the presence of the two girls, and which lasted far into the night. Evy, after an ineffectual attempt to reconcile them, sought her own room in great distress. The last words her aunt had spoken were very bitter ones. "You wish me dead, Mr. Hulet, I am well aware, but I mean to live as long as I can, if it is only to vex you." To which her uncle replied with some expressions of cold contempt. Evy sat up in her chamber listening to the war of words, which continued to come up con-

fusedly from beneath, and with tenderest pity in her heart for both combatants. How terrible it was to think that so kind and generous a man as her uncle, so gentle and well meaning a woman as her aunt, should act in this shocking manner towards one another because they were man and wife.

As brother and sister, that is in a relation of life where separation was comparatively easy, they would doubtless have got on far better; as friends, even under the same roof, she had had evidence that they could harmonise excellently well; whereas it was now quite painful to behold them together. The nature of each seemed changed by contact with the other. Was it humanly possible, or rather could the Powers of Evil so effect it, that Jack and she should become one day like that? She shuddered at the monstrous thought, then put it from her, like some nightmare dream that has terrified us in slumber, but which we are well convinced can never be realised. Presently she heard the drawing-room door closed with a clang, evidently by the hand of passion, and then to her great relief the steps of her uncle as he retired to his own apartment. If her aunt had been alone she would have descended at once to comfort her, but a hushed sound of voices, very different from those to which they had succeeded, satisfied her that Judith was with Mrs. Hulet.

After awhile the drawing-room window was softly opened, and the two women came out upon the lawn and paced up and down the cliff walk. It was warm and a lovely night, though the moon was young, and gave but scanty light, and the scene without, contrasting as it did in its silence and serenity with that outbreak of human passions that had so recently taken place within, was doubtless welcome to her who had been the actress in it. At all events Mrs. Hulet and her companion remained so long without doors, that before their return Evy had fallen asleep, to dream perhaps of love and Jack, or perhaps—for even the gentlest natures are haunted by such abnormal fancies when sleep reigns—of Death and Murder.

Whatever vision of the night may have frozen her young blood, it must needs however have fallen short, in horror, of what was actually passing at Cliff Cottage, beneath the keen-eyed but silent stars. What Evy knew of it was nothing, or next to nothing; yet for many a month it was fated that her mind should dwell

on every shadowy hint that came to her that night 'twixt sleep and waking, in cautious movement and muffled sound.

PLANETARY LIFE.

BY HERMES.

NO. III. PUNISHMENT IN ANOTHER WORLD.

To appreciate the present system of punishment now adopted in the Star City of Montalluyah, it is necessary to go back to that which was in use at an earlier period. A number of persons crowded together in a prison were degraded by mutual contact, and, for the most part, became lost to every sense of shame. A person who had once suffered incarceration was almost invariably worse than before, when his term had expired, and severer punishments only tended to increase the obduracy of the criminal. As soon as new modes of detecting crime were invented, the excitement and gratification of avoiding detection by means of superior cunning encouraged the culprit to devise new methods of escape, and thus the number of those who avoided the retribution due to their misdeeds was even greater than the increased number of the punished. There was, indeed, a constant struggle between authority and crime, until the Great Toot-manyoso (or ruler), by whom all the reforms in Montalluyah were effected, resolved, with the assistance of Heaven, to track moral disease to its source, and reduce it, as he had reduced physical disease, to its smallest possible proportions. His grand object was to eradicate from the soul of the offender the very seeds of evil, and restore him to a condition of moral health. A reformed malefactor was, he considered, a recruit to the ranks of virtue.

By the present system punishments vary according to the character, intelligence, and constitution of the offender, since it is rightly considered that what would be scarcely a punishment at all to some, would be atrocious cruelty in the case of others. Thus, for persons of a sensitive and impressionable disposition, the mere exposure of their offence might be found a sufficient penalty, while for hardened malefactors something much more severe would be required.

There is, in Montalluyah, a public building called the "Temple of Justice," whither the public is invited to come on certain days. Here the admonition to a convicted criminal is sometimes repeated on several occasions. Thus, to take the case of a

man who had committed a theft under circumstances of strong temptation, and who afterwards deeply regretted the offence. Such a person, when convicted, would be compelled to stand on a pedestal in the presence of the public, while every detail of his crime was read to him aloud. This process would be repeated at intervals, until a moral reform was obviously effected, and between the intervals the offender would be employed in the trade or profession to which he had been accustomed, not for his own benefit, but for that of the state. When his penitence was ascertained, occupation would be found for him in another district, since with us it is a maxim that nothing is more dangerous than to set a criminal at large without employment.

A girl who wandered from the paths of virtue would be called before our Wise Men, by whom all the horrors consequent upon her fault would be explained to her. We have marvellous pictures of successive stages of crime painted by our greatest masters, and an erring girl, say, is shown first in all the freshness and beauty of innocence, then the different grades of her fall and misery are plainly exhibited; and at last she appears in her old age abandoned by all. By way of contrast the career of a good and virtuous woman forms the subject of another series. A deep impression is made by these pictures, which may be roughly compared to the "progresses" of your Hogarth, though they are free from the vulgarities which occasionally mar the works of your great pictorial moralist. Let it not be supposed, however, that a love of virtue is encouraged by the mere effect of these pictures. All is explained by the kindest and most generous expositors of both sexes, trained expressly for the purpose.

When offences are of a grave nature our Wise Men keep the convicted criminal for some time in view, and test him in various ways. When once it is ascertained that the desired reform has been effected, the offence is consigned to oblivion, and no one is allowed to refer to it. Those who violate this regulation can be ignominiously punished, and perhaps compelled to wear what we call the "Dress of Shame." All our punishments, it may be generally asserted, are distinguished by clemency. Through the care bestowed on the education of character described elsewhere, and through the circumstance that social promotion is with us a certain consequence of exemplary conduct, all are interested in

the preservation of order, and crime is very unfrequent. But if it does take place, punishment is sure to follow, so that nothing can be gained by an infraction of the law.

Many offences, I need not say, are the result of discontent, or a desire to possess what is not our own, and we avoid the mistake of inflicting punishments which tend to give the coveted object increased value in the eyes of the covetous, and thus stimulate them to renew their efforts to possess it.

In "Another World" I have stated that the women of Montalluyah are encouraged to dress well, rich married ladies even with magnificence. If a woman neglects her dress it is suspected that something wrong has occurred, and when she is a wife we infer that her husband is no longer an object of her affection. Here, however, is the place to make the accompanying statement that none are allowed to dress or wear jewels which do not accord with their social position. The law to this effect is so well understood, that now an infraction of it would be morally impossible, for the offender would be more than amply punished by the ridicule which would visit his transgression. In the early days, however, of the reforming Tootmanyoso, this happy condition of affairs had not been reached, and the ludicrous story of a "Dress-coveter," who affected the costumes of her "betters," may here be conveniently related.

The offending girl was at first told, with all due gentleness, that if she qualified herself for a higher social position she would acquire the right of wearing the dress and jewels suitable to her elevation. She, however, persisted in asserting that she had already attained the rank which qualified her for the enjoyment of the desired privileges, and that, at all events, she thought her appearance was such as entitled her to wear the most brilliant costumes, adding that she ought to be provided with a servant to do her work.

At first the girl's excessive folly and affected laziness were attributed to ill-health; but when medical advice was obtained, and the doctors declared unanimously that the patient's malady was of a moral, not of a physical nature, a mode of treatment consistent with this opinion was adopted. The offender was brought to a house filled with dresses and ornaments, apparently of the most costly kind, but in reality mere imitations of superior

articles. One of these dresses, with the appropriate ornaments, she was requested to put on by one of the ladies intrusted with the charge of the gorgeous wardrobe. She complied with delight, but when she had worn it for half an hour, she was required to change it for another, and at the expiration of every half-hour, for one entire month, save during the time appropriated to sleep, the process was repeated. She was not allowed, I should observe, to exert herself in the slightest degree, all the labours of the toilet being performed by the ladies and their assistants.

It was some time before the girl's gratification at this unwonted magnificence was diminished. She thought herself a grand lady, and spoke with an affected air. At last, however, her patience was worn out, and she earnestly implored the ladies to desist from their toil, declaring, with respect to one dress after another, that she liked it too much to require a change. The ladies replied in terms of simulated respect, but did not desist from their wearisome operations, and when, after a while, the girl expressed a wish to walk about, she was requested and even forced to remain seated, and did she make an effort to rise she was ordered not to stir, as everything she required, would be done for her. In every respect she was treated as a lady, whose intellectual attainments had fitted her for the highest position. When she was hungry and asked for porridge, the fare to which she had been accustomed, the ladies were apparently shocked, and she was at once served with delicate viands, which to her uncultivated taste seemed utterly unsatisfying and insipid.

On the first day of her arrival she had been asked to select the hour for retiring to rest, and feeling somewhat weary, and having nothing to do, she named a time corresponding to your eight o'clock P.M. She was accordingly conducted to her bed, was undressed, and was put to bed. Here she was allowed to remain as long as she pleased, and in consequence of the excitement she had undergone she did not rise till a late hour on the following morning, whereupon she was informed that henceforward the same hours for rising and retiring to rest were constantly to be observed. On the third night, not having undergone any fatigue, she wished to go to bed later, but her courteous persecutors were inexorable, and the hour, which condemned her to the renewed routine of dressing and re-dressing, was not to be changed. Nor did the inter-

vals that occurred between the repeated changes of attire bring with them any solace. Books were read to her which she could not understand; she was requested to play on musical instruments of which she had never heard, and to paint pictures, although she had never handled a brush; and what made her position more mortifying, numbers of her former equals were admitted to visit her, and laugh at her expense, though, in consistency with the courtesy of our manners, they were not allowed to pass a certain line.

When nearly a week had passed, a desire to do the work to which she had become accustomed, and which had once seemed to her so irksome, became her predominant feeling, and she begged the attendant ladies to leave her to herself, and even allow her to sweep her rooms. This, of course, was not permitted. It was obviously against the law, she was told, that a lady of such intelligence should be employed in work which people with inferior minds could do as well. In case of attempted disobedience, there were men near at hand who, the moment she tried to exert herself, placed her in a peculiar chair, with a bar before it, which prevented the slightest movement, and she was not released, except for the purpose of being undressed and re-dressed, until she had solemnly promised to comply with the regulations of her splendid prison. The same punishment was inflicted if she did not listen to unintelligible books, or even showed any signs of weariness. When she asked leave to talk with some of her companions, and to see a young man on whom she had once bestowed her affections, she was gravely informed that such persons were unfit to associate with a lady of so elevated a station. Now and then her torments were varied by an airing in a gorgeous carriage, which took her, magnificently dressed, about the city, where she was regarded with derision by the multitude.

Truly joyful did she feel when the wearisome month had passed, and she was to return to her home and her equals. Her cure was perfect; she became exemplary in her position, sedulously attended to her domestic affairs, and never ceased to warn others of the folly of desiring to avoid work, and coveting things unsuited to their station. I ought to state that the dress commonly worn by our humbler classes, which the converted girl had once despised, is extremely pretty and picturesque, as she

herself was often heard to declare when her period of probation had passed.

The same principle of effecting a cure by means of satiety was sometimes adopted by the reforming Tootmanyoso, when a man, altogether unequal to the cares and duties of government, aspired to political powers. Such a man was appointed ruler over some small place, where he was surrounded by persons who did all they could to annoy him, not allowing him a moment's rest. Despatches on despatches were hurried in, especially at meal-times, and his consequent inability to eat a single morsel in peace, rendered his condition somewhat similar to that of Sancho Panza, described by your immortal Cervantes.

On account of the warmth of our climate, and the consequently hot blood of our people, outbreaks of passion are commoner among us than offences deliberately committed. Great vigilance is therefore exerted to prevent infractions of the peace. A person guilty of an act of violence is forced to wear on his arm a badge inscribed with a warning indicative of his offence, as for instance, "Beware of the assaulter, for he will strike you if you please him not." If the act results in bloodshed, the inscription runs thus, "Flee from him as a pestilence; he thirsts for blood."

During the time of his punishment none are allowed to associate with him, but he is conducted by the officers who have charge of him to the most frequented promenades, and to some places of public amusement, where the sight of the badge causes him to be regarded with universal horror. To this exposure he is subjected whether he likes it or not, and though at first perhaps he feels rather pleased at the amusements accorded to him, he soon finds that the apparent privilege is one of the severest parts of his castigation. It is explained to him by the decree of his punishment that he is excluded from society because he has shown by his conduct that he is unworthy of its blessings, and this is read to him three times a day—in the evening, the morning, and at noon.

The badge is removed every night, but to prevent the offender from rising before the appointed time, each of his hands is placed in a large wicker case, secured at the wrist by a lock. Sometimes, when the assault has been committed with extraordinary violence, both hands are secured in one case, and a guardian constantly remains close to the offender.

The duration of this punishment is pro-

portioned to the nature of the offence, and to the effect produced on the offender. Our system of nipping evil in the bud renders the existence of what you would call hardened criminals an impossibility. Punishment inflicted without a view to reformation, is foreign to our ideas of right, and even if a murderer—a character almost unknown to us—came under the operation of our laws, he would simply be confined alone, and subjected to a degrading discipline as though he were a ferocious animal.

I have mentioned above the "Dress of Shame." This dress, which consists of a robe made in one piece of the commonest material, is attached to the punishment for every serious offence, the particular nature of which is indicated by a conventional mark. A similar mark is placed over the offender's house. The obligation to wear it is usually accompanied by degradation of rank. Since with us social distinction and wealth are proportioned to the superior virtues or intelligence of the person on whom they are conferred, it is a logical consequence that exceptional advantages are forfeited when the qualification to enjoy them has ceased.

NAVVIERS.

THE navy is an individual concerning whom society at large has very undefined ideas. We see very little of great public works, such as railways or docks, until they are completed, and, for the most part, we are content to accept the fact of their completion, and trouble our heads very little about the men who have made them. But the navy repays a little study, and as is commonly the case, when we come to know him, we find him not nearly so bad as he is generally believed to be. It is something of an experience for a stranger to dwell for a time in an isolated navy community. He must be curiously constituted if he is sorry when the time comes for him to leave, but he must be very indiscreet indeed if he carries away with him broken bones or a contused face; and he quits the settlement with a consciousness far from unpleasant to the student of his kind, that he has seen a phase of human life to be found nowhere in this country, save in a navy community.

Probably not a great many people know whence the "navvy" derives his distinctive name. The great burly fellow in the mole-skin and hob-nailed ankle-jacks, has cer-

tainly, to all appearance, little enough connexion with navigation. As like as not he has never been on board ship in his life, and is essentially an operator on terra firma. Nevertheless, "navvy" is a contraction of the term "navigator," which somehow—probably at first by way of nickname—came to be applied in the early days to the men who made the canals, which carried nearly all the heavy traffic of the country before the railways came and cut so much of the ground from under them. The name stuck, as names do, and has long ago become accepted as the generic appellation of the stalwart men who dig cuttings, build embankments, and prepare railway lines for the reception of the ballasting and permanent way.

There are some navvies born, but the greater number come casually into the avocation. The requirements are not specially exacting. To be a navvy, a man must have thews and sinews, he must have a thorough conception of the meaning of a day's work as contra-distinguished from a day's make-believe; he must know how to wield pick and shovel, and to take his own part in a fight. These are about all the necessary accomplishments; although perhaps a man is better suited for a navvy life if his notions of comfort are strictly rudimentary, if privacy is a point on which he is utterly indifferent, and if he can drink a large quantity of beer without being the worse for it.

The navvy proper is nearly always an Englishman. There are a few Scotchmen, who, unless very drunken, aim steadily at becoming gangers, and the number of Welshmen is said to be on the increase, although it is still but small outside of the Principality. A good many Irishmen find employment in the construction of a new railway, but rather as labourers hired by the day to do inferior work, than as navvies proper, engaged on piecework, as every true navvy craves to be. There have been exceptions, but, as a rule, once a navvy always a navvy. Habits of improvidence, and an intermittent, but oft recurring love for the ale-can, effectually bar any accumulation of savings, no matter how large earnings may be; the navvy lives from hand to mouth on his capital, and that capital is represented by his thews and sinews. He is one of the most fluctuating and unsettled of mortals—"here one month, gone the next," to use the words of one who knows him well.

When a large work employing navvy

labour is begun, there is no need to advertise for hands. The news passing from mouth to mouth, permeates somehow in an inconceivably short time through the scattered ranks of navvydom, and hands drop in apace. The navvy comes upon the scene in the simplest manner. He comes clattering in among the shanties in the West Riding hill country—he may have come from Bedfordshire, Barrow-in-Furness, or John of Groat's House, there are no questions asked—in a roomy, mole-skin pea-jacket, with mother-o'-pearl buttons, and a pair of high, thick-soled ankle-jacks. He carries over one shoulder a little round bundle containing all his belongings, sometimes the bundle even is deficient, and it is a wonder if he has more than a shilling in his pocket. He goes to the contractor's office, where he is summarily "taken on," a glance at his muscular power being all the certificate of character demanded. Then he goes to find lodgings. His choice is limited, the shanties belong to the contractor, who lets them to married (or reputedly married) navvies, with the proviso that single navvy lodgers are to be taken in up to the accommodation of the habitation. A hut generally contains three apartments. The central one is the common kitchen and sitting-room, at either end is a bedroom, one for the family of the married navvy, the other for the single navvy lodgers. Such a hut is reckoned to afford accommodation for six lodgers, who pay from twelve shillings to fourteen shillings each weekly as board and lodging. There cannot, with the present prices of provisions, be a great margin of profit in the board of navvies, for they have the most tremendous appetites, and hold it a portion of their creed to eat beef about four times a day. Eighteen pounds of butcher's meat is said to be a fair weekly allowance for each navvy, and he has rather a contempt for any other kind than beef.

His lodgings secured the navvy goes to work at once, often on the day of his arrival. If he is a good man and confident of his own powers, he tries to get into a "butty gang," as a squad of men are called who work into each other's hands on piece work, one of themselves acting as their time-keeper, and the collective work being measured up in the lump every fortnight. The best and most powerful navvies on the job are always to be found in these "butty gangs," and it is a caution to see the sustained energy with which they labour—working as they do for their own hands,

and quite free from the supervision of a ganger. If a navvy does not join a "butty gang," he is put into a squad working on daily wages, or rather time wages, under the direction of a ganger, who may be either himself a sub-contractor on his own account, or the paid servant of a principal contractor. Wages vary according to the nature of the work and the price of labour; just now they range from four shillings to six shillings per diem. The navvy is free to go at a moment's notice, or rather without any notice at all; and his employer is at liberty to "sack" him on equally summary terms. But the day's work which lasts, with breaks for meals, from six A.M. to half-past five P.M., is practically divided into four quarters, and the custom is that the navvy taking or receiving his discharge completes his quarter-day for convenience of reckoning. The first quarter is from six to half-past eight in the morning, the second from nine till noon, the third from one to three, and the fourth from three to half-past five in the afternoon. The "pays," that is the settlements of wages, are fortnightly, and it is customary with most contractors to retain three days' wages in hand. But there is a system of "subs," or subsidies, to enable the impecunious navvy to live through the intermediate time. These "subs" are granted twice a week, and are drawn so close up, that at the fortnightly settlement the navvy has generally but little to take. The new-comer has a special privilege in the matter of "sub." If he desires, he can have an advance every night until the first fortnightly settlement occurs, and then he falls into the bi-weekly "sub" system.

The navvy is not a drunkard. He could not get through the violent and sustained labour he does, if he were an habitual sot. When he is "keeping steady," he is an abstemious man. He never has beer brought to him when at work—as is the custom of puddlers and foundry-men, who may be said to work upon beer. The navvy has a drink of beer for dinner and another for supper, and perhaps the lodgers in a shanty may have a "pint round," as they sit and smoke in the evening. Perpetual infraction of the Licensing Act goes on in every navvy settlement. Every shanty-keeper has a barrel of beer, and retails the drink to the lodgers in the house, and indeed to every non-suspicious person who may ask for it.

The navvy's life is a kind of modern labour of Sisyphus. He saves his money.

He buys himself a good kit. Not unfrequently, when he can keep steady long enough, he invests in a silver watch—the larger it is the better value he considers he has for his money. He has rolled his stone nearly on to the plateau of competence. Then he "breaks out," and the stone rolls down to the bottom. He meets an old chum, and they fall a drinking together; or a spell of wet weather may occur, and the navvy finding the time hang heavy on his hands, takes to card-playing for beer; or he may have had a quarrel with his mates. Sometimes from sheer ennui he can stand it no longer, but must be off to the nearest town; in other cases he has his drink out at home. When the navvy goes on the spree, he drinks not from the barrel of his shanty, but hies him to the public-house. There he drinks first his money, then his watch, and then his clothes, till he has drunk everything except what he stands up in, save a trifle of marching money, and enough to make up his little bundle. Then he tramps, for, after a heavy spree, he does not care for going back to work in the billet from which he lapsed. He trudges to the next "seat of work," and takes on there, in all probability to pursue the same routine, and as likely as not in six weeks' time he is back again at the previous job, at which, if in by-past time he has proved himself a fair workman, he is taken on without the slightest demur. He was free to go and is free to come. He represents simply so many shovelfuls of earth to be moved, and if there is need for the earth to be moved, there is need for him.

As a rule in a navvy settlement there are always one or two men at least on the great reckless sprees. These constitute the nucleus of less lasting orgies, the partakers in which "take a day," Sunday being preferred as not entailing loss of wages, and return to work after the short debauch. It is the day on which fights generally occur. I do not mean indiscriminate scimmages of a Donnybrook character—the navvy is not a riotous animal in his cups, and when he fights he likes to go about it systematically, with his man in front of him. Occasionally there has been a quarrel between the two pugilists, but for the most part the fight takes its rise from an abstract difference of opinion as to who is the better man. Seconds are appointed, and act in the most orthodox fashion, and the fight is à outrance; that is, till one man can no longer come to

time. The amount of punishment which navvies will take, without being killed, is almost incredible. High science is not the leading feature of those encounters, but the hitting is tremendously hard, although always fair as the rules of the ring go.

Now-a-days the navy has the spending of his own money where he likes, and is no longer a victim to "truck" and the "tommy shop." The tommy shop system was a synonym for highway robbery. Ale, spirits, bread, meat, bacon, tobacco, shovels, jackets, gay crimson and purple waistcoats, boots, hats, and night-caps were to be had at the tommy shop, whose keeper, though apparently an independent tradesman, was, in fact, a mere nominee and dependent of the contractor. Credit was liberal, on a basis of still more liberal fines. The workman drew from the office a ticket, which the shop recognised as representing so much money. When the settlement, which was then monthly, came, the navy had a very meagre balance to draw in hard cash, and this, in default of any other outlet on the ground, was also spent in the tommy shop, for the most part in drink. In fact, an argument by which the contractors met the desire of engineers that the workman should be paid weekly or fortnightly was, that as they never resumed work until they had drunk out the balance of their earnings, it saved time, and expedited the progress of the works to render those seasons of interruption as few as possible. Things are not so bad now. The keepers of stores in navy settlements are probably still the nominees of the contractors, but the dealings of these navy customers with them are all now in ready money.

It is rather a puzzle to tell what becomes of navvies when they grow old. They are not, I should say, a short-lived race. I have seen men doing hard, continuous navy-work up to forty-five; and when that becomes too heavy for them, they drop down into the ranks of the labourers, where a man may be good for his honest day's work till over fifty. But what happens to him then? Probably he falls back on the parish of his birth, having never in the course of his rambling life acquired a settlement elsewhere. It may safely be said that few retire on their savings. But in the early days of the railways there were navvies who gradually clomb the tree to wealth and squiredom. Of the five hundred millions expended on the railways of the United Kingdom since 1830, it is certain

that more than half must have passed through the hands of contractors for construction. If we allow that a profit of some thirty millions must have been cleared by a body of men, who have come into recognised existence within less time than half a century, we shall probably be within the mark. If to the actual profits we add the power and influence accruing to those who had the almost uncontrolled expenditure—so far as the pay-table and the bill-book goes—of three hundred millions sterling, it cannot be surprising that lordly estates should have been purchased, and noble palaces erected by men who had known what it was to have to work very hard to make both ends meet. An ex-coal-hewer is a member of the present House of Commons, and an ex-navvy has sat upon the same benches.

THE DAY THAT IS DEAD.

MY day, my golden day that is dead,
How the birds in its dawning sung;
What a sunny light from its sky was shed,
When it and my life were young;
The lilies have never breathed half so sweet,
Nor the roses glowed half so red,
Since they fringed the path for our happy feet,
In the day, the day that is dead!

There was never a jar in the music then,
And never a thorn in the flowers;
And falsehood and coldness were rare mid men,
Or fleeted like April showers;
The past was as calm as the present was bright,
O'er the future hung no dread;
No mist crept over the full free light
Of the day, the day that is dead!

And oh, in the cold reluctant ray
Of the pale November weather,
As I painfully toil on the arid way
We trace no more together;
How the sad heart yearns for what ne'er returns
As the lonely tears are shed,
Where under the clustering immortelles,
Sleeps the golden day that is dead!

TOO CAREFUL BY HALF.

WE were a party of four—four working men—two of us engaged in the works of Culvert Brothers, engine-makers, of Grubtown, and the other two employed in the factory of Messrs. Staples and Company, of the same place. We had all four managed, with some difficulty, to get our yearly holiday, of a fortnight, at the same time, and had arranged to make a walking expedition through the Lake Country, by way both of getting a present enjoyment, and also of laying up a pleasant memory to look back to in after years. We meant, besides going through the Lake Country,

to get a sniff of the sea, by visiting the little coast-town of Allonby. Before saying anything about our excursion, however, it is only right and proper that I should here set down our names. Our party, then, consisted of Matthew Moonside and John Barnacle—they were the two in the employ of Culvert Brothers—George Entwistle and myself, Gideon Crook, at your service.

And now it is necessary that I should say something at starting about the first-mentioned member of our little party, Matthew Moonside, namely. Well, he was just simply the most remarkable man, of his position, in all Grubtown, a large place, with plenty of clever fellows living in it. He was a mechanical genius, and had given so many proofs of his ability in that line, that he had got quite a reputation all about the town, and further off, too; while with his employers he stood as high as might be expected of a man who, by the improvements which he had introduced into the working of their machinery, had saved them first and last a powerful deal of money. Indeed, he was always inventing, always making contrivances which saved time and labour, striking out something new and original perpetually.

And yet with all this, and although his inventions were invariably of a most practical and rational sort, he was himself in his manner of life the very most unpractical, absent-minded, eccentric fellow that you would meet with anywhere. He really seemed to live in the clouds—we who were his intimates used to corrupt his name into "Mooney"—and half his time did not appear in the least to know what he was doing, which led to his getting into the queerest scrapes and difficulties imaginable. With all this, he was the most affectionate and winning fellow. I wish I knew how to draw, that I might do a likeness of his handsome face, with that far-off look about the eyes, which some of those who knew him best used often to comment upon.

Now it is certain that this absent-mindedness and wool-gathering habit of Mooney's would have mattered much more, and done him much greater injury, if it had not happened that he was always tended and looked after by the most loving and affectionate wife that ever any man had. I don't suppose that Moonside quite knew what that woman was to him, though I will do him the justice to say that he was very fond and proud of her. Still I don't think—because of that very absent-mindedness of his—that he was fully aware how much

better his house was looked after, and his children cared for, than were the houses and children of most of his friends and associates. The fact is, that his wife, besides being naturally a good manager and a sensible woman, thoroughly understood and appreciated her husband, believing in him in spite of his queer ways, and loving him with all her heart. I shall never forget, on the morning of our starting on our excursion, the state that this same Janet Moonside was in about parting from Matthew. She entreated all of us to be very careful of "her Matthew," though for this there was little necessity, George Entwistle and myself—not to mention Moonside's more intimate friend and companion John Barnacle—all setting a high value on Moonside, as, indeed, everybody did who knew him at all well. It was quite early morning still when we got under way, all waving our hats and calling out "good-bye" to our friend's wife, she giving directions to Mooney up to the very last, and loading him with provisions enough for a journey across the Desert. I noticed, too, that after we had all left, she called back John Barnacle, and seemed to be impressing on him something very particular indeed.

The members of our little party all got on very comfortably and well together during the early part of our excursion, and all seemed for a time to promise most favourably. It was not till we had been travelling together some little time that any interruption to the cordiality which existed between us appeared to threaten, and when it did so the interruption seemed likely to come from the quarter from which, of all others, it might have been the least anticipated. There appeared, in short, a likelihood of something almost approaching to discord, arising between Matthew Moonside and his friend John Barnacle.

It was one of the especial characteristics of our friend Mooney, and it was no doubt one which was intimately connected with his inventiveness and thoughtfulness, that he would at times take a fancy for being alone, and getting away for awhile from all his companions, be they who they might. On general occasions, Mooney was sociable enough, and as fond of smoking his pipe, and having a chat with his friends, as anybody, but at other times he seemed to feel a positive necessity of being alone. I had never any doubt that this was not because of any unsocial thing in his nature, but because of his wanting to think quietly over those inventions and mechanical con-

trivances of which his head was always full. Indeed, all his companions were ready to fall into this mood of his in a general way; but on this occasion there was an exception, and it was furnished by no other than the above-mentioned John Barnacle. There never was anything like the way in which during this journey of ours he stuck to our friend Moonside. He never left him, and if by chance Mooney did succeed for a short time in getting away from his companionship—for it very soon became evident, both to Entwistle and myself, that Mooney did sometimes make strenuous efforts to get away from his friend—Barnacle would complain in the most serious manner of Moonside's unsociableness, and hold himself up as a martyr because of it. It was not long, however, in becoming evident who was the real martyr in their case. They used both—Matthew Moonside on the one part, and John Barnacle on the other—to come to me with their complaints.

"It is a most extraordinary thing," says Moonside, on the occasion of his first confidence to me on this subject, made while we were walking up and down the little lawn in front of our quarters at Allonby, "but I cannot, for the life of me, get away from our friend Barnacle for so much as half an hour at a time. No doubt he's a very good fellow, and he and I are close friends, and have been so for years; but really one can have too much of a good thing. He never leaves me alone, and I want to be alone sometimes in order to think out several important matters connected with that patent which I want to take out, and all the details of which I had intended to get thoroughly hold of in the course of this holiday of ours. The way in which he sticks to me amounts to a positive annoyance."

"I'm quite sure," says I, "that he has no intention of annoying you."

"I dare say not," replies Moonside, "but he does, nevertheless. It actually seems, only of course I know that cannot be, as if he was watching me. Why I can see him at the window now; he is pretending to examine the prospect, but I know perfectly well that I am the real object of his scrutiny. I'll try and give him the slip though," continued Mooney; "I'll go through the house and out at the back door, and so get to the beach by a round-about way, but you'll see he'll be after me long before I can get there."

He had hardly disappeared through the

house when down comes Barnacle from his post of observation.

"What's become of Moonside?" cries he, directly he gets within my hearing.

"How should I know?" I replied, willing to assist our scientific friend's escape. "He's about somewhere, I suppose."

"What a fellow he is," says Barnacle, with an air of intense vexation. "He's always getting away like this just when one wants him. Most annoying, really."

"He'll be here again presently," I said. "What do you want with him?"

"It's something very particular I want to talk to him about."

"Well, but won't it keep?"

"No, it won't keep." And off he bolted without waiting for another word on my part; and soon after, looking down towards the beach, I saw that Barnacle had succeeded in carrying his point. He had got hold of his prey, and was sticking to him as close as ever.

One day Mooney came to me almost desperate.

"I really don't think I can stand this any longer," he groaned. "You've no conception what Barnacle is. I had no conception of it myself till now. Up to the time of our starting on this expedition he had never gone on in this way. I used to see a good deal of him, of course, both when we were at the factory and at other times, but nothing like this. You saw yourself how he pursued me the other day when I got away to the beach by the back way. Well, that's only a specimen. The beach is an open sort of place, and there's not much chance of keeping out of sight, though I have tried among the rocks round the north point often enough, but the other day I did get away and made for a little wood up the country which I had observed, and where I thought I might hide to some purpose, and get an opportunity of developing some plans for a wool-carding machine, which I had been thinking over lately. Not a bit of it. I had been in my hiding-place about half an hour; I had got all my papers scattered round me, and with my writing-case and instruments was fairly at work, when I heard, suddenly, a rustling among the leaves, and, looking round, there was Barnacle's grinning face—for the provoking part of it is that he's always in a good humour—hemmed in by a framework of boughs, and wearing an expression of the most perfect self-complacency and triumph. There was an end of my calculations. All my ideas were

put to flight by that invariable formula of his, 'What a fellow you are! I've been looking for you everywhere.'

I could not help laughing, but poor Mooney took it in a very different way.

"It's no laughing matter," he said. "I have a number of letters of importance to write, besides all sorts of calculations which it is necessary for me to make, and all these things require that I should be alone."

"Why don't you lock yourself up in your bedroom?" I asked, thinking I had hit upon a solution of my friend's difficulties.

"Bedroom!" he echoed. "That's the most hopeless place of all. I've tried it, and before I've been there five minutes, he is outside the door with the usual exclamation, 'What a fellow you are!' and then he goes on telling me what a fine day it is, and how my holiday will do me no good, if I don't keep out of doors; and even if I get him to promise me half an hour's peace, I feel entirely unable to settle to my work, because I know he won't keep his promise—and he doesn't."

"Why, even a bathing-machine," continued my unfortunate friend, after a moment's pause, "is not a safe retreat, though you would naturally suppose it would be. He either takes another, as soon as he sees me go into one, or else he sits upon the steps of mine, and at brief intervals rattles at the door, and roars out, 'Don't you stop in the water too long, or you'll get a chill;' or reminds me that the coast shelves down very suddenly here, and that I can't swim."

"That bathing-machine failure was a great disappointment to me," Mooney went on, "for I'd great hopes of it at first, and one day, after telling the proprietor not to hurry me, and promising to pay him double time for the machine, I shut myself up in one, intending only to remain in the water about a minute, come out again, get my clothes on, and set myself quietly to work. Would you believe it, that fellow had been on the watch as usual, had observed how short a time I stayed in the water, and when he considered I had been long enough to have finished dressing, began to batter at the door with all his might. At first, as the sea was making a good deal of noise, I thought I might pretend not to hear him; but that wouldn't do at all. 'I say,' he bellows, 'what a long time you are. You're not taken ill, are you?' 'No,' I roared, 'nothing of the sort.' For awhile, I thought I'd got rid of him after that, but

in a minute or two he was at the door again. 'I know what it is,' he says; 'you've got your socks wet, and can't pull them on. It's happened to me often. I'll tell you what you do,' he screeches, for the noise made by the waves made anything less inaudible. 'Don't attempt to get them on, but slip on your boots without them. They'll soon get dry in the sun.'

"The bathing-machine," continued Mooney, "was no good at all, nor anything else. Why, one day I actually got into a cave, which I had observed from the sea, and the entrance to which was under water at high tide, and ensconcing myself, with my books and papers, on a ledge of rock, which was high and dry, thought that I was safe, at any rate, for six hours. Absurd! I had not been there half an hour, when a boat appeared at the mouth of the cavern, with Barnacle, in a high state of excitement, sitting at the stern. 'All right,' he cried; 'you're saved! jump in. Luckily enough, I was on the cliff, opposite there, amusing myself with my telescope, and I saw you go into the cave, just before the tide turned. I've made all the haste I could, and, thank goodness, have arrived in time to save you.' It was in vain that I explained that I was quite safe on my perch, and rather liked the idea of stopping there. He would hear of nothing of the sort, and I was obliged to get into the boat and abandon my retreat, as Barnacle would only allow me to stay on condition that he and the boat and the boatman should remain too."

"I think, however, I've hit upon a plan," Mooney went on, after a short pause, "which will give me a few hours to myself, and that will be enough for my present purpose, I shall want your help and Entwistle's though, in carrying it out. I have hired a dog-cart, and am going to drive out to-morrow morning to a village about nine miles off, where I intend to spend the day, not coming back till quite late in the evening. The only difficulty is the getting off; I have arranged to make an early start, but I don't feel secure of Barnacle's not being on the watch, and I want you to keep him engaged somehow or other, till I am fairly off. I shall direct my driver to have everything ready, and to put the horse into the vehicle in the coach-house, out of sight. We can get into the dog-cart in the coach-house, have the doors opened only at the last moment, and then make a bolt of it."

I promised Mooney that I would afford

him all the help I could, though I own that I felt considerable misgivings as to my chances of being of any use.

Well, next morning, Entwistle and I, having first seen Moonside safely secreted in the coach-house, got hold of Barnacle, who, early as it was, was up and stirring, and drawing him to the front door of the house—he wouldn't come any further—made a proposal to him that we should all three go out fishing in the bay. I knew that Barnacle was fond of sea-fishing, and thought that, by this means, we should have at least some chance of tempting him out of the house.

"And Moonside?" he asked, at once.

"Well, you know, he's but a bad sailor," I replied, "and wouldn't enjoy it. We could leave him here to his own devices."

"Leave him to his own devices!" replied Barnacle, in a voice of dismay. "Oh dear no! that would never do—never do at all!"

"Never do?" I repeated, "and why not? Tell me," I continued, determined to make an attempt to emancipate my unhappy friend, "don't you think that a man—and especially a man like Moonside, whose mind is always full of all sorts of big schemes—sometimes likes to be alone? Don't you think you might leave him to himself occasionally for a little while?"

"Leave him to himself!" echoed Barnacle, looking at me with an air of great consternation. "Leave him to himself!—but what's that?" he cried, in the same breath; and, turning about, he rushed through the house into the yard at the back, from which region the most infernal noise and clatter conceivable was at this moment proceeding.

I cast one despairing look at Entwistle, and then we both ran off in the direction from which the sounds came. Their origin was soon explained. That elaborate precaution of poor Mooney's, of having the horse put into the dog-cart in the coach-house, had entirely defeated itself. The place was of small dimensions, and encumbered with all sorts of objects, which had been stowed away there to be out of the way, so that only a very narrow space was left, through which the vehicle containing our friend and the driver had to be steered, in order to reach the yard in which the building was situated. The horse, which was a young one, had jumped aside at starting, and having succeeded in jamming the conveyance to which it was attached between a plough, which stood on one side of

the coach-house, and a cart on the other, straightway proceeded to indulge in a series of rearings and flounderings, which had produced those sounds of stamping and clattering which had caught the attention of the vigilant Barnacle.

The animal was soon reduced to order, and the dog-cart speedily extricated and brought out into the yard; but, alas! for poor Mooney's deeply-laid scheme! Barnacle was up in the back seat of the vehicle almost before it was fairly out of the coach-house. Poor Mooney cast one despairing glance at us as he listened to his friend's expostulations.

"What had he been about to do? Where was he going, without telling anybody? It should not be, however. That horse was obviously dangerous. He (Barnacle) knew something of the management of horses, and out of that yard they should not stir unless he went with them, mounted there on the back seat, ready to jump down on any emergency, and run to the animal's head."

Of course, he carried his point, and remained on his perch. As the dog-cart drove off, he turned round and winked at us who stayed behind, with an air of triumph, which was exasperating in the extreme.

When they came back, late in the evening, Barnacle pronounced that they had had a most delightful excursion, but poor Mooney had nothing to say on the subject. One would have thought that this was to be the climax of the persecution which our friend was destined to endure from his companion's affectionate adherence, but it was not, worse was to come.

After we had stayed a little while at Allonby, we set off on our return-journey, making our way towards home through a different portion of the Lake Country from that by which we had travelled when outward bound.

One reason of our taking the direction which we chose was, that we might pay a visit at the house of a certain Mr. and Mrs. Thorneycroft, who had an estate in a beautiful part of the country, not far from Ulswater. Mr. Thorneycroft was a partner in the firm of Culvert Brothers, though his name did not appear in the business, and he and his wife, who had always had a high opinion of Moonside's abilities, had insisted, when they heard of the excursion which he was going to make in the Lake District, that he and his friends should spend a night or two at their house. Mrs.

Thornycroft had, moreover—as I heard afterwards—intimated to our ingenious friend, that there was a point connected with certain improvements in the house about which she wished to consult him, and as to which he was particularly well qualified to give an opinion. She mentioned, at the same time, that what she had in contemplation was to be kept a secret, as it was intended as a surprise for Mr. Thornycroft.

We found ourselves quite in clover at Lakeside, which was the name of Mr. Thornycroft's place. Everything was good and well-arranged about the place, our quarters were delightful, and the eating and drinking unexceptionable; so that we all enjoyed ourselves immensely—all, that is, except friend Barnacle, who now found it much more difficult than he had previously done to keep his companion Moon-side in view. The fact is, that it was very evident that the position occupied by our ingenious friend in the estimation of our entertainers was very different from that accorded to the rest of us. Mr. and Mrs. Thornycroft were perfectly kind and hospitable to every one of us, and in all things looked after our comforts, and even our enjoyments. Still it was Moon-side whom they evidently wanted, and it was for his sake that all the other members of the party were made welcome. To Entwistle and myself this seemed only natural, and we fell into the arrangement quite easily; but Barnacle did not a bit relish so great a difference being made between him and his mate, and, above all, did not like the occasional separation which took place between them, when Mr. Thornycroft would carry Moon-side off to look at his outbuildings, and give an opinion as to how they might be more conveniently arranged; or when Mrs. Thornycroft would lay claim to a share of the engineer's attention for her own schemes, and especially for that one as to which she had originally applied to him for advice.

It was in connexion with this last, that circumstances occurred which at last brought matters to a crisis, and led to a regular quarrel between the two friends.

Mr. Thornycroft had kept our man of genius to himself during the whole morning of the second day of our stay at Lakeside, consulting him about the construction of a sort of rude lift, for conveying hay and corn up into a kind of granary, which was above the stables, where all such stores were kept. He kept him, in fact, so long,

that Mrs. Thornycroft, who had her own scheme, which she was bent on carrying into execution, at last became impatient, and, aided and abetted by her sister, fairly carried Moon-side off from the stable-yard, where he had been victimised by Mr. Thornycroft, and insisted on his accompanying her sister and herself into the house forthwith.

"And mind," the lady said, "nobody else is to come at all, because we are going to consult about something very mysterious."

Mr. Thornycroft shrugged his shoulders and smiled, and the lady, who was pretty, and completely spoiled by her husband, was allowed to have her way.

Mrs. Thornycroft's project was on a very grand scale, and took quite a long time to explain.

"You see this dining-table, Mr. Moon-side?" she said. They were standing before one of circular shape, the centre of which remained always the same; the table, when it had to be enlarged, having additional pieces—each a segment of a circle—added all round its outer circumference. The room in which the table stood was a very handsome one, of a square shape, and communicating with a splendid conservatory, full of the rarest and most beautiful plants.

"You see this dining-table," repeated Mrs. Thornycroft. "It is nothing as it is but an ordinary round expanding table; but I want to make it something more. I want to have a fountain, a delicious trickling fountain, coming out of the middle of it, surrounded by an ornamental basin, with gold and silver fish swimming about in it."

Moon-side did not make any answer just at first; but first taking off his coat, which we working men are apt to do when we mean business of any kind, he got under the table, and examined it underneath, and then tapped on the floor, and asked—still under the table—whether there was a high service of water in the house. On being answered in the affirmative, he—still from under the table—pronounced that the scheme of the table-fountain was entirely feasible, and only a question of expense.

"Oh you charming man," cried both the ladies at once; "come out at once from under the table, and tell us all the particulars of how it's to be done, and whether it can be finished in time for a dinner-party which we have arranged for the second of next month."

Mooney completed his survey of the table, and coming out from underneath it, with the intention of answering this question, saw—saw standing behind the two ladies, with a broad grin on his countenance—his friend and tormentor, John Barnacle. He had come in through the French window, unperceived by the ladies, who had their backs turned in that direction, and of course unseen by his friend, who was under the table. He had heard every word that had been spoken.

"So that's your little game, is it?" he says, smiling affably; "you come away for an outing with your friends, and then you desert them, and come and make yourself agreeable to the ladies—my service to you both—and set to work arranging fountains on dining-tables, with fish swimming about in basins, and what not, for all the world like an Arabian Night's Entertainment. I've been looking after you all the morning, and at last I saw you going in at the window, and so I thought I'd come after you, and see what you were up to."

Now this was a very good fellow, who wouldn't have said anything to hurt any one on any account if he had known. Only he had no power of observing what was, and what was not, agreeable to those he was with—not a scrap of what is called, I believe, among superior people, by the name of tact. He was not long in being made aware that he had put his foot in it.

The lady of the house gave him a glance which was enough to freeze the marrow in his bones, and then turned round upon poor Mooney, who had been so "charming" a moment before.

"Really, Mr. Moonside," she said, "this is too bad. You should keep your friends under better control. The whole essence of this scheme of mine was that it should be kept entirely secret. Now that this person knows about it, it might as well have been told to the town crier, and I shall certainly have nothing more to do with it," and with that, and followed closely by her sister, she swept out of the room.

"Well," said the unfortunate Barnacle, looking after them in the extremest bewilderment and dismay, "if that doesn't beat everything."

"Beat everything," cried Moonside, angrily, for his naturally equable temper had at last fairly given way, "I think your confounded intrusiveness and impertinence beat everything. I have borne all this too long. I told you this very morning that you must look after yourself to-day, and not

calculate on my being with you. I told you that this lady wanted to speak with me about some little fancy of her own, which she did not want talked about, and then you come forcing yourself where you're not wanted, and intruding as you've been doing continually ever since we started on this expedition. Ever since we came away from Grubtown," continued Moonside, determined to have it out at last, "you've been hunting and pursuing me about, tormenting me, and making a fool of me all the time. I have never had a moment to myself, for your following me about and watching me, and now at last you've made me offend people who have been hospitable and kind to us, and made us welcome in every way in their power. What is the meaning of it? Are you mad, or do you want to make me so? Come, there must be an end of all this. I ask you, once more, what does it all mean?"

"Do you want to know what it means?" asked Barnacle, speaking slowly, and not like himself.

"Yes, I do?"

"Then I'll tell you what it means, Matthew Moonside. Just before we started on this excursion of ours, your wife—who's just the loveliest wife, and the best that ever man had—she called me aside, and she said, 'John Barnacle,' she said, 'this is the first time that my Matthew and me has been parted since we've been married. You know Matthew as well as I do almost,' she said, 'you know what he is, how absent in his mind, how he's always thinking and speculating, and not minding what he's about along of his being altogether taken up with his plans, and his inventions, and his ideas, of which his brains are so full, that there's hardly room for them all.'"

Barnacle went on speaking this way quite unlike his usual self, and Moonside stood looking at him in a sort of fixed manner, which was likewise different from his ordinary absent ways.

"Now," she goes on, "so long as Matthew is along of me, and I'm able to look after him, and take care of him, it's all very well; but now, when he's going away from me, I do freely own that I'm uneasy and fearful lest, in one of his absent fits, he should get into some trouble, or fall into some kind of danger; and what I want you to do, John," she says, "you being a wide-awake, go-ahead sort of chap, is to promise me that, whatsoever happens, and wheresoever you may go, you'll keep your eye upon my

Matthew, and never let him out of your sight.' That's what she made me promise, and that's what I did promise, and that's what has led to all that you complain of."

There was a short pause, during which Moonside still continued to stare at his friend.

"And do you mean to say that Janet gave you such a commission as that?" he said at last.

"Yes; I do."

Again there was a pause, Moonside's consternation seeming to increase with every word which Barnacle uttered.

"Why, I can hardly believe it," said Moonside, passing his hand over his forehead. "It's making me out a contemptible creature, incapable of managing his own affairs, or arranging properly the conduct of his life—a child, an idiot. Oh! Janet, Janet, how could you?"

Barnacle did not answer just at first, and Moonside began to pace up and down the room in extreme disturbance of mind, walking first in one direction and then in another, as if seeking some outlet. At last, with an exclamation of positive pain, he flung himself into a chair, and remained buried in thought, evidently of a most distressing kind. Barnacle waited a little while, looking uneasily from time to time at his friend.

"You are angry and put out," Barnacle said at last, "and I can partly understand your being so at first——"

"At first," interrupted Moonside.

"Yes, at first," continued Barnacle; "but not after a moment's thought. If you will try to calm yourself—as I know you will, because it is not your nature to be intemperate about anything—I firmly believe that you will be able to see that you have no real cause to be angry."

"No cause?" echoed the other.

"No cause whatever, but entirely the reverse. Why, what," continued Barnacle, "does this that your wife has done prove? What sort of feeling does it show towards you—a kind feeling or an unkind? Just let me ask you that. You are a just man, Moonside. Ask that question yourself, of yourself."

Moonside made no reply for a time. He was still not himself in any sense of the word.

"Leave me a little," he said at last, speaking in a milder tone. "I want to be alone awhile, and think this matter over. You are not afraid to lose sight of

me for a little?" he added, with a half-smile.

"Yes, I am," added the other, doggedly. "But I will leave you, nevertheless, if you will promise to ask yourself that question."

"I promise."

Barnacle left the room, and Moonside began once more to walk backwards and forwards, absorbed in deep thought. The tone of his mind was by no means as yet restored. He changed his course as he moved about the room, directing his steps now this way, now that, and turning over the same things in his mind continually. "What a miserable contemptible creature it makes me out," he said to himself. "To have it plainly intimated to me that I am incapable of taking care of myself, or directing my own way through life; to be treated like a child, or an imbecile, who does not know what he is doing, or where he is going; to be——" Crash! smash! a sudden blow, and a shower of myriads of fragments of glass all around, a rush of warm blood, a sharp pain, torn garments, a cut hand. What was this? What had happened?

Simply he had walked straight through an entirely invisible glass door which divided the room in which he had been pacing up and down from the conservatory without. It was one of those exceedingly dangerous doors which consist of a single sheet of plate-glass, extending from top to bottom, and which, when closed, being entirely transparent and impalpable, fail to proclaim themselves as doors at all. In his agitated walk poor Moonside, seeing nothing but what appeared to be an opening into the conservatory, had made straight for it, and, entirely unconscious of that insidious sheet of glass, had crashed through it with his knee, shivering the whole fabric to atoms, and cutting his leg and one of his hands badly in the act.

Of course the tremendous noise made by this mighty catastrophe brought a number of persons who were within hearing to the spot, among them Barnacle, Entwistle, and myself. We found our poor Mooney sunk down upon a chair, to which, unable to stand from the hurt done to his knee, he had managed to stagger, and endeavouring, with his handkerchief, to stanch the blood which was flowing profusely from his leg and one of his hands. The damage done was probably not serious, but the poor fellow was very faint, and hardly able to speak. He pointed to the broken glass, and to his maimed limb, by way of ex-

plaining what had happened, which was, however, obvious enough without any explanation, and then motioned to Barnacle to stoop over so that he might whisper something in his ear.

He spoke in a very low tone, and in indistinct accents, but I was standing near, and I managed to hear what he said.

"She was right," he whispered; "Janet was right, John Barnacle, as she always is."

"And you're not angry with me any more? You see, you do want a little looking after."

"I'm afraid I do," said Moonside, taking the hand which his friend held out to him; "I'm very much afraid I do."

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER L. MISS DARLINGTON.

"AND you're Duke! To think of that! The boy that saw me dance at the fair. What an age ago it seems! The boy that found me in the snow and saved my life! For you did that; I'm sure about it now, and grateful enough for it, though I wasn't then perhaps. But you're no longer a boy; quite a man grown, I declare, with hair upon your face. Can you blush still as you used to? I see you can. My old friend Duke! Who would have thought of our meeting again, here, at Sir George's? I'd forgotten your name was Nightingale. I never thought of you but as Duke, simply Duke—my Duke!"

"You *have* thought of me then, Rosetta?" I could not call her by her new name of Miss Darlington. Still less could I address her as Lady Overbury.

"Thought of you? Of course I have; often and often."

"And kindly I am sure, Rosetta."

"You may be sure, my dear," she said, simply. "How could I think of you but kindly? You loved me, didn't you? for half an hour; or was it longer? And for five minutes or so I fancied—I almost fancied—I really loved you again. You seemed so brave, and true, and fond, and foolish, it did me good to think of you. You lost your heart—in the snow, wasn't it? But you found it again, before the snow had melted. Hearts are soon lost and soon found again. Or, when we lose one, another quickly grows in its place. Still it was something to be loved as you loved me, my Duke, although it didn't, couldn't last. After all, perhaps, the things that don't last are the pleasantest. I'm

very glad to see you again, old friend. For we're friends still; we must be friends, anyhow. Such a world of things has happened since I've seen you! I can't begin to speak of them now or I shall never stop. But I'm no longer Rosetta. Forget the tight-jeff—I do, at least I try to; though sometimes if the band struck up the right tune I really think I should begin looking for my balancing-pole, and jiggling about again just in the old way. But I'm now Miss Rose Darlington of the Theatre Royal Haymarket. And, my dear, I'm engaged for the winter season at Covent Garden. Think of that! And Sir George Nightingale—what relation is he of yours? Uncle? Well, your cousin let us say—the great and grand Sir George, asked permission to paint my portrait. Only fancy his asking my permission! My dear, I was ready to sink into the ground with shame and confusion. His politeness was quite killing. It was so keen, and cold, and polished it seemed to run through me like a small sword. Of course, I consented. What could I do but consent? And then he smiled upon me. And he looks wonderfully handsome when he smiles. You're my old friend, my Duke, and I like your face, and you've grown what's called a nice young man; but, my dear, you're a fool to your cousin so far as good looks are concerned. And so I'm sitting for my picture to Sir George. And what do you think of it? He's flattered me, hasn't he? They say he always flatters."

I declared that the painter had not flattered her in the least; that I thought the picture wonderfully like. This was in truth my opinion, and I did not hesitate to express it, although I saw that Mole was standing by, arching his brows with an odd look of mocking incredulity and amazement.

"You really think so? You know I can't tell, myself, how I look. Of course, that's only a fancy dress. I've never been 'on' quite like that. But surely I'm not so tall as he's made me."

I said that posed as she was in the picture, at the top of a flight of steps, the effect would probably be that she would seem taller than she really was.

"He's given you about three inches extra height," said Mole, in rather a sarcastic tone. "About three inches; not more. A mere trifle. It's what we call poetic license."

"I think it's too tall," she said. "But I wouldn't for the world say so to Sir George. He must have his own way of

course; and if he likes to make an Irish giantess of me I can't help it. He's made me very good-looking, anyhow. And I know I'm that. At least I know the audience think me so, and that's all I care about. My dear, such a round of applause as they give me when I come on and make my curtsy to them! It sets me tingling all over with pleasure, and I'd do anything I could to content them."

"You're a novelty, you see," said Mole, "and the public's fond of novelty."

"Well, I'll try and keep them fond of me after I've ceased to be a novelty. Anyhow, they've been very good to me as yet, and I owe them much, very much. I've not a word to say against them."

"Wait a bit," Mole continued. He seemed in a carping humour. Was he jealous of the success of Rosetta? Or did he think it prudent to check her pride somewhat, with an eye, perhaps, to diminishing my too apparent admiration of her? "You've had it all your own way hitherto, and the town all to yourself. A summer's success at the Haymarket may not count for much when the winter comes on. Wait till Covent Garden opens. There may be a different story to tell then. You'll have to play against Mrs. Mountjoy, an old established favourite and a clever woman, who's secured all the best parts."

"Mrs. Mountjoy, indeed! I've never seen her, but I'm not a bit afraid of her. Let her keep all the best parts. I'll beat her though I only play the worst. I dare say she is clever; she ought to be, at her age, if she ever is to be. They tell me she's fifty, if she's a day, with black teeth and a long nose like a cucumber. Come, they can't say that of my nose, can they, Duke?" She faced the picture again. "Sir George hasn't flattered that, has he? If anything, he hasn't done my nose justice, I think. He's turned it up too much, perhaps. Does standing up at the top of those stairs make one's nose look as though it were turned up? But he hasn't finished it, I dare say. I came to-day to give him another sitting. But I made a mistake, it seems. I'm always making mistakes, somehow. Sir George is away, and didn't expect me until to-morrow. Never mind; no harm's done. I've met you, Duke; and you'll come and see me act, won't you, and judge for yourself? You won't mind what our friend here says. These old actors like to clip the wings and cut the combs of us young ones. It does us so much good, they think. Not that I bear him any grudge for it;

nor does he me, in truth. Only it's his way—it's the way with them all, and they can't help it. I'm not so much to be envied when all's told. I've had but a hard time of it altogether. You know something of that, don't you, Duke? And now that a gleam of sunshine falls upon me mayn't I enjoy it, and make the most of it while I can, and while it lasts? It won't be for so very long, likely enough. But you won't stand between me and the light so as to leave me in shade and cold, will you, Duke? I'm sure you won't. And when you see I want a hand you'll give me one; and you'll join in the applause when I step on the stage. Nothing braces one up and cheers one's heart like a good reception. It's far better than a glass of champagne. And this old croaker here will do the same, though he pretends he won't. But he will, I'm sure of it, if only for old acquaintance sake. He calls himself Mole, now, it seems; but he's been known by other names. That's our way, you know. And he's left the profession, he tells me; but his heart's in it still, I can see that. It's so with us all. Once look on the footlights from the stage and they're always flaming before your eyes for ever after. You can't get quit of them again, though you try never so. Why, when I was dancing at that fair where you first met me, Duke, this Mole was clown to the rope, and called himself——"

"Never mind what I called myself," Mole interrupted.

"Well, I won't mind. And to tell you the truth, I don't quite remember. It was Signor Something, however."

"That's all done with now," said Mole, "There's no need to recal it."

"Well, I am not ashamed of it; and you've no occasion to be. You were a very good clown as clowns go." Mole did not seem to be much conciliated by this tribute to his merits. "You were new to the business; anybody could see that. But you did well enough. You could do better in your own line of course. That was only to be expected. Still you pleased the house. What more could you want? Do you remember a Miss Delafosse, who was at Jecker's in those days?"

"I remember her," said Mole. "A little white-faced slip of a girl, with yellow hair."

"Yes. There wasn't much of her, but there was thought to be promise about her. You thought so. And you gave her hints, you know, about stage business, and how to manage her voice, and

how to come on and get off, and that kind of thing, for she was little better than a novice. Well, I listened, and laid to heart what you said. I found it true and useful afterwards. Nobody minded me. I was only Diavolo's pupil, bound to the rope for life as all thought. But I didn't intend that, even then. I knew I could do better—that there was cleverness in me if I could only turn it to account. By-and-bye the chance came to me, and I didn't forget what I'd heard you say to Delafosse. I don't forget now. So you see if I'm something of an actress now, and people say I am, you've helped to make me one. And I'm grateful, Mole, don't say I'm not. I'm grateful to all who helped me to rise. It wasn't done so mighty easily. No one knows that better than I do. But I won't speak of it now, it's too long a story. And I must be going. I've to meet old Mrs. Bembridge, and we've a lot of shopping to do. Only never think I'm ashamed of the rope and old friends and old times. I don't care who knows that I was once Mademoiselle Rosetta of the Cirque Imperial of St. Petersburg. Wasn't that what they called me? It was all nonsense, of course. I was never at St. Petersburg. I don't know where it is. But it was none of my doing. Diavolo called his pupils just what he chose. Diavolo! He was a wretch if ever man was. I shiver at his name, and hate him still, though he's been dead and gone this many a day. Folks may sneer at me if they will. But they can't dance on the rope as I did, and they can't play Rosalind as I do. They can't draw a full house in the dog-days as I've done. You must come and see me act, Duke; mind you do; and we must meet again and again. Where will a letter find you? Here? You must give me your address. Ask for me at the stage-door. I am so pleased to see you again, my dear boy, you can't think! I mustn't kiss you now. You're such a man—but I did kiss you once, or was it twice? You remember? And I must speak of it while I think of it. My brain's in such a whirl with talking and laughing, though I've been near to crying, too, twenty times, that if I once forget to say it I shall never remember it again. But I was rude that night, wasn't I? I behaved badly—I'm always behaving badly—to your mother, I mean. She was your mother? Yes, of course, I remember; and she thought worse of me than I really deserved; and she scorned me, and hated me because she believed I'd come to the farm to steal her boy's heart away from

her. It wasn't so, really; though perhaps it did look something like it. And I—I was cold, and worn, and weary, and more sick at heart than you'll ever know—I rebelled against her hard looks and stiff words. I paid back scorn for scorn. I was very insolent. The fool that I was! For she was a kind woman at heart—your own mother, Duke! And she was right. She could but step between her boy and his foolish love. And do you know as we rode bumping along in that cart over the snow—what a night! and what a journey!—she clasped her arms round me, she wrapped her own cloak about me to keep me warm. I could have cried like a child upon her bosom, if I'd dared. Great Heaven! If I'd had such a mother as that! There, I do declare, I'm really crying at last. What was I saying? Oh, this—I'm sorry, very sorry, that I was so rude, that I behaved so ill. I'd go on my knees to tell her so if she were here. She's forgotten me quite, very likely, but some day I should like her to know, and I want you now to know, Duke, how sorry I am. My temper's a good one generally, but it was in a bad way that night. You forgive me? Well then she will too. The kind soul will do all you ask her I'm sure. And now I must really go. God bless you, my Duke. You promise to come and see me act? and soon? Come to my benefit. You shall have the best seat in the house. You'll take a box? How proud we are! Nonsense. You'll go in with my order or not at all. Only mind you applaud the Cuckoo Song, and, my dear, if the house does not ring with cheers when I trip on as Little Pickle in the farce, in a scarlet jacket and white trousers, with a boy's frill round my neck, if the pit doesn't rise at me, then my name isn't what it is. It's Rosetta to you always, by-the-bye. But to the world it's the great, the famous, the fascinating Miss Darlington. God bless you! How poor old Mother Bembridge will scold me for keeping her waiting. Good-bye, Mole. Tell Sir George I'll come to-morrow, or any time he may send for me."

With a bright glance, a winning smile, a wave of her hand, and a crisp rustling of her silken skirts, Rosetta departed.

We remained silent for a minute or so. The stillness of the room seemed strange. It had been reverberating with the animated music of Rosetta's voice, with the bright tones of her saucy laughter. These had ceased and the studio had grown curiously dull and sombre, as though clouds were hiding the sun, and the daylight had diminished.

Mole drew from his fob a clumsy old pinchbeck watch. It had stopped years since, as I believe; but he always carried it, and seemed fond of producing it at intervals, as though it were a sort of symbol and evidence of his respectability. Of old he would have described it as a "property" watch. He advanced towards me, and, assuming the air of a medical practitioner, he took my wrist between his left thumb and forefinger, and affected to feel and note my pulse.

"Hum! It temperately keeps time, and makes healthful music. How fares your heart, my young friend? You love her still?"

"No, not as you mean."

"You're sure?"

"Quite sure."

"There is no danger, you think, in your seeing her again—in meeting her, often, it may be?"

"There is no danger. I will do anything I can to serve her. I cannot but admire her greatly; for, indeed, she is admirable. Is she not? Her beauty seems to me almost matchless. Her vivacity is quite irresistible. The melody of her voice stirs my heart strangely. Her laugh is the most exquisite of mirthful music. Her wonderful volubility and impulsiveness of manner completely carry me away. But—that is all."

"And enough too, I think. Take care, Master Duke, take care."

"I repeat there is no danger. I can admire without coveting. Henceforward Rosetta and I are friends simply. You heard what she said? Besides—"

"You love some one else, perhaps?"

"Perhaps."

"I can see you do. Your cheeks haven't quite lost their old trick of telling tales. Rosetta found that out. Well, I'll ask no questions. Better that you should love some one—any one else. No. I won't say any one. That would be too hard upon Miss Darlington, as she calls herself."

"Her real name being——?"

"How should I know? To me she was only Diavolo's pupil—Rosetta. Rosetta Nothing. Had she a surname? People haven't always, you know, especially when they happen to be apprenticed to the rope. But what does her real name matter? 'What's in a name,' after all? Won't Darlington do as well as another? The public seem to like the name well enough."

"But her husband's name?"

"The stage doesn't care much about husband's names. If she marries——"

"Is she not already married, then?"

"You know as much about that as I do; perhaps more. I've heard that she was married. I've heard, too, that she wasn't. Which am I to believe? I don't know; and I don't care. Is it any business of mine? or yours? I have heard the gentleman's name mentioned——"

"The nobleman's name."

"Well, the nobleman's name, if you like to have it so. Lord Overbury, to be quite plain. He was a friend of yours at one time. But for him you would hardly have known Rosetta. Is he her husband? As his friend you should know. I declare I don't. She didn't mention him, I observed. That might be like a wife, or it might not. I'd rather not express an opinion on the subject. If you really want to know—though it seems to me yielding to an idle curiosity—why not apply to Rosetta herself? She'd tell you, I suppose. Only it might be thought that you were inquiring whether she was free to marry another—yourself, for instance. And that, after what you've stated and hinted, would hardly do, would it? Or you might address yourself to Lord Overbury. I presume he'd supply you with the necessary information. Have you seen him lately, by-the-bye?"

I told him of the fight in Chingley Bottom, and of Lord Overbury's presence at that strange scene. Mole was much interested; not so much in regard to his lordship's proceedings, however, but as to the incidents of the combat.

"I should like to have seen the Baker punishing the fellow you call Gipsy Joe. I don't fight myself. I don't know how, and I don't think I should much care to, if I did. But I've no objection to other people fighting. In fact, I rather like it. In such a case I could play the part of looker on very satisfactorily to all concerned. From your description it must have been a lively and exciting affair."

I told him that it was rather horrid, too.

"Perhaps so. But then a fight is such a real thing. That's what I like about it."

I'd forgotten, at the moment, how much of his life had been passed among sham things; in such wise reality had, no doubt, become precious to him simply on its own account.

CHAPTER LI. ROSALIND.

THEN we talked of Rosetta again.

"Yes, I've seen her act," said Mole, in

reply to my inquiries. "But please don't ask me to be enthusiastic about that, or, indeed, about anything else. I'm forty" (he might as well have said fifty, I thought), "and at forty somehow, enthusiasm is apt to fail us. You see one is so lavish with it at twenty, there's little of it left for use in after years. You will find that out for yourself some day. And then I happen to know something about acting; and *that* makes a difference. But she gives the public what they like—good looks and high spirits. And she knows her words. I don't pretend to say she understands them. She's at home on the stage, and she works hard. What more would you have?"

"You saw her play *Rosalind*?"

"I saw her attempt the part of *Rosalind*."

"But she succeeded?"

"Didn't you hear her say so? But there are so many different sorts of success. At any rate there's the success that means nothing, and there's the success that means everything. But I'm not a fair judge of *Rosalinds*, perhaps. I've seen *Jordan* in the part. *There* was a *Rosalind* if you like! I knew *Jordan*. I played with her one summer in the West of England."

"You were *Orlando* to her *Rosalind*?"

"I should have been, but for an infamous conspiracy. *Orlando* was my part in those days; but it was taken from me and given to one of the very worst actors I ever saw. He was a little better than an amateur. Of course he failed ignominiously, though he had taken pains to pack the house with his friends. I was cast for *Charles the Wrestler*. It was really too bad. The audience quickly perceived as much, and rewarded me with extraordinary applause. They're fond of wrestling in the West of England. But that wasn't the reason. They saw they had an actor before them. As a matter of fact I knew little about wrestling; although I'll take upon myself to say that *Charles* was never made so much of as upon that occasion. No, *Darlington* cannot play *Rosalind*. But she goes on in the part, and the public—they're sometimes, not always, in the mood to like anything—like her acting, or what she calls acting, and just now, for lack of something better to applaud, are making rather a pet of her. It won't last, of course. Pets are never long-lived. And they're hardly used sometimes before they're done with. Not that she isn't clever. I don't say that. She *is* clever. It's wonderful to me, considering the few opportunities she's

had and the short time she's been on the stage, that she should have contrived to pick up so much. You heard her say that she *had* learnt something from me? That may be worth remembering if she should ever become really famous. I should think she had learnt something from me, indeed. There's a good many more of the profession in the same boat if the truth were told. Few, I'll venture to state, have ever been in my company that haven't learned something, nay, a good deal, from me. And that she had the luck to fall into the hands of old *Bembridge*."

"Who's old *Bembridge*?"

"Old *Mrs. Bembridge*, widow of *Harry Bembridge*, who played utility at *Drury Lane* under *Kemble*, and died of drink. A thorough actress: the best old woman on the stage, if the public only knew it; but they don't. She ought to have made her fortune long since. But it isn't those who ought to make fortunes that do make them, somehow. *Bembridge* knows every trick and turn of her profession better than any one I ever met with. She has it all at her fingers' ends. For stage business she's without a rival. Even I allow that of her. Why she was treading the boards when I was in my cradle. She was playing *Juliet* before I could walk. Now she plays the *Nurse*. She's gone through the whole round of parts. She first went on as one of *Mrs. Haller's* children. Now she's too old to play *Mrs. Haller*. Fifty years ago she was admired as *Lydia Languish*. Now she gets applause as *Mrs. Malaprop*. A wonderfully clever, sound, true old body, and an actress from top to toe. Well, she met *Darlington*, it seems, somewhere in the provinces, and took a great fancy to her; for some odd, woman's reason: she was so like some long departed daughter born to *Bembridge* years since. Or the child, she fancied, if it had lived—I won't swear that it ever existed at all—and grown up, would have been just what *Darlington* is now. So *Bembridge* declared. Absurd, of course. But you know what women are. No, you don't though. You can't. How should you? Who does? Anyhow, some strange maternal yearning and tenderness towards *Darlington* stirred in the old woman's heart, and she took the girl under her wing and made her what she is. Not a great actress. I can't allow that. There are no great actresses now. There never have been but very few. But she taught *Darlington* all she knows. Her success, such as it is, and it's easily overvalued, is entirely due to old *Bembridge*."

And Darlington's grateful; for a woman, wonderfully grateful. They're always together; they live under the same roof, and, I do really believe, are fond of each other. You see they can afford to be fond of each other. There's such a difference between their ages. Otherwise they'd be rivals, jealous of each other, suspicious of each other, struggling for parts. All that's out of the question as things are. They're like mother and daughter, or grandam and grandchild. A woman can hardly be jealous of her grandmother, can she? And it's an enormous advantage to Darlington that there's a worthy old woman like Bembridge beside her, looking after her, or seeming to look after her. It gives an air of respectability to the business. Darlington's young, you see, and pretty and lively; and the world has a way of talking disagreeably about young and pretty and lively actresses. For that matter it doesn't spare those that are not young, nor pretty, nor lively. But with old Bembridge always at hand much can't be said."

"You're censorious, Mole."

"Not I; but the world is. I'm not the world. And I'm not hinting anything to Darlington's discredit; mind that. In truth I don't believe there's a word to be said against her. But the idle, scandalous, mischievous talk that goes on! Especially when our profession—I should say the player's profession—is under discussion. And don't think I'm hard on Darlington's merits or demerits as an actress. Only I'm entitled to an opinion on that subject. I've been on the stage myself, as you know—though unluckily you've never seen me at my best, or anything like my best—few people have, perhaps. But see Darlington and judge for yourself. When? Soon, of course. She begged you to go. You can't refuse her. I knew you couldn't. Isn't she Sir George's Comic Muse? I'll get an order and we'll go together, if you like."

So I went with Mole to the pit of the Haymarket Theatre—such things as pit orders were in existence in those days—and I saw Rosetta play Rosalind.

I may not linger over or descant at length upon that representation. It was received with extraordinary demonstrations of favour by a very crowded audience. Mole was quite noisy in his acclamations. He was constantly urging me to clap my hands anew. Not only in homage to the exertions of Rosetta, but by way of gratifying all the other performers engaged in the play. "Give old Battersby a

hand," he whispered to me. (Battersby was rather an effete tragedian, pompous of gesture, and strained of attitude, much inclined to mouth his speeches.) "He can't play Jacques, but he thinks he can. He hasn't really an idea of the part, and he's not more sober than usual. Did you ever hear anything worse than his delivery of the Seven Ages? It was a favourite recitation of my own once. But he's been out of an engagement so long; give the old man a hand!" In the same way I was bidden to applaud Radstock the Banished Duke, Bamford the Touchstone, and Carberry the Orlando of the evening. The Rosalind we greeted with most boisterous cheering.

But although Mole expressed his approval thus publicly, he did not the less indulge in much private and whispered fault-finding. It seemed, indeed, that he really rated Rosetta's abilities very cheaply indeed. He pointed out that she now and then strayed from the text of the dramatist. He detected false notes in her Cuckoo Song, although they were not audible to me. "That's Jordan's business," he said of some portion of her performance. "She's learnt it all from Bembridge." Something else she did had been done before by precedent Rosalinds, Miss Booth, or Miss Tree, or Miss Kelly—I forget whom now. I thought him very hard to please. He seemed to condemn her alike for venturing to depart from conventional ways of playing her part, and for following the example of earlier actresses. He wearied me with his persistent criticism. I, at any rate, had not come to the theatre for that. I took upon myself to upbraid him for the inconsistency of his conduct. Why did he applaud and censure in the same breath?

"Because I'm an actor," he said. "We always applaud each other. It looks well—has a good effect with the public. At the same time, you know, as an actor I can't help seeing when things are not quite what they should be. And so I've spoken my mind on the subject. But only to you, my dear Duke. I addressed myself to your private ear. I wouldn't for any consideration reveal my opinions to the general public. Here's Darlington again. Let's give her a hand!"

For my part I was not a critic nor an actor, and I thought Rosetta's performance perfect, or almost perfect. She surprised and delighted me exceedingly. Her appearance was most winsome. She wore her Ganymede dress with infinite grace. I had never seen her look more beautiful.

The incline of the stage gave her increase of stature, and she trod the boards with a firm elastic step, moved to and fro with a suppleness of action and freedom of limb that were referable perhaps to long practice of her old profession. Yet was there no repellent over-confidence in her presence upon the scene. She was arch, vivacious, mirthful, yet most modestly feminine withal. In much that she did there was an elegance, a refinement even, for which I was by no means prepared. It was far more than a mere matter of "good looks and high spirits," as Mole had suggested. She was an accomplished actress; and if in her impersonation of Rosalind the more subtly poetic side of the character might be now and then but slightly manifested, no suspicion of deficient intelligence marred the performance. And especially it possessed the poetry of youth, and grace, and beauty. Mole alleged that she did not comprehend the speeches she uttered. I thought the charge unjust. It was clear to me that she entertained a vigorous, broad, and thoroughly dramatic view of the character. "All Bembridge's doings," said Mole. It might be so. Yet something of her own the actress had surely brought to the fulfilment of her task. She was not the trained parrot, the mindless machine, he would have me believe. The audience applauded her to the echo. I fully shared their enthusiasm. It was much to hear the poet's text spoken by that exquisite voice, with its rich volume of melody, and now and then its plaintive throbs and pathetic sub-currents of sound. How witching was her laugh! How touching was her tenderness! And then, was Rosalind ever better looked than by Rosetta? It was in this part, I maintained, that Sir George should have portrayed her—not as the fanciful and rather absurd Thalia of his picture. But when I saw her assume other characters, it seemed to me that he might do well to portray her in each of these, and form, indeed, a sort of Rosetta gallery of paintings.

"Well, I admit that she possesses a certain sort of talent—for farce," said Mole.

This was when she had appeared in the afterpiece, as a romp, wearing a short white muslin dress, with a blue sash, and wielding a skipping-rope. I cannot call to mind the name of the play.

"You're prejudiced against her, Mole."

"And you're prejudiced for her. Isn't

that so? We're both prejudiced. Will it do you any good to know that another has been as foolish as yourself? My boy, who knows but what we're both moved by the same sentiment, only it has affected us in different ways? Shall I make a confession? I will. I don't pretend to be really wiser, or better, or stronger than my neighbours. I loved Rosetta! 'Forty thousand brothers could not with all their quantity of love'—but I'll not quote Shakespeare. It's a bad sign. Folks will think I'm intoxicated, which is far from being the case."

I must state, however, that he had refreshed himself very liberally (with bottled stout) during the pauses in the performance, contending that playgoing was a dry employment, and needed as much moistening as play acting.

"Men differ," he contended. "Some make an idol of the object of their affections, grovel before it, and glory in the passion that degrades them. Others love and are ashamed of their folly, revenging themselves by abusing the creature they adore. Perhaps that's my case. Why did I warn you from Jecker's tent? Why did I join Diavolo in his pursuit of his apprentice? Why did I interest myself concerning the fortunes of Rosetta? I loved her. One's never too old to do foolish things. And it was foolish—very foolish. But I was always susceptible and human—very human. It's all over now, of course. It was but a dream, and it's gone, and 'being gone, I'm a man again.' I'm wrong to speak of it. Forget it, my dear Duke. Never mention it again. 'And whatsoever else shall hap to-night, let it be tenable in your silence still.' God bless you! We part here. No, not a step further. I can walk without assistance. Good-night."

How much or how little truth there was in this strange and sudden revelation of Mole's I cannot say. But that there was some inebriety about it, I am nearly sure. He never referred to the subject of his love again, however. Nor did I.

Now publishing,

THE BLUE CHAMBER,

BEING THE

**EXTRA DOUBLE NUMBER FOR
CHRISTMAS, 1873.**

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THE BLUE CHAMBER.

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF **ALL THE YEAR ROUND.**

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BELATED.

"CONFOUND the Comte de Bayonne" said Vernon Blake, as he threw himself back in the furthest corner of the rickety little carriage and tried to make a bit of the ragged lining act as a fence between him and the howling wind, which came charging at him like a troop of cavalry. "Confound the Comte de Bayonne, and his fusion, and his flag, and his relatives, and all the rest of it. If it hadn't been for this wretched nonsense I should just be sitting down to my first rubber at the club, or taking my third glass of Sandeman's port, or enjoying myself in some civilized manner, instead of tearing down a mountain road with Heaven knows how many feet of snow in the drifts on either side, a lame horse and a Styrian driver, nine-tenths of whose talk is perfectly unintelligible. Whew, how the storm raves! If I hadn't had this fur hood fitted to my old Ulster in Montreal, and bought these beaver gauntlets there, my ears and fingers would have chipped off long since. Hallo there!" he cried, emerging a little from his wraps, and bending forward to look up at the driver, who, holding his horses loosely in one hand, with the other was going through a rapid rotatory motion in putting on the break, as they descended from the brow of a steepish hill. "Hallo there! Can you see the lights of Gmunden, yet, in the valley below?"

"Not yet, Herr Major," cried the driver, a wild looking fellow, in a high sheepskin caftan, and a huge woolly cloak enveloping him from the ears to the feet, "not yet, Herr Major; two more turns in the road and we shall find them beneath us."

"What on earth makes him call me Herr Major?" muttered Vernon Blake, grumpily to himself, as he fell back into his corner. "It was as much as I could do to get my company, and I only held that a couple of years, when I was forced to sell out; not that I have anything to grumble at on that score," he added, as he pulled his hood more closely round him, "this is the better life of the two—there is a deuced deal more excitement in it at any rate. It is better to be swinging along in this wretched old trap, with the chance of being shot out every moment, and without too clear a notion of where one is to pass the night, than to be mooning over Fermoy Bridge, or listening to the stale old horsey talk in the mess-room at Buttevant. Christmas Eve, by George!" he cried, as the recollection suddenly occurred to him, "Usually supposed to be a very festive season—chestnuts and snap-dragon, and punch, and all that kind of thing. I wish I had one of those artists of the illustrated papers with me in this old bone-shaker; he'd make a different kind of sketch for his next Christmas number I warrant!"

Those who only know the Traunsee as a sheet of shining silver, an inland summer sea placidly reflecting at one end the undulating green hills, dotted here and there with single houses and white-faced villages; at the other the tall precipices and black fir woods, with the snow-capped peaks of the Salzburg Alps—those who have floated on its surface, or lounged under the shelter of the little chestnut grove on its shore, can have no idea of the appearance it presents when winter has once set in.

Then, with the rising of the storm wind, a thin delicate cloud-veil covers the lovely landscape, much as the human breath sullies the surface of a mirror. Athwart the little lake, now lashed into an angry sea, its waves reverberating on the shore, the snow comes sweeping from the distant Alps. The tiny rills become raging torrents, the pine trees are bearded with icicles; here and there some of the oldest denizens of the wood succumb to the wild charges of the storm-king, and, snapping at the stem, lie prostrate across the road, as down the mountain passes sweeps the wind, striking the dense dun clouds aslant through the air, and causing them to disgorge their heavy burden of snow.

No worse night, than that on which Vernon Blake was endeavouring to fight his way through the valley of the Traun, had been seen for years. Hours before, the sun had sunk beneath the horizon, like a burning ship at sea wrecked in a tempest. Now, the intense darkness was only occasionally relieved by a momentary gleam of a torrent hoarsely murmuring on either side of them, and threatening with destruction the log-built bridge by which they crossed it. Despite his huge Ulster coat and his fur hood, Vernon Blake felt the bitter chill creep to his heart; his moustache bristled with icicles; his hands and feet were numb; worst of all, as he lay back in the corner of the carriage, he felt an almost unconquerable tendency to sleep. He was an old traveller in both hemispheres and knew well what this meant, so, with a great effort, he roused himself, slapped his hands together, stamped his feet on the bottom of the caleche until the rickety vehicle rocked again, and, draining the few drops of brandy left in his flask, renewed his question to the driver, asking him whether he could not yet perceive the lights of Gmunden.

"Gott sey dank," said the driver from the folds of his woolly throat-covering, stretching out his arm towards a few glimmering specks in the valley beneath them. "In ten minutes we shall be there, Herr Major."

"And not too soon either," muttered Vernon Blake to himself, as he sank back into his corner. "Another half hour of this cold would have settled my business. Once at the 'Bellevue' at Gmunden, and I shall speedily get right again. Rather a different sight will the 'Bellevue' be now to what I last remember it! Then the sun blazed so vividly that the gold lace band

on the porter's cap made the wearer quite objectionable; then the white stucco front, which is now probably gaping with the frost, was cracking in the heat; then we bullied the Ober-kellner for the lack of ice—he will be lucky now if he escapes a wiggling for not having the stoves red-hot. The Vöslauer and Adelsberger, I recollect, were particularly good, and I will renew my acquaintance with them before I am an hour older. What a fool I was," he muttered, stretching out his feet as far as he could in the narrow carriage, "to allow myself to be persuaded to come this journey! Old Talleyrand was quite right when he said, 'Point de zèle;' and I fancy I am too zealous in the interest of my proprietors. There ought to be a handsome Christmas-box for this news. I shall strike the telegraph at Linz to-morrow, and send them the main facts by wire; and, I should think, before the week is out I shall be able to give the *Statesman* three columns of as readable matter as ever was printed in its pages."

"Hey, Fuchs; vorwärts alte Stute!" cried the driver, cheerily, cracking his whip and urging the tired animals into a canter. On they go, past the pretty wooden chalets and villas, summer residences of the wealthy, now shut up and dismantled; past the little row of lodging-houses, whence all the guests have long since fled; past the spot where, in summer, stands the swimming school, and against the few remaining planks of which the waves are now dashing with tempestuous roar; past the Trinkhalle, where, in the season, the pretty girl dispenses the iced drinks, and where now there are no drinks and far more ice than is required; past the outlying garden-café, where the legs of the tables, piled upon each other, are seen dismally sticking up out of the snow-heaps, until the driver, who, after the manner of his kind, has "kept a trot for the avenue," pulls up with a rattle and a bang before the door of the "Bellevue" Hotel.

Is it the "Bellevue" Hotel? The name is painted up on its front, to be sure, and a few of the letters of the same legend can be discerned on the snow-choked lamps over the portal; but is this ghastly, dead-alive white building—whence no sound issues, no lamp gleams, where all the windows are closed and shuttered, whose chimneys are smokeless, whose entire appearance is that of the abomination of desolation—is this the jolly, well-kept

Gasthaus, where, in the summer before last, Vernon Blake had spent such happy days? With great difficulty, for he was stiff with the cold and cramped with his long-maintained position, he descended from the carriage and hobbled into the middle of the road to get a better view of the house.

"By heavens!" he exclaimed, after a minute survey; "there is no doubt about it, the place is shut up."

"Zugeschlossen, Herr Major," said the driver, who was banging his arms against his sides in the vain endeavour to instil some caloric into his system, "either they have all gone to bed, or, what I fear most, there is no one here. Let us ask this, which I see coming down the road."

Vernon Blake looked in the direction pointed out, but could make out nothing. Presently, however, he discovered "This" to be a wretched-looking old man, dragging along a more wretched-looking pannier-laden donkey, under the lee of the house, and, with the twofold object of warming himself and quickening the donkey's pace, keeping up an incessant shower of blows upon the animal's hardened hide.

"Hallo there, father!" cried the driver, as they ranged within speaking distance. "What's the matter here at the 'Bellevue'? have they all gone to bed, or has a plague seized upon the house, that they are shut up thus early?"

At the sound of the voice the old man stopped his donkey and looked up with excessive wonderment, which was not decreased at the sight of the carriage, the steaming horses, and the two dark figures stamping about in the snow.

"Ach, Herr Jé," cried the old peasant, in a thin piping voice. "Has the travelling Herrschaft the idea of sleeping at the hotel?"

"What other idea could bring anyone at this time of the year to any place of the sort, my good friend?" asked Blake, testily, "sleeping, supping, and all the rest of it. Help us to knock at the door and rouse the people up."

"Ach! leider, leider," said the peasant, "we might knock long enough without arousing anyone. Nearly three months ago the whole establishment left, according to their usual custom; this is only a summer house, and at the end of the season all quit it. Whom did the Herrschaft wish to see? The Herr Wirth and madame are at Vienna, the Herr Ober-kellner has gone

far away—some say to France—the Herr Partier is with his family at Linz, and—"

"Confound the Herr Partier and his family!" broke out Vernon Blake, "what I want to see is a roaring fire, a roast hare, a bottle of wine, and a comfortable bed. If this house is shut up there is no chance of them here, but there must be other hotels in the village—what are they?"

"There is the 'Goldenes Schiff,' on the border of the lake," said the old man, speaking slowly.

"The border of the lake don't sound particularly inviting just now, but however, let's try it."

"Alas, the 'Goldenes Schiff' is also shut up," said the peasant, shaking his head, "so are the 'Hirsch,' the 'Sonne,' the 'Anker,' and the 'Adler.'"

"Good Heavens, all shut!" cried Blake, in despair. "Is there no place where I can get some supper and a bed?"

"Certainly, there are some five or six wirthschafts in the town," said the old man, "but none which the Herrschaft would like to enter."

"It isn't a question of liking to enter," cried Blake, "these horses are done-up and can go no farther; it therefore remains to be seen whether I shall spend the night here in the open air, where I should be inevitably frozen to death, or —"

"Yo, ho! Out of the road. What in Heaven's name is the matter down there?" broke in a voice, and the next moment a pair of horses with steaming nostrils were pulled up short, close by the carriage. The horses were attached to a light sleigh, and in the front part of the sleigh sat a tall, broad shouldered man, muffled in furs, while from the hinder seat descended a servant, who ran at once to the horses' heads.

"Thou dear Heaven," cried the old man, throwing up his hands, "it is indeed the Herr Graf himself, who comes before us in this wonderful manner."

"The Herr Graf, or whoever he may happen to be, might give us some notice of his approach, I think," said Vernon Blake, sulkily, for the cold was beginning to tell upon him again, "and not come charging down into the midst of a set of people, who have probably as much right on the highway as he has."

The man in the sleigh bent forward to listen to these words, and when Blake ceased speaking, he stepped down into the road.

"Your tone is somewhat rough, sir,"

he said, "but I perceive from your accent that you are a foreigner, and I dare say my sudden apparition must have been sufficiently startling. It was all the fault of my stupid servant in neglecting to put the bells upon the horses; if I had had them you would have heard their music long before I came up to you. I ask your pardon," he added, carrying his hand, military fashion, to his cap, "and now I may say that, on such a dark night, you and your carriage and horses have no right to be in the middle of the road."

"It is about the very last place that I should wish to be in, Herr Graf," said Vernon Blake, returning the salute, with a half laugh; "nevertheless, I suppose I ought to apologise for being there."

"But what is the matter?" asked the gentleman. "Has your carriage broken down, your horses fallen lame, or what?"

"Neither, Gott sey dank," interposed the driver. "The fact is, Herr Graf, that I have brought the Herr Major here from the Oastle of Rosenau, and that he intended to stop the night at the 'Bellevue;' and now, behold, on our arrival, he finds the 'Bellevue' shut, and there is no other place in which he can pass the night."

"I have told the Herrschaft that the 'Sonne,' the 'Hirsch,' the 'Adler,'" said the old peasant, checking them off with his fingers, "are all closed, and that, with the exception of small wirthschafts——"

"There, we will not trouble ourselves to enter into a list of them," said the stranger, addressing himself to Blake; "my residence is close by, sir. If you will do me the honour to pass the night there, I shall be most happy to have you as my guest. An Englishman," he added, "I imagine?" suddenly changing his language.

Vernon Blake bowed.

"I thought so," said the stranger, continuing to speak English. "They say that an Englishman's house is his castle. If you will make my castle your house for the time being, you will confer a great pleasure on me."

"You are very kind," said Vernon Blake, speaking slowly; "and, if not encroaching upon you, I shall be too glad to accept your offer."

"Encroaching!" cried the vivacious stranger; "you will be conferring a personal favour by sharing my solitude. Here, Fritz, take this valise into your seat, and if you, my dear sir, will place yourself beside me—Hallo, what's the

matter?" he cried, as Blake staggered a few steps forward.

"I—I feel quite numbed by the cold," he murmured, as the strong arm of his newly-found friend encircled his shoulders in support.

"The flask, Fritz, quick," said the stranger. "That is the way," he said, as Blake placed it to his lips; "that is some Kummel, that, for warming and reviving power, I think, is equal to any brandy. Better? That's right! Now then, one short step and there you are. Wrap this wolf-skin tightly round you and sit fast as the road is rough and the ponies skittish. Good night kutscher, good night old father; right behind Fritz? Off!" He shook the reins, and the ponies started into a gallop.

The spirit which Vernon Blake had drunk had sent a warm glow through his body, and covered by the wolf-skin in addition to his own wraps he felt there would be no harm in yielding to the somnolent influence which was stealing over him, and which was stimulated by the soft gliding motion of the sleigh, in luxurious contrast to the severe jolting he had just undergone. He felt that, in common politeness, he ought to address some observation to the companion who had so readily and frankly offered him hospitality, but his overweening desire for sleep was too strong for him, and after one or two muttered incoherent sentences, he made no further resistance, and subsided at once into a sound slumber.

When he woke he found that the sleigh had stopped at the foot of a flight of steps on which his companion was already standing, offering an arm to help him to alight.

Vernon Blake rose slowly to his feet, and as he descended from the sleigh, the large doors at the top of the steps were thrown open, revealing the delicious prospect of a large, well-lit hall, decorated with huge stags' heads, suits of ancient armour, warlike and sporting weapons, oddly jumbled together, with a vast blue china stove glowing in its midst, and two or three liveried servants in attendance.

"Gently, my good friend," said the stranger, in English, as he helped Blake up the steps, "that flask did you good service in the nick of time, but you have scarcely yet regained the full strength of your limbs. Max, take this gentleman's valise to a bedroom, and have a large fire made up there at once, and bring some cognac and hot water here directly, and

draw those two chairs to the stove. While your fire is burning up we will sit here and chat, for it will be, I suppose, half an hour before supper is ready. Now mix for yourself. If you do as I do, you will take it half and half," and suiting the action to the word, he poured some liquor into a tumbler, and, bowing to Blake, exclaimed, "Welcome to Treuenfels!"

"Thank you very much," said Blake, returning his salute, "will you add to the obligation by telling me to whom I am indebted for this very opportune hospitality?"

"Fancy my forgetting to introduce myself," said his companion, slapping his thigh, with a mighty laugh, "that is indeed rich. I am called the Graf Von Wehrendorf, and this is my home. Not that I am much here, except in the shooting season, as I have no domestic ties and no relatives, indeed, except one niece, who keeps house for me. I have travelled a great deal, and scarcely a year passes without my visiting England, where I have several acquaintances, some of them in your profession."

"My profession!" echoed Blake.

"Certainly. Did I not hear your driver speak of you, or to you, as Herr Major? Are you not in the army?"

"I was," replied Blake, "for some years, but I became invalided in India, and had to retire. Since then, as I found it impossible to lead an idle life, I have adopted another profession. I have exchanged the sword for the pen, and am now a writer for the press, a journalist."

"You have forgotten to mention your name," said Von Wehrendorf, smiling.

"Blake—Vernon Blake."

"Exactly; and you are engaged on the *Statesman* newspaper?" said his host.

"Your journalistic fame is not unknown to me, Mr. Blake—in addition to which I have a personal interest in you. Your friend, George Needham, who is attached to the English embassy at Vienna, is an old ally of mine, and I have often heard him speak of you. Probably you have been staying with Needham just now?"

"No, indeed; my mission has not been so pleasant. I came from——"

"Pardon my interrupting you," said his host; "you shall tell me all about it over a cigar after supper. The servant is here to say that your room is ready. Pray don't think of putting on evening dress; my niece will be our only companion, and she will be too happy to accept you in your travelling garb. Only be quick."

Vernon Blake followed the servant to a large room, panelled with black oak, where a huge fire was already blazing. In the midst stood a very funereal-looking feather-ornamented bedstead of vast size.

"I'm in luck, after all," he said to himself, as he sponged his face and beard with hot water. "Even if the 'Bellevue' had been open, the arrangements would, doubtless, have been on a winter footing, which would have been wretched enough; while there is a sense of solidity and comfort about this place which is thoroughly enjoyable. There was a smell, too, as I came up the staircase, which leads me to expect something quite beyond what the 'Bellevue' chef could accomplish. This Count Von Wehrendorf seems to have seen a great deal of the world. I must get him to tell me something of his life after supper; it may prove useful one of these days. How poor Johnny Luard would laugh if he heard me say that. 'Always looking out for copy,' and, 'There's Blake, with his note-book again,' made his constant chaff against me. I suppose it's a habit I have fallen into; and it's one which I have certainly found tolerably useful during the last few years of my life. Without Blake and his note-book the columns of the *Statesman* would often have been pretty bare; and if I were to lose that note-book now, it would be, I am prepared to say, a national loss!"

As he concluded his hasty toilette, in obedience to the summons of the gong, he made the best of his way down the staircase, at the bottom of which he found his host and a pretty, fair-haired girl waiting to receive him.

"Ernestine," said the Count, "this is Mr. Blake, to whom we have the happiness of offering hospitality and endeavouring to make up for the attractions of the 'Bellevue' at Gmunden, which is now closed. Mr. Blake, let me present you to Mademoiselle Von Wehrendorf! And now let us go in to supper; for I bring with me, literally, the hunger of a hunter, and you must be nearly famished."

Vernon Blake had not deceived himself in the opinion which, from his olfactory organs alone, he had formed of the Treuenfels cook. There was no need of the appetite which two of the convives brought to the supper to have ensured its proper enjoyment; and the Rhine wine was so excellent that Blake could not forbear paying it a tribute of admiration.

"Yes," said the Baron: "it comes of a

good kind and is good of its kind. It is not," he added, with a smile, "the blue-scaled Johannisberg from Prince Metternich's own cellar: that is only to be found in England, where it is retailed at the family grocers and at newly run-up hotels, kept by limited liability companies. This is some Marcobrunner, which I have had for years, and which, both as regards taste and bouquet, seems to me a very tolerable wine."

When the supper was over, Mademoiselle Von Wehrendorf retired; and the two gentlemen, lighting their cigars, pulled their chairs before the fire, with a fresh bottle of Marcobrunner between them.

"Now is the time," said the Count, "for you to tell me, if you will, what brought you into these wild regions at this desolate season of the year. If you had been staying at any of the neighbouring hunting lodges—if you were making your way on a visit to our friend Needham at Vienna, attracted by his accounts of the glories of the ball season and the beauty of the Viennese ladies, I could understand it; but that you could have come here in your journalistic capacity, as I think I understood you to say, is quite beyond my comprehension."

"And yet it is easily explained," said Blake, with a laugh. "Within thirty miles of this, on the borders of the lake, in a tower, to which is attached a legend of the old Hero and Leander type, there resides a man who is, or who at least believes himself to be, on the eve of playing an important part in the world's history."

"You mean the Comte de Bayonne," said Von Wehrendorf. "Has he come to the front again?"

"Very much, indeed," said Blake. "He, or, perhaps, I ought to say, his friends for him, think that they can take advantage of the present troubles in Spain to promote the Count's claims to the throne."

"Do they indeed still indulge in that delusion? I have long since ceased to take interest in any politics, save those of my own country, and when I am out here my days are occupied in hunting, my nights in sleeping, so that I very seldom take the trouble even to look into a newspaper, and derive all my ideas of what is going on from what Ernestine may choose to tell me. And so the Pretender still has hopes, has he? But be they what they may, I don't see that your presence in these regions is at all ac-

counted for. You have not come as a deputation from the Spanish people to offer him the crown? You have not been sent out by your government, to promise him English gold, English influence, or English military support?"

"Neither the one nor the other," said Blake, "and yet my mission to Rosenau was, from my point of view at least, by no means an unimportant one. The press, my dear count, plays a far more important part, even in matters of statecraft, than it did some years ago, and the greatest diplomatists, no matter of what nationality, are glad to expound their views to English journalists, and have them promulgated in English newspapers."

"I have heard of the system," said the Count, "it is what is called by the Americans, I believe, 'interviewing?'"

"Pretty much the same kind of thing," said Blake, with a smile, "though we confine ourselves to the person's views and opinions, and take no notice of his height, his boots, or his waistcoat. The Comte de Bayonne is a very important personage just now, and so my proprietors started me off at a moment's notice, armed with a letter of introduction, for Rosenau, where I have been for the last three days."

"I trust you were successful. Did the Comte de Bayonne talk to you, as your English phrase goes, like a book?"

"Much better," replied Blake. "He talked to me like three and a half columns of the *Statesman*; allowed me to take full memoranda of all he said, which I have in this note-book; and seemed greatly pleased at the publicity which I promised him."

"Fill your glass, Mr. Blake," cried the Count. "I will warrant you did not get better wine than that at Rosenau? And now you are on the way back with your precious burden?"

"Yes," said Blake, "the leading features of the Count's statement I shall telegraph from Linz, to-morrow. I shall then make my way through to London as fast as I can, and by the time I arrive I shall have the whole story ready for publication."

"I am sorry to think you are going to run away so soon," said his host; "not that I have anything to offer you in the way of attraction, save the sport, which is tolerably good; but if this hard weather continues there will be no getting into the forest for a day or two, and unquestionably you would bore yourself to death in the house."

"There would be no fear of that while you were my companion," said Blake, politely. "You must, in the course of your life, have seen numberless strange adventures, any one of which I am sure would be quite as well worth recording in this note-book as the Comte de Bayonne's political manifesto."

"Not I, indeed," said the Count. "My life has been a sufficiently common-place one; and, even if I had happened to have any out-of-the-way experiences, Nature has not provided me with memory to retain, or brains to utilise them."

"This old castle," said Blake, helping himself from the fresh bottle of Marcobrunner which the Count had just uncorked, "is in itself, I should imagine, a mine of romance, and must teem with legends of battles and sieges which it has stood, or dark deeds done within its walls. There must be, at least, a dozen ghost stories connected with it. That bed-room of mine looks just the place in which a spectre would stand by your bedside at midnight, and wringing its hands, tell you how foully it had been dealt with and how its body had been disposed of."

"I am sorry I cannot promise you any such interesting visitors," said the Count, laughing. "There is no ghost story connected with the family, and the legends of my ancestors are as dull as those told by the housekeeper at an old country seat in England in anticipation of the visitor's half-crown. By-the-way, there is one part of the castle which might interest you, and that is the portrait gallery, a collection of ancestral effigies, which has been kept up with tolerable regularity for seven or eight generations. I will have it lighted up while we are finishing our wine, and you shall then come and inspect it."

Vernon Blake was not a connoisseur in art, and when this proposition was made he thought he would rather have stopped at the table with another bottle of the far-famed Marcobrunner. But, all uncaring as he was about such matters, when he once found himself in the bright and skilfully-lighted gallery, he could not refrain from an exclamation of surprise and admiration at the sight of a collection of pictures, many of which, it was evident, even to his inexperience, were priceless works of the greatest masters. For on the walls were to be found sea pieces by Vandevelde, and mountain passes by Sal-

Dutch boers were muddily enjoying themselves, by Teniers; grand cathedral interiors, by Steinwyck; mild-faced sleepy cows placidly cud-chewing, by Cuypp; flame-eyed boars with bristling neck and ensanguined tusks, by Snyders, with panting dogs hanging on their flanks; merry-faced impudent children, by Murillo; solemn-looking bearded rabbis, by Rembrandt; swarthy, blue-blooded Spanish cavaliers, with pointed beards and curling moustache, by Velasquez; and dotted here and there amongst the sea pieces, and the cattle pieces, and the landscapes, were family portraits for generations. Now a truculent-looking warrior in steel morion and leather jerkin, now a sombre priest in sable canonicals, now a blooming damsel, now a wrinkled dowager, now a grave statesman, and now a butterfly courtier, but with a resemblance, sometimes slight, sometimes strong, running through them all. Vernon Blake paused before one or two of the most interesting of these portraits, and asked the Count for some details concerning its original, but his host merely laughed, and, saying he was born so-and-so, and he died so-and-so, and "I know nothing further about him," pursued his way.

THE BLUE CHAMBER.

THEY had concluded their round of the picture gallery, and were about to retrace their steps, when Vernon Blake paused before a heavy door covered with two hanging *portière* curtains of blue velvet. "What is this?" he asked, pointing to it, "a continuation of the gallery, or what?"

"Rather a supplement than a continuation," said the Count, looking fixedly at him.

"And one which is apparently not on view," said Vernon Blake.

"Oh, yes, you may certainly see it if you have any wish," said the Count, taking down a lamp from its stand and opening the door, "enter by all means."

Vernon Blake passed before his host, and by the light of the lamp which the other held above his head, found himself in an octagonal chamber of fair size, its walls painted deep blue and hung with from twenty-five to thirty portraits, male and female, in the costumes of various ages.

Vernon Blake had not much knowledge of or care for Art; one of his fellow labourers could, he knew, have spent hours

here, but for him there was nothing to be made out of it, and being thoroughly weary, he was anxious to smoke his final cigar and get to bed.

"More ancestors," he remarked, with a half-suppressed yawn, "merely an amplification of the portrait gallery?"

"Not exactly," replied his host, "for the Von Wehrendorfs, at least, there is a special interest attaching to the portraits which are relegated to the Blue Chamber, as we call this apartment. Each of those people whose portraits you see here, men and women alike, in their lives committed some crime which brought shame upon the family name, and which caused their portraits to be exiled from the highly respectable gallery which I have just shown you. The Blue Chamber is, in fact, a kind of equivalent to the Chamber of Horrors which you have in London at Madame Tussaud's, only that the criminals whose effigies are here exhibited all came from the same stock."

"What a remarkably interesting fact," said Vernon Blake, suddenly breaking out and producing his note-book. "Why, there must be the making of at least a dozen magazine articles in this collection. Now, for instance, this German student-looking individual—kindly hold the lamp a little lower—with the long hair and the wound in his forehead, who was he? where did he live? and what crime did he commit which caused his portrait to—"

"Gently, my friend," said the Count, with a smile, laying his hand lightly on his companion's arm, "I am afraid I must ask you to put up your note-book. The stories in which these wretched figures figured as principals have never been made public, and I should indeed expect to be visited by no end of ghosts of bygone generations of Von Wehrendorfs, if I, their lineal descendant, were to connive at any such degradation."

"But won't you—"

"No, to be frank with you, I won't. You look tired to death, and their harrowing stories, even if I knew them, which I do not, might rob you of your sleep. I have some wonderful Irish whisky, which my friend, Sir Cato Clay, gave me the last time I was in Dublin. We will smoke a cigar with our tumbler of punch, and then you shall get to bed, for I am sure you need it."

The punch had been drunk, the cigars smoked, and Vernon Blake was in his

bed-room again, but the idea of the Blue Chamber was still uppermost in his mind.

"What a queer notion," he said to himself, "to put aside the portraits of all those old fellows and pretty women, whose pleasant vices had brought them to grief—thoroughly German idea that," he muttered, as he continued undressing himself, "something quite transcendental. What wonderfully good whisky that was; where did he say he got it? From Cato somebody. It must be so—Cato thou wiskest well; else why this uncommonly pleasant feeling, this desire to hail every man as my brother, this—What a confounded nuisance, he wouldn't tell me any of those stories! From the glimpse I caught of the countenances of those wicked Von Wehrendorfs the ten commandments must have been fractured over and over again amongst them. What an absurd scruple of the Count's! I could back myself to take anything he chose to tell me, and so turn it inside out, and to heighten it here and lower it there, and touch it up altogether, that he wouldn't know it himself when he saw it in print. I wish I had had another glass of that whisky—I will just make a memorandum of where the Count got it. Clay—Sir Cato Clay, that was the man's name; but he couldn't have bought it of a Sir, it must have been made a present to him. Never mind, I will just make a note of the name, and next time I go to Dublin—why, where on earth's my note-book? By Jove, I recollect now, I must have left it in that confounded Blue-beard Chamber: my note-book with all the memoranda of the Rosenau conversation, all the details of the manifesto which the Comte de Bayonne gave me, and which I took down in shorthand. I wouldn't lose it for a fortune, and if I leave it where it is, some idiotic housemaid may carry it off for waste paper, and there is an end to me at the Statesman office. I must go down and look after it, though Heaven knows whether I shall ever find the way!"

So saying, Vernon Blake took up one of his candles and sallied out into the dark corridor.

The corridor was pitch dark, so dimly dark and black that the candle which Vernon Blake carried did not seem to have the slightest effect beyond an inch from its wick. Before he started on his search, a dim hope had pervaded Blake's mind that the servants might not yet have gone to bed, or at all events, that some of the lamps on the staircase and in the

passages might have been left burning. After taking a few steps, and peering before him while shading the candle with his hand, more from habit than from any idea that the light which it gave could possibly have dazzled the weakest eyesight, his hope was as completely extinguished as the lamps had been. All was deep solemn darkness, dead grim silence, only broken by the ponderous ticking of a huge clock in the hall. The corridor was covered with a thick carpet, on which Blake's footsteps fell noiselessly. He stole on half inclined to pay deference to the silence by holding his breath, until he reached the top of the staircase, and holding the candle over the broad balustrade, attempted to look down into the depths below. The black cavern mocked the feeble glimmer, and he began to descend. A dancing quiver of light quivered on the suits of polished armour as he passed them by. The eyeless stags' heads glowered at him, and the huge antlers dimly shadowed forth took weird and spectral shapes; the still incandescent logs in the great hall fireplace leaped into a final blaze at his approach, but shrouded themselves with a mantle of grey ashes ere he reached them, as though to deprive him of anything like comfort from their contemplation.

"This is the dining-room," muttered Blake to himself, as he stood at the door of that cosy apartment, "and there are our tumblers just as we left them. But the whisky's gone, and I would have given anything for a slight nip just now. What the deuce is this feeling creeping over me, and which I feel it impossible to shake off? My hand shakes like a leaf, and my knees are decidedly tottery! I think I'll give up the search for the note-book till the morning, and go back to bed. The silence in this grim old house is making me shiver just as I recollect I used on jam-cupboard robbing expeditions at Dr. O'Dwyer's academy; and all the mountain torrents I passed this afternoon seem running down my back. And yet if I were to oversleep myself to-morrow morning, as I'm pretty sure to do, being dog-tired, and the note-book were to be thrown away, the whole of my last fortnight's work and travel would be lost. What a fool I am! I am in for it now, and will carry it through, if all the witchcraft and Hexerei of the Hartz mountains were on my track!"

Into the picture-gallery at last, and

rapidly gliding through its solemn aisle! Here the ticking of the hall clock can be heard no more, and the silence is intensely painful. Blake casts a rapid glance right and left of him as he passes through, and could almost swear that he saw a solemn-looking Flemish burgher scowl at him, and a grave Velasquez cavalier shake his head at his intrusion. There in front of him lay the heavy oaken door, enshrouded by its blue velvet portières. A few steps more and all his trouble will be at an end. He remembers the exact spot on the table where he had left his note-book when the Graf Von Wehrendorf refused to satisfy his insatiable curiosity. Ah, if he had only remembered poor Johnny Luard's chaff against him at that moment, and had not been so eager for the acquisition of material for "copy," he might then have been sleeping the sleep of the weary, instead of wandering about a strange house like a purposeless burglar! The thought of the rest which was awaiting him, and which he so much needed, roused him to action; he pushed aside the velvet curtains, turned the handle of the door, and, dropping the candle from his hand, stood petrified with amazement.

For the Blue Chamber was ablaze with light, and crowded with a motley company! Fair women, some with clustering ringlets, some with their powdered locks arranged over high cushions, some glistening with jewels and brilliant with laces and satins, such as the looms of later days have in vain essayed to rival, were either engaged in conversation with each other or were promenading the room, hanging on to the arms of men whose varied costumes embraced the fashion of three or four generations. But on the face of all, men and women, was a strange sinister expression, exhibited everywhere in the restless rolling eyes and in the ever-shifting muscles of the mouth; and when Vernon Blake looked up at the walls, he saw that the picture-frames indeed remained there, but that they were all empty!

In mortal terror Blake would have turned to fly; but ere the thought had crossed his mind his presence was perceived, and an old man, clad in complete armour, with a blood-red plume in his helmet, and a face as pale as that of the dead Ritter who carried off Lenore, cried in a hollow voice, "Whom have we here?"

"Ein toller Engländer! a mad Englishman!" said a man standing close by the door, a tall man with a bearskin cap

like a grenadier, and a long blue great-coat reaching far down his leathern-gaitered legs, while the company began to gather round in a circle.

"Why does he intrude upon us on the one night on which we have liberty of speech and action?" asked the old man, frowning heavily.

"Speak, Dummkopf! speak, Beef!" said the Grenadier, seizing Blake by the collar and dragging him into the room as the door clanged behind him.

"Don't try that on again!" said Blake, shaking himself free, "You must have been in England yourself, I should say, and learned your manners from the police! Ladies and gentlemen," he added, looking round, "I had no idea of intruding upon you, and if you'll allow me——" and he looked round significantly towards the door.

"Stay!" thundered the old man, and the passage between Blake and the door was immediately barred by several of the company. "How do you know he is an Englishman?" he continued, turning to the Grenadier.

"Because," said the latter, "when he came into the gallery some two hours since with the present Graf, our unworthy descendant——"

"Ho! ho! ho!" laughed the company in sardonic chorus.

"I repeat, 'our unworthy descendant'" said the Grenadier looking round, "I heard them speaking the English language. Saperlotte! I have met with English deserters in my time, and I know the sound of their tongue, though I cannot understand it."

All this time Vernon Blake stood gazing at the company, who were by no means backward in returning his stare, some of them (but these were women), coming forward and looking up into his eyes, some boldly, some defiantly, and others with a long melancholy gaze.

"You were here before-to-night," said the old man who had just spoken, addressing Blake, "and you came with our descendant the Graf Von Wehrendorf—what was the object of your visit?"

"Nothing particular," said Blake, looking at him and speaking steadily; "the Graf told me that the ladies and gentlemen whose portraits I saw on the walls had distinguished themselves during their lives——"

"Distinguished ourselves, I should think we did!" broke in the Grenadier.

"Ho! ho! ho!" laughed the ghostly chorus.

"Had distinguished themselves during their lives, and I asked him to give me a few particulars, to relate a few incidents, that I might take them down in that notebook, which afterwards I left on the table yonder."

"And what said the Graf?"

"He refused."

"He was ashamed of us, the mean-spirited cur," roared the Grenadier. "Not merely are we exiled from the company of our noble relatives, but every opportunity is taken to cast a slur upon us. Friends, what shall be done to this soulless, spiritless creature, who has inherited none of the reckless courage of the Von Wehrendorfs? This is Christmas-Eve, the one night in the year on which we are allowed to step out of our canvas prisons—let us make use of the opportunity and avenge ourselves upon him!"

"Ho! ho! ho!" laughed the ghostly chorus, and there was a general move towards the door.

"Stay!" cried the armour-clad old man in commanding accents. "Who are you, Hans Dietrich, to suggest any action in this matter? You talk of 'us,' and yet such of the Von Wehrendorf blood as flowed in your veins came but from a muddy source. Besides, though we have life, or semblance of life, on this night, from midnight to cock-crow, we are not permitted to pass yonder portal. Approach, man!" he continued, turning to Vernon Blake. "You asked our cousin to tell you the history of our lives."

"I did," replied Blake.

"And he refused?"

"He would not give me the faintest hint."

"You shall hear some of them from our own lips," said the old man. "We are not ashamed of our deeds; on the contrary, we glory in them, and this swaggering dare-devil, Hans Dietrich, shall be the first to begin."

"Ho! ho! ho!" laughed the company in ghostly chorus, gathering round.

"I?" cried the Grenadier, slapping his thigh. "Well, I don't mind; my life was not very long, but it was tolerably eventful. I am not a genuine Von Wehrendorf, as our great ancestor has just told you, only a left-handed connexion, and I was not born in this castle, but in a little place a long way off.

All the same for that I am Von Wehrendorf."

dorf enough, by blood and reckless daring, to have as good a right here as the rest of them. Listen, Englishman, how I earned a place in the Blue Chamber.

DARE-DEVIL HANS.

OF all the sleepy, dreary, wearisome places I ever knew, commend me to that village of Knobeldorf in Brandenburg, the village in which I was born.

It was a stagnant hole. At the "Golden Lamb" the old mayor and about half a dozen of the seniors of the place gathered every evening, to smoke and drink muddy beer. For us youngsters there was no "Golden Lamb," and no beer; only school and then work. Most of us were content enough, and jogged on through the dull routine, but I could never settle to this sleepy existence. The village looked on me as its scapegrace long before I was a man. I had been twice in trouble for poaching, and the head forester and I had once had a stand-up fight. Old Carl Hoffmann, the mayor, used to wag that old head of his, over his beer at the "Lamb," grunt that Hans Dietrich would come to no good, and contrast with the ne'er-do-well that goose-pated, heavy-footed Hermann of his own, who was the very duplicate of his father, barring the paunch and the grey beard. Little did old Hoffman wot that hardly a night passed in which his fair-haired daughter Barbara did not meet the ne'er-do-well at the gate behind her father's garden. Did I love Barbara, then? Well, it depends upon what you call love. I was always a practical kind of fellow, except when I happened to lose my temper; and as for romance and self-sacrifice and that sort of thing, I always looked upon those as ridiculous weaknesses. But I liked the comely Barbara; I liked to hear her protest that she would never marry that jolter-headed Zimmermann, for whom her father intended her; and I liked to hear her tell how, when her brother Hermann abused me for a reckless gallows-bird, she had taken my part, and told him I was worth half a dozen such as he.

But the stagnant air of the place choked me, and I was just making up my mind to run away in search of excitement, when news came that the French had kidnapped and shot Palin, the bookseller of Naumberg, and that Frederick William had got his bristles up at last, and meant to fight the

great Napoleon. It was true enough, and the stagnation cleared away from all the villages of Brandenburg. Most of us young fellows were in the militia, and we were all collected one fine morning, and marched away, first to Potsdam, and then to Berlin. Then the drilling began. Der Teufel! I never liked drill: especially the stiff formal drill which had come down to us from the great Frederick. Hermann, Hoffmann, and Zimmermann took to it kindly enough in their dull way, but the restraints of discipline disgusted me to the heart. Then I used to see those fools of officers of ours sharpening their swords on the doorstep of the French Ambassador's house, and swearing over their beer to die for the Fatherland. Faugh! all this fervour sickened me—by displaying it no man could earn either a thaler or a pleasure.

Away we marched to meet this Napoleon, who had beaten all the world but ourselves, and whom, of course, we were now to beat. I didn't know a great deal about soldiering—tactics, manœuvring, and such like; but when this same Napoleon dodged round our flank, and captured Naumberg, where all our magazines were, I began to feel a deal of respect for him. Owing to the loss of those magazines we had to go without rations very often, and this did not suit me at all. In truth I would not put up with it, and, with a few other enterprising spirits, began to plunder farm-houses and hamlets on the line of march. This was surely natural enough, but the Provost Marshal did not see it. One of my comrades was shot as a marauder, and the Colonel said I was lucky to get off with a caning, which made every joint in my body sore for a fortnight.

I did not quite appreciate my luck, but I came to one conclusion—that there was too much discipline and came in the Prussian army, and too little liberty, pay and rations. "Why not desert?" said I to myself. I had heard that this Napoleon let his troops do pretty much as they liked, provided only that they marched and fought. I'd march and fight right cheerfully, so that I escaped the stick, and was not looked after strictly in the way of plundering. The end of it was, that three of us deserted from Hof one dark night, and tramped away through the country to the Frenchmen at Naumberg. Sakrament! here was another kind of business altogether. Why, the French for the

most part lived altogether on plunder. They took what they wanted wherever they could find it, and if the owner grumbled at seeing his goods carried off, or his wife and daughters kissed before his eyes, they burnt his place about his ears, and, as likely as not, himself inside of it. This was the service for me! I was drafted into one of the regiments of Ney's corps, and began learning French, and French customs and manners, with infinite gusto.

Then came the battle of Jena. Things did not look over well for the French, I promise you, when Hohenlohe held the Landgrafenberg heights, between the Ilm and the Saale, with the King and the Duke of Brunswick in support. But Hohenlohe was a long way behind old Fritz as a general. We laughed among ourselves as we saw him evacuating the Landgrafenberg; and that same night we were on it ourselves. It was a stiff night's work. Rocks had to be blasted and roads cut, to get the guns up out of the ravine on to the hill. Napoleon was at the work himself, toiling with a pickaxe, like a common sapper. For every gun that was got up he gave a couple of gold pieces among the fellows, and his orderlies went about with flasks of schnapps, and served out the liquor without stint. Ah, that was the commander to work for, and with!

We bivouacked that night on the Landgrafenberg, and in the morning began the battle of Jena. It was my first fight, and I had never before thought so much of my countrymen. Mein Gott! what a battle we had—we fellows of Ney's division—before we drove them out of that cursed little village Vierzehn Heiligen—fourteen devils, I called it, as we fought in it hand to hand, with crossed bayonets and clubbed firelocks. Isserstoed was even harder to take, and we might have been outside of it till now, had it not been for the charges of Murat's cavalry on our flanks. Ah, but it was a sight to see Murat leading on his squadrons on his noble black horse, with the flowing mane and tail! What with jewelled scabbard, stars, sash, braided jacket, and gold saddle cloth, he was a picture—wouldn't I have enjoyed the plundering of him! They broke at last—those stubborn countrymen of mine, and then we went forward at the *pas de charge*. But the battle was not won yet, for here, in front of Capellendorf, were Rachel's

reserves, firm as a rock. At them we went, and lo! opposite to me stood my old company. Yes, there was the Unter-officer who had caned me, and there the two jolterheads, young Hoffmann and Zimmermann. They saw me, too, for I heard pass along the line the words "der Verräther!" The *melée* came, and as it happened I crossed bayonets with young Hoffmann. I had his guard up and my skewer through his chest in a twinkling, and then I gave him the *coup de grace*, because I hated him, Barbara's brother though he was.

Well, Jena and Auerstadt finished Prussia, and the French army swept on toward Berlin without a check. It happened that my regiment had a week's stay in Knobeldorf. I was no exception to the proverbial rule, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. Of course I swaggered about, and tried to carry things off with a high hand. The children in the street hissed, "*der Verräther*" after me. When I went into the "Lamb" and, calling for a glass, sat down among the village worthies, old Hoffmann, with a shudder, rose and went out, and all the rest followed his example. You see Zimmermann had come home, and told at whose hands young Hoffmann had met his death. It was an absurd prejudice on the stupid old father's part—this horror of me; for I had only happened to kill his son because fortune stuck the fellow opposite to me. As some consolation I, with a few comrades, plundered friend Zimmermann to the last pfennig, and then thrashed him for grumbling. Barbara was the only sensible person in the village. You see, if once those women really do get fond of a fellow, they don't allow nonsensical prejudices to stand in their way. Still, Barbara was a goose on one point. I gave her the chance to marry me—for the matter of that, I would have dispensed with the stupid ceremony—and come along with the battalion to share our victorious and lucrative progress. Barbara was willing enough to marry me and disregard the contumely of the neighbours, but no persuasion would induce her to quit that old adleplate of a father of hers. The route came, and I had to march away and leave the stubborn jade to coddle her old father and vegetate in dreary Knobeldorf.

It is not worth while to narrate the story of my soldiering in the Grand Army, from the campaign of Jena up to the spring of the year in which was made the expedi-

tion to Moscow. I had a turn of fighting in Spain, and another in Austria, in the Wagram campaign. It was a rough, merry, devil-may-care life, this soldiering in the Grand Army: now living on biscuits and horseflesh, and bivouacking in the mud; now drinking old wine in the best salon of some stately old Schloss. It was not until the spring of 1812 that the fortune of war brought me once more to Knobeldorf. There was little change in the sleepy village, but a good deal among its inhabitants. The old Mayor Hoffmann was dead, and his daughter Barbara, by this time a buxom young woman of three-and-twenty, was still unmarried. She was staunch as steel; but, in her plodding, German way, would fain have had me leave the army, and settle down in Knobeldorf on old Hoffmann's acres. This was not my game. What I—when I could not live in the hum-drum, dreary place when as yet a lad, and knew no other life—was I to become a jelly in it now, after having been used for years to a life that was really living? Not yet, at least, for a good few years; the time might come when one's moustache had grizzled and the nerve had gone out of one; but now, while as yet one was young and hale, and greedy for pleasure, it was not to be thought of. I married Barbara, and sold old Hoffmann's acres to worthy Zimmermann, who took a day and a night to ponder over a difference of opinion to the extent of half a thaler.

It was in May that the route came once more, and on the 23rd of June we stood on the banks of the Niemen, and Russia lay before us. It was worth a good deal to see the Little Corporal, dressed in the cap and jacket of one of his Polish body-guards, ride on to reconnoitre the banks of the stream and fix the spot for the bridges, while the gaunt Cossacks already hovered on our skirts. While as yet in Prussia restrictions had been laid on our enjoyment of the licence of war; but, now that we were in Russia, we were free to take our swing. In truth, we were in a manner forced to plunder—even had we been unwilling—in order that we might live; for, from the Niemen onwards, commissariat supplies were never forthcoming. The peasants used to fight for their belongings, and had to be shot freely; and those infernal Cossacks were always prowling around us. When we came to a city, such as Witepsk, we were sure to find all the magazines destroyed, and the only consolation we had was, to sack the place as if it had been a storm-prize.

Barbara made a capital soldier's wife. She had set up as a sutler, and I always knew where to find a hot mess after a weary march. Then her cart was useful for holding anything worth carrying away, and she had a rare knack of making good bargains with the conscripts. Donner Wetter! but she was the right sort, this jade, of a Barbara. She did her duty by me on the day of Smolensk. We of Ney's corps went at the suburb of Krasnoi, and had some villanous hard fighting to little purpose. I was knocked over by a spent ball and carried, when stunned, into one of the wooden houses of "La Basse Ville." The shells fired the timber, and I was like to be roasted with the rest, lying there senseless as I was, when this Barbara found me and carried me out on her back. When I came to, I found the silly wench fondling and blubbering over me quite romantically; as for me, I wanted a toss of cognac rather more than being wept and prayed over. But women have always been imbecile, you know; and the usages of civilisation prevent you from swearing at a woman ten minutes after she has saved your life.

Talk about war! this Russian expedition was not war at all, in the reasonable sense of the word. Nobody minded fighting, if there was anything to be got by it—say a rich country to ransack, or a fine fat town to take one's will of. But now, when after long and hard fighting, you drove back those infernal Russians, it was only to find desolation along the route, and the smoking embers of abandoned cities. We lost our tempers at this unjustifiable disregard of the usages of war, and spared nothing and nobody. We exterminated the peasantry wherever we found them, and in our chagrin, burnt such places as the enemy had spared. One day we came very near burning one of our own chiefs—old Junot—in the town of Gjatsk, that had been fired when we found nothing in it worth plundering. Then came the battle of Borodino—a fiercer fight than Eylau itself. Those abominable Russians could be killed, but they would not run away. I caught it quite early in the morning. Old Rapp had been carried to the rear wounded, and his division, trying to carry one of the Russian field-works, was all in confusion. Ney, with eyes blazing, and face all of a flame, led us on in succour. At the point of the bayonet we stormed the field-work, but were barely over its epaulement,

when the Russian grenadiers fell upon us, and as in our confusion we scrambled back from their assault, there fell on our flank, like a thunderbolt, a mass of cuirassiers. I skewered one horseman, but my bayonet hung in him, and before I could pull it out, another cut me over the head and shoulder, and I went down. Let me tell you, it was not enjoyable to lie there, bleeding, and trodden under the feet of the *melée*! We wounded littered the track along which infantry, cavalry, and artillery pressed on into the battle, and the horsemen galloped over the wounded as if they had been as many wisps of straw. Being able to stagger, I drew myself up on to the slope of the epaulement, and in this comparative safety, watched the fight. I saw that wonderful charge of Caulaincourt's cuirassiers through the enemy's intervals, and their sudden wheel into the throat of the gorge of the great redoubt. But when night began to fall, I could not tell, for the life of me, who had won. As for us, scattered over the field, we at least were all losers. A terrible storm of wind and rain raged, but over the din of the storm rose the groanings of the wounded. Conscripts called for their mothers, as if, the silly boys, mothers were recognized articles on battle fields; others shouted madly for some one to come and despatch them at once, out of their agony. Next day, as I heard afterwards, the whole army was engaged in clearing the wounded off the battle-field; but my turn never came. When the storm broke, I had half rolled, half scrambled down the slope of a ravine, for the sake of shelter, and lying down there, must, I suppose, have become insensible from weakness and cold. When I came to myself, all was quiet. The groanings had ceased, the dead lay everywhere stark and grim. I was too weak to do more than crawl, but I was very hungry. Ransacking the nearest knapsacks, I found some meal, and a little stream gurgled hard by. It had not yet come to its colour, but I was in no condition to be particular, and I made up a rough mess of stirabout seasoned with gunpowder instead of salt.

I must have lain in this gully for several days, but I lost all count of time. I had become unable to move from the side of the stream, and lay there drinking when thirsty, and sustaining life by eating pieces of flesh I cut with my knife from the carcase of a horse which I could

reach. It was beginning to get dark one night when I heard voices close by. One voice I recognized; it was Barbara's. I called out feebly; she heard me, and running to me, threw herself on me in a transport of emotion. I wished that she had postponed her emotion in favour of brandy. But the brandy came presently, and some decent victuals as well. Barbara wept all the more vigorously when she saw to what straits I had been reduced for food, but as she wept, her nimble fingers were examining and cleansing my wounds. Altogether, as she and a conscript who was with her lifted me into her cart, I thought I had reason to congratulate myself on my marriage with Barbara.

Some of my comrades, it appears, had told her that I was wounded, and she had searched without avail for several days the corridors and cloisters of the great Abbey of Kolotskoi, whither the wounded had been carried after the battle. So she had determined to search the battle-field, thinking only to find my body, and at least give it decent burial. Now that she had found me alive instead of dead, she swore I should not go to Kolotskoi, where neglect, starvation, and hospital fever were fast supplementing the work of bullet and sword. She was as good a doctor as Larrey himself, she maintained, and she would take me on to Moscow, which she was sure by that time had been occupied, and cure me there. So dexterous was she, and so good was my constitution, that I was in the fair way to convalescence before we reached Moscow. What a spectacle that was! the broad streets lined by heaps of blackened and still smoking ruins, interspersed with palaces, shops, and churches, which the fires had spared—strings of marauders prowling among the ruins, or smashing open the doors and windows of the unconsumed edifices, tumultuous groups of soldiers gathered round the entrance of a cellar whence tubs full of wine were being handed up; beautiful furniture, rich hangings, costly dresses, lying pell mell in the streets, or blocking the gutters along with drunken men, and bales of merchandize, burst open and abandoned, and over all the dull heavy pall of smoke from the still burning buildings, with now and then a jet of flame in a fresh place, as some new conflagration broke out.

Barbara was not long before she found quarters for herself and me, and while

she made money fast by selling bread for gold, I rapidly recovered of my wounds, and very soon I was well again, and fit for duty. Things had begun to look very ominous for the army. We had lost nearly one-half our strength on the road to Moscow. Moscow, where we had anticipated comfort, ease, and luxury, we had found in a blaze, which, when it died out, left nothing but barren ruins. There was no shelter, and men cannot live on rich furniture and gold vases. Our troops, wretchedly clad, worse shod, and half starved, lived in bivouac around the burnt city. Those camps, whither as a convalescent I used sometimes to go, were very miserable. In the fields, amidst thick and cold mud, large fires were kept up with mahogany furniture, window-frames, and gilded doors. Around those fires, on a litter of damp straw, imperfectly sheltered by a few boards, the soldiers and their officers, splashed all over with mud, and blackened with smoke, sat in arm chairs, or reclined on silken couches. At their feet were spread or heaped cashmere shawls, the rarest furs of Siberia, the gold stuffs of Persia, and silver dishes, off which they had nothing to eat but a black dough baked in the ashes, and half broiled horseflesh. It was a curious mixture of abundance and want, of riches and filth, of luxury and wretchedness. Our Marshals were reduced to eat cats' flesh when they desired a savoury change from the horseflesh, and I have heard men of his guard say that the Emperor himself had to keep a very meagre table.

"What was to be the issue of it all?"

we veterans of the Grand Army asked each other. Was he going to keep us here all the winter, then, to freeze of cold and perish of starvation? The Russians were all round the place, so that Moscow was, in fact, like a besieged camp. Foraging parties and marauding detachments were ruthlessly cut off; the road by which we had come was blocked, so that neither letters nor intelligence came to the army. And it seemed as if the Emperor was no longer himself. He was getting fat, and his energy seemed to be going out of him. When we saw him, which was but seldom, he would ride by slowly, in abstraction, with his head sunk on his breast and his eyes half shut. But he roused himself at last. It was on the 18th of October that he reviewed us of Ney's corps in the first court of the Kremlin; we heard the sound of the cannon thunder in the direction of

Vinkowo. Napoleon made as if the sound had not reached his ears, and continued the review; but he could simulate indifference no longer when young Beranger galloped into the court with tidings that Murat's cavalry had been all but destroyed. The news of the battle recalled him to himself: that night the whole army was on its march from Moscow, and he himself left it early next morning.

The departure from Moscow was a curious spectacle. In front were the columns of infantry and artillery: behind followed a chaos of vehicles of every kind, laden with plunder—some few with provisions. There were straggling soldiers, without arms, dragging along wheelbarrows piled up with cumbrous valuables that were thrown away before the end of the first day's march; throngs of servants, swearing in every language under the sun, and flogging on the half-starved ponies that hauled the carriages. The great cortege was like a huge caravan on wheels; and so densely were the roads filled that Napoleon's escort had great difficulty in making a way for him to pass through the throng. Barbara had her little waggon as well laden as any of the rest—better, indeed, than most; for she had no cumbrous booty, and only carried gold and provisions. There was no better forager than Barbara in all the Grand Army! As for me, I had to halt with Ney's corps, on the flank, while the rest defiled past us, to cover the retreat; and so, although we were perpetually harassed by the Cossacks, we escaped the slaughter of the battle of Maro-Yaroslawetz.

Our misfortunes commenced very soon. Cold, hungry, miserable, we tramped on through mud, wind, and rain, every now and then turning to fight. We had a devil of a battle of it at Viasma, and had to fire the place at our heels, to give us an hour's respite. The houses were full of our wounded, but there was no time to get them out, and, if there had been, no means of conveying them. Then, on the 6th of November, winter began in earnest. Snow had been falling for two days before; but now began that piercing drift that cut to one's marrow like a razor. Our wet clothes froze upon us, the wind caught our breath and made it into icicles, that dangled from our beards all round our mouths. We stumbled on mechanically. If anyone fell he never rose again, the drift covered him like a winding sheet. Our arms dropped from our numbed grip. We lost all com-

radeship: if one felt weak, his stronger neighbour would not help him, but let him lie where he fell. We fought like wolves over the horses that had fallen in the track. We set fire to everything that would burn, for the sake of a moment's warmth. And behind and around us ever hovered the relentless Cossacks, and the peasants, infuriated against us, slaughtered thousands of stragglers, who were too weak and wretched to offer any resistance.

There were no rations to be had in Smolensk, and we died there, like flies, of sheer starvation and cold. We of Ney's corps—dwindled now to a few thousand men—were the last to quit the place, which we blew up about the ears of swarms of disheartened stragglers: women left behind, because they could go no further, and several thousand wounded wretches. Among the women I saw nothing of Barbara, and concluded she had gone forward somehow. So much the better, in one sense, for our plunder stood a chance of being saved; but it seemed to me I had but little hope of living to enjoy it.

Frozen, starving, dying, we trudged on over a road paved with the dead of the columns which had preceded us. In bivouac, the parts of us farthest from the fires became frostbitten, while those nearest them roasted. The heat produced mortification of limbs that had been frostbitten in the day's march. Sometimes in the morning the men, who had gathered round a bivouac fire at night, remained there in position, as they lay, frozen dead. We made sure we were abandoned by the rest of the army, and had to fight every step of the road. Kutsoff summoned Ney to surrender; but the Marshal, though with only fifteen hundred men in arms against countless hosts, refused, and fought on, till at length, on the fifth day, we overtook Davoust, Mortier, and Eugène at Orcha. Here, too, were rations and brandy; and here I found Barbara. She was something like a woman! Sapristi! She had got thus far with the waggon and all the plunder, and had still some flour and vodka left. I had done enough for the Grand Army, and was more like a skeleton than a grenadier. So I left the ranks and joined Barbara with the waggon.

But we had soon to part. Two bridges had been thrown across the Beresina, and all the train crowded together on the bank to cross by them. The confusion was horrible; for everybody wanted to

cross at once, since the enemy was pressing hard on the corps that was covering the passage. About mid-day Russian balls began to fall amidst the chaos, and then a panic set in. Some men rushed through the throng sword in hand. Others drove their carriages right through and over the crowd that blocked the way. I would fain have had the opportunity to do this and get across; but our horse was weak, and we had got jammed with another waggon, the horse of which had fallen dead. There was a cry that the enemy were close upon us, and I thought the time had come to look out for number one. But I had two strings to my bow. Barbara might make herself useful by staying with the waggon, on the chance of getting across. It might not be a great chance; still I had no use for her without it, and to leave her, on the chance of saving the waggon, was the only way that occurred to me of utilising her. She was a good sort, that Barbara! She never uttered a word of objection, but quietly remarked "Very well."

Just as I had struggled my way close to the artillery bridge, it burst and broke down. Numbers went into the stream with it. I saw women and children swirling in the water, and shrieking—as if that could do them any good! My only plan for safety now was to make the best of my way to the infantry bridge, a hundred fathoms lower down. Lord, what a crush there was for it! Ammunition waggons, heavy carriages and cannon converged on it from all sides, grinding to pieces the miserables who got in their way. In the medley, those who had been thrown down and were stifling under the feet of their companions, struggled to lay hold of them with nails and teeth, and had to be stamped down as if they were poisonous snakes.

As I pushed along, keeping with difficulty on my legs, it became necessary for me to shoulder a woman out of my way. It was Barbara. The waggon had been smashed, and now, her responsibility over, she was doing her best to save herself. *Ja wohl*, beloved Barbara, do the best you can, of course! but, devil take you, let go my arm, else I shall be too late. You won't? Donnerwetter, take that, then, and quit grips! I had to hit the jade, you see, else this bridge might have gone too, and then there would have been no hope for me.

We had a wretched time of it from the Beresina to Königsberg, and my comrades

died in crowds; but I contrived somehow to keep from dying outright. By the time I got reasonably fat again, I had had enough of soldiering, and determined to look out for a snug billet in which to settle down. As we marched across Germany, on our way back to France, I was quartered for a spell in a village where I made a good many friends, being a born German. I gave the regiment the slip when the route came, and stayed on as a civilian. To tell the truth I had my eye on a well-to-do widow who kept a shop in the place, and she had no objections. We were to be married on New Year's day—just a year from the time I had reached Königsberg, more like a skeleton than a man. I had been spending the Christmas eve with my betrothed, and came home to my cottage about midnight, full of meat and beer. There was something black huddled up on the snow on my doorstep, and as I came close, the thing straightened itself up and spoke. It was that jade Barbara! She, too, had kept alive somehow, and, Lord knows how, had found me out; and here she was, full of a confounded placid joy at seeing me at last. It was a devil of a mess. I didn't want her a little bit: she was discomposing all my arrangements, and was altogether a nuisance. I bade her be off, and went in and shut the door upon her, in hopes that she would take a hint and get up and move on. But, confound her, she just huddled down again there in the snow, and kept on the doorstep, every now and then scratching faintly on the lintel. I sat up all night, as savage as a bear. If she should not go away till the morning, the neighbours would see her, ask questions, and spoil my future. About daybreak I made up my mind. I opened the door and bade her come in. She was so stiff with the cold that she could hardly move, and I had to help her up. She fell a mumbling and snivelling over my arm in a silly imbecile way, and fawned about my feet like a spaniel. When I had got the door safely closed, I reached up for the hammer that hung on the wall, and hit her fair and square with it on the forehead. She never struggled or spoke, but dropped like a stone, and I carried her up into the loft and then went to bed.

As ill-luck would have it, she had been seen about the village on the previous night, and had declared herself to some of the neighbours. They had a prejudice

against practicality in the improvement of one's position, and the outcome was that I was hanged then and there for that jade Barbara. And that wasn't all—for the witch got the best of me, even then. I hadn't struck hard enough somehow, and the meddling doctor brought her back to life. Though how they could think *her* life of any value when they were so plaguey ready to take mine, I never could understand.

"Ho! ho! ho!" broke out the ghostly chorus as soon as Hans Dietrich had ceased speaking. The tale was evidently agreeable to the generality of the company, for there were several interjected expressions of admiration during the narrative, and at its close it was warmly applauded.

"You must have been a pretty kind of scoundrel," said Vernon Blake, looking at him curiously, "and richly deserved your fate. I don't think he'd be any use to me for a plot," he muttered to himself, "there is too much of the raw head and bloody bones flavour for a three-volume Mudie subscriber, though he might do as a serial for a penny dreadful."

"Gundred!" called out the phantom of the old soldier, who had first spoken.

Vernon Blake looked round and saw the spectre of a young woman emerge from the throng. A tall young woman, of noble presence, but with restless, terrified eyes, and heavy, lowering brow.

"The Ritter called me?" she said, in a low voice. "I am here."

"Be it yours to speak next, Gundred," said the Ritter; "tell this Englishman the story of your life."

The girl hesitated for a moment, but at an imperious gesture from the old warrior, she bent her head and spoke.

COUSIN RÖSCHEN.

Two hundred years ago I lived, and this was my favourite chamber. I had it hung with costly stuffs, and decorated with works of exquisite art; the view from its window could soothe me sometimes in my wildest moods. Now the shutters are kept fastened, the sun does not come in, because Gundred was a wicked woman and she lived in this room. Gundred Von Wehrendorf was a wicked woman, and she died; and she is speaking to you now.

I was born the heiress of wide estates, and of this noble mansion. When I was first conscious of myself my father and mother were dead, and I lived here alone among my servants. My guardian resided in Paris, an old man given up to pleasure and not likely to feel much interest in a child. He kept me provided with a steward and a governess, and with these he had a limited correspondence. From my earliest infancy I was at warfare with those who had authority over me. My servants strove to control and cow me; they were a bad set, and I felt it and hated them, though I did not know, except by instinct, that there was such a thing as goodness in the world. I fought for my independence, and triumphed, so that at fifteen I was feared by all around me. There was nobody to love, nobody to teach or guide me.

The only thing I delighted in was beauty, as I saw it in nature, in my own face, or in the faces sometimes of the peasants who passed me with their free step on the hills. Sometimes the face of a young girl, like myself, smiling among her friends, would fill my heart with a strange joy; but, such was my reputation, that if I stretched out my hand to such a creature to draw her near me, she was sure to shrink away with looks of fear; and the reaction in my nature, after such vain efforts, left me fiercer and more unlovable than before. At seventeen I was the arbitrary mistress of great possessions, and many servants and retainers. I was beautiful, and gifted with perfect health; ignorant, haughty, subject to fits of frenzied passion, weary already of playing the tyrant, yet knowing no law for my conduct but the impulse of my own caprice. It was at this age that I began to long unspeakably for the companionship of some one softer and more loveable than myself. It came upon me like a fever; I could think and dream of nothing else than a tender little cousin—Röschen, who had written me a secret letter long ago, but whom I had never seen, and who lived in the most southern part of Italy. Her father was the eldest son, but mine had inherited the family property by the will of our grandfather, and a life-long feud had existed between the brothers. Had right been done, said my uncle and his friends, Röschen were the heiress instead of Gundred, and they envied me my lonely grandeur, while their little rose nestled and blossomed sweetly in happy simplicity

among their hearts. Hearsay of the enmity of these my relations had been one of the miseries of my lonely childhood, just as the letter of little Röschen had been the only ray of sunshine that had fallen across my life. "Think not I envy you," she wrote, "and regret not that I am alive. I am glad that you are rich and great, and I do not wish for wealth, since I am so happy without it. People say we are enemies, but I desire that we should love one another. Write me these little words—'I love thee, Röschen.'"

Ah me, I was all untaught; I could not write, and was ashamed to confess this truth to one younger than myself. I tore the letter in pieces in my grief and rage, and then I tried in vain to put it together again. It remained unanswered, and the writer believed herself repulsed. And then, when years had made me almost a woman, that fever fit of longing for her presence took possession of me, and I wrote, begging her to come to me. I was answered in the coldest terms by her father, who declared he could not entrust his child to the society of one of whom he heard such evil reports.

"I suppose I was born to be wicked, then," I thought, "since good people will not come near me;" and I became worse than before. I wished to be dead, for I despaired of ever making anything love me, and I knew that the love of some one different from myself was the only thing that would ever make me happy. Just then my guardian arrived from Paris with a suitor whom he had brought me—a man of repulsive countenance, the sight of which made me shudder. "He is a bad one," I heard one of my servants say, "but he is good enough for a vixen like her." My guardian declared to me that my reputation was getting so terrible that by-and-by nobody would be found brave enough to marry me, so that I had better say yes at once to his friend, who was willing to endure me with patience. My answer to this was such as frightened both guardian and suitor from my house. When I rushed out of their presence I arrived panting in my own chamber, and saw suddenly my own reflection in the looking-glass. "Is this true," I said, "Can this creature here be so evil that only the wicked will have anything to do with her?" Where was this badness which people saw in me? I could discern nothing in my own countenance but sorrow and loneliness. I passed my hand pityingly over

my cheeks, when suddenly I heard the voices of those men as they rode away under my window; and in a second a terrible look sprang out of my eyes, and settled on my brows and on the corners of my mouth. Ah! there it was—the evil spirit which people hated and shunned in me. The rage and hatred in those beautiful eyes made them look like the eyes of a murderess. I covered my face with my hands, and sank cowering and shuddering to the floor.

After this many other suitors came seeking me, but I knew by instinct that they were not men of loving and gentle hearts, but rather needy fortune-hunters, who were reckless and daring enough to think of wedding the fierce beauty of the Saltz Kammergut, breaking her spirit and enjoying her possessions. I would have none of them; their false smiles and flattery made me wilder and gloomier than before. One by one they left my house cursing me; and then I had a long spell of time unmolested, when I gave myself up to the deepest solitude and melancholy.

I left off wearing the rich clothing which was associated in my mind with falsehood, hatred, and all evil passions, and roamed about the hills alone, dressed in almost mourning garb. Sometimes I cheated my thoughts for a while by trying to forget my own identity, and to imagine that I was a good peasant woman whom every one loved; until the reflection of my face in some lake recalled me to myself. I even went further than this, for I began to indulge myself by trying how loving and amiable looks would sit upon my face, while I gazed at it in the water. One day I was engaged in this new and childish sport, when I was suddenly conscious of the presence of some one near me; and looking up I saw a man of noble and kindly bearing, who was standing at a little distance, observing me attentively. He approached smilingly and addressed me with an easy and courteous familiarity, which proved at once that he mistook me for a peasant. I felt strangely delighted at finding myself thus known and yet unknown, and I replied with a gentleness of manner which I had never used towards any one before. He wished to sketch my portrait, and while this work proceeded he conversed with me like a friend. I felt a new and profound joy while I sat there passively before him, glancing now and then at his face, which was so bright, so good-humoured, so different in every way from

mine. The time passed quickly, and it became dusk, and he asked me where I lived that he might bring me safely home.

"Yonder," I said, pointing to the roof of this mansion, which could be seen on the height between the trees.

He started. "You are then a maid of the famous beauty of the Saltz Kammergut. Are you not afraid to live with her? Is she really wicked?"

"She is bad enough," I said, "but not so bad as they say."

When we reached my home, I begged him to enter the house and be refreshed.

"The Lady Gundred von Wehrendorf is hospitable," I said, "Churlishness to the traveller is not one of her vices. Enter and be her guest, and you shall judge of her character for yourself. I will answer for it she will meet you at supper."

I showed him to a guest-chamber as if in my capacity of servant, and then I flew away to make myself ready to receive him as the mistress of the house. Never had I felt it sweet to be beautiful before. I dressed myself like a queen, and when I gave him my hand in the drawing-room, his amazement and delight were beyond anything I could have imagined.

After supper we walked on the balcony, with the moon shining above us, while valleys, lakes, and mountains lay bathed in silver light beneath us. My new friend described himself as a wandering artist; he would not have dared to approach my mansion had it not been for the strange accident that had led him to my door. He had heard much of the Lady Gundred, much that was unaccountably, cruelly false. She was sweet, gentle, beautiful, good. His praise was like new life poured into my veins, a meeker and loftier soul seemed created within me as he spoke. I found myself suddenly transformed into a happy and benignant being; and when I went to rest that night, I was well-nigh delirious with the belief that I was loving and beloved at last.

Ah! with what different eyes I looked upon the sunrise next morning. There was now some one who believed me good, some one who felt delight in my presence. I smiled upon every one, and spoke so softly and kindly to all, that my servants looked at me in amazement; my poor old governess lifted her shaking hands in dismay at what she considered my hypocrisy. My new friend remained at my house, and we rode, and walked, and conversed together. He painted my portrait,

and, as it was a faithful likeness and a fine work of art, it was hung at once in the family gallery. He gave me lessons in painting and music; for he was wonderfully accomplished, while I did not attempt to hide my ignorance. All this time I knew no more of my friend and lover than that he was a wandering artist, and that his name was Fritz. Anything he had told I should have believed; for he was all-perfect and all-beautiful in my eyes. But the sunny days went over, and I asked no questions, and I was infinitely happy.

One evening we walked together along a natural terrace which had formed itself on the top of some mighty rocks, which go sheer down from the height on which this castle stands into the lake which spreads away on one side towards the horizon. The valley, threaded by a silver stream, lay smiling in the warm light beneath us: its gardens, and vineyards, and the walls of its little dwellings glistening among the rich wrappings of amber and olive-hued foliage, enchantingly crowned with hill-peaks which had turned to pearl under the magical light of the hour. Our eyes were ravished with the mellow harmonies of light and colour. My new life throbbed strongly within me. I felt myself only a timid, happy, thankful creature, as my hand lay in that of my lover while he poured forth his love into my ear. Oh! the glory of that summer evening! Why did I not die before its sun had set?

The sun had reached the verge of the hills, just as I promised to be his for evermore, and the tender pleading tone of his voice changed to one of triumph, as he clasped me to his breast. He, the poor artist, had won the famous Gundred whom many had wooed in vain; he, Fritz, who possessed nothing but his portfolio. A secret amusement gleamed in his eyes as he repeated this again and again; and at last pressing my hand closer still between his own, he said—

“I will now conceal nothing further from my promised bride. I am not Fritz, the poor artist, but the Baron Von Eisenfels, one every way fit to be your mate. The fame of Gundred reached me, and I swore to make her love me. When I saw you sitting by the lake, I knew you at once—”

I listened to him. He had tricked me from the first, and how well he had acted his part! I remembered his questions, his surprise—might his love not also be

all a pretence? A sudden throe of anger seized and shook me with violence; it was the first I had felt for many weeks, and its coming so terrified me that I forgot the cause of it, in the fear lest it should betray me. I turned away my face lest the evil spirit should be seen shining in my eyes. The passion left me. Let him cheat and trick me as he would, so only he looked at me and no other woman with that gaze which now sought my own. I was meek and at rest once more, when I turned my face on his.

“Do not deceive me again,” I said, and the air had grown chill, and the light had left the valley. We got up to return to the house, and as we passed along a narrow part of the terrace, where there was a fearful-looking opening in the wall overhanging the abyss, my lover suddenly threw his arm round me, and drew me from the danger to his side. Oh me! oh me! I have suffered since and died. Must I go on telling my miserable story to the end?

That slight cloud passed away and I was more wildly happy than before. It was known that I was engaged to be married, and my guardian, greatly astonished, wrote me his approval and congratulations. He was more than satisfied with the Baron Von Eisenfels. Some arrangement of the affairs of the Baron made it impossible that the marriage should take place immediately, but in the meanwhile I lived in an enchanted atmosphere, and desired nothing more than my present state of bliss. Up to one glorious moonlight night the charmed portion of my existence reaches. After that, the heavenly light became extinguished, the storms arose, and the evil spirits that had power over me broke loose, and took possession of my soul.

We were standing, my lover and I, on the vine-wreathed terrace that overlooks the valley in front of the castle. The dusk had fallen on the earth, the moonlight crept over the hills, red lights twinkled here and there in the distant cottage windows. A reflected gleam of daylight still lingered on the slant of the hill to one side of us, and we saw, all at once, a dark-looking object on the road which wound along it. This was a travelling carriage toiling slowly up the ascent: a black, peculiarly shaped coach, drawn by black horses, and presenting a most lugubrious aspect. A strange agony of terror came over me at the sight of this unexpected

object approaching near my door. "It is a hearse," I said, grasping my Fritz by the arm, and a horrible abyss of gloom seemed suddenly to open at my feet; a deadly presentiment rose up out of the darkness like a snake and coiled itself round my heart. "It is a hearse," I repeated, "and it is coming for you and me!" My Fritz laughed and tried to cheer me. Little could he understand the unspeakable reality of the horror that oppressed me.

The carriage became hidden behind a curve of the hill and reappeared on the gravel sweep before us. I knew that its black ghostly enclosure concealed something which had come to me, bringing tidings of a horrible doom. I strained my eyes through the dusk as the carriage door opened and some one came out; not a ghastly object such as I had looked for, but the delicate form of a young girl. As she stepped forth the moon rose over the chimneys, and the pure white light fell across her spiritual face and dainty figure as she flew across the gravel to my arms.

"It is Röschen, your little Röschen!" she murmured, hanging upon my neck; "oh, Cousin! I have made my way to you at last!"

I strove to speak to her, but my tongue clove to my mouth and my arms hung down by my sides. Here, then, was the warm, loving little creature whom I had burned to draw to myself, and I was not glad to see her and I could not bid her welcome! Why had she not come to me when I was perishing for affection and had wanted her? Now I did not want her. I fed on the love I had hungered for, and she should not come to rob me of the food that was my life. For even in that first moment while I felt the touch of her lips, and before I had discerned her features, the vague fear that had fallen upon me took a shape and a name. In giving up my life into the keeping of love I had thought to make it all noble and all good. I had not known that the demon of jealousy would follow, step by step, in the track of that love, more powerful to work my ruin than all other evil powers that might lay siege to my hapless soul. In the voice, the step, the movements of this little maiden, I discerned at once the traits of the ideal character with which Röschen had ever been gifted to my fancy. I acknowledged in her something more winning, more tender than myself. Had I been here alone to receive her I could

have loved her to adoration; but for fear lest another should see her as I saw her, should find her more loveable than myself—I hated her.

"You are cold, Cousin," she said, "you are unwell, I have startled you." With a sudden revulsion of feeling I clasped her close in a long embrace.

"You were slow in coming," I said; "many a year I pined for you. If you had come a little sooner it might have been better."

"I came when I could," she said, gaily, "we cannot push the world about as we will."

The tone of delicious mirth smote upon my heart like a knell, and I longed to drive her from me, and to shut my door in her face. She entered across my threshold with her dancing step, and I followed heavily, and Fritz came lightly after us with pleasant words and jests.

Poor savage wretch that I was! I decked myself in white satin that night, and covered my arms and neck with jewels, in the desperate fear that my lover's eyes might wander towards another than myself. I wondered what appearance she would present in the light of the supper-room, and gazed in dread towards the door by which she would enter. Would she outshine me in beauty and splendour of apparel, as she did in sweetness and gaiety of heart? I had forgotten her poverty, her simple rearing. She came into the room with her face alight with joyousness and mirth, but her dress was a robe of unpretending black, and a bunch of scarlet roses were her only decoration. Her round child-like forehead, her little dusky graceful head, her beaming eyes, her fresh half-open mouth; all these seemed to me charms with which my own could not compare. I looked at our faces side by side in the opposite mirror; mine was only a pale cold piece of statuary, for all its beauty; but hers was a rose, dewy and downy in its living bloom. I imagined that Fritz also looked at these faces together and made the same comparison. From this moment forth, whenever a sickly thought entered my own mind, I immediately transferred it through my diseased fancy to the mind of Fritz; and, seeing it there, I resented it and raved at it in my heart. And so the morbid anguish grew that goaded me afterwards to madness.

I made many struggles that night to shake off the coil that was laying hold of me; but I was gloomy and cold, and felt

myself a dreary hostess at my own board. Fritz looked at me in amazement, while the little cousin prattled sweetly, and entertained him with anecdotes of her journey. He listened with pleasure, and their laughter drove me lower and lower into the depths of gloom. I turned away from them that they might not see the wickedness that I felt gathering in my eyes, and I stared at the crackling log upon the hearth. I saw mocking demons weaving horrible spells in the flames, while gibbering goblins seemed haunting the distant corners of the room. The wind rose and sobbed round the castle, and in its wail I heard the lament of my own soul over its evil destiny. When we separated for the night my lover pressed my hand, and hoped that I should be better in the morning. I looked longingly in his face; a dreadful gulf had opened between us, and he knew nothing of it. "Good night, Fritz," I said, and my hand clung to his. I knew well what manner of farewell was this I was speaking. Good night joy, good night peace; good-bye to the life of love and goodness which I had promised myself. I felt the madness within me, and that it would work. How, or when, I knew not; but it would work.

After that night the meek and womanly love of Fritz, the creature he had called to life, disappeared for evermore, and the old Gundred reigned in her stead. The idea that Röschen's exquisite charm had stolen from me my lover was never absent a moment from my mind. Jealousy gnawed my heart, and blinded my vision, and the sight of Röschen became hateful to me. Shame at my own madness overwhelmed me at the same time, and unable to endure the gaze of eyes that were turned in wonder at me, I sat for hours alone here in my chamber, or roamed like some savage animal among the hills. Meanwhile Fritz and Röschen were left to bear each other company as they could. Doubtless they wondered together over my strange conduct—she the tender young creature so far from her home, and he who began to tremble at the thought of wedding so harsh a bride. Step by step everything happened as I had foreseen it would. I stood by and saw my lover alienated from me by conduct of my own, which I had no power within me to alter or prevent. I saw the little friend, who would have loved me, fly from me in terror, and seek refuge in his protection. They already stood side by side, and they would love

each other. The day on which they would go forth together, and leave me alone, I believed must be the last of my existence. Often I stood on the verge of some rock, longing to fling myself down, yet withheld by a vague hope that something yet might change me, and save me from myself. But such change never came. Day followed day, and my soul drifted more and more helplessly through the tempest of rage and gloom.

And then, and then——! One morning I slept late, lapped in delicious dreams of my lost happiness. I wakened to remember that it was past, and could never return, and I rose up trembling with agony, loathing the sun, and feeling the longing for the love I had destroyed, thrilling through every fibre of my heart. Perhaps I was not really all wicked; perhaps I might yet be good. As usual, when I suffered most I sought to be alone, and avoiding all eyes, I set off to walk to the hills, and spent a long day, quite in solitude, battling with my evil nature. I pondered my own case. If I had known how to pray I should have prayed. Why, I asked myself, could I not have kept what was my own? Why could I not have loved both those creatures who had come to me, held their love, and preserved my place between them? Oh; I would yet retrieve the past—it might not be too late; I would rise up and fling myself at their feet, and ask their forgiveness. I would confess to Fritz the malady that consumed me, and he would help me to overcome it. Inspired by these sudden resolves, I hurried wildly in the direction of home, my imagination inflamed with hope, my pulses burning with fever. The sunlight grew redder and richer as I flew along, the valley became glorified, the aspect of everything reminded me of the evening when Fritz declared his love for me on the terrace above the lake. Already I felt his smile of forgiveness warm my face!

I came suddenly round a curve of the path, and saw the two, of whom I had been thinking, standing close together on the verge of the terrace. They were standing as lovers stand, absorbed in one another. Fritz's arm was round Röschen, and he was gazing down on her uplifted face. They were on the very edge of the precipice, just at the opening from which Fritz had withdrawn me shuddering so lately. My eyes flamed and became blind; and then, again, I saw this sight which I had expected and feared—this sight which

made me an outcast from all good hearts for evermore. The heavens seemed to burst forth fire over my head, the earth to heave. The demon took possession of me, and my good angel forsook me for evermore. I walked on quickly. I thought—yes—I thought to pass them by without looking at them; but, as I passed, I came near—very near—they. I could not bear them so near. I threw out my arms and pushed them from me. I had the strength of a lioness at that moment, and I pushed them away. I did it. There was not time for them to scream. Through the fire that seemed to burn the air I saw the look of horror and reproach in their eyes; and then they were gone. They were vanished, brushed off like a fly from the wall—like the dust from a garment. They were gone down the precipice—Röschen and Fritz, and I—I knew that I was their murderer.

I walked on; I know not where I went; I saw nothing around me, I felt nothing, thought nothing; but I kept moving, moving about for hours. At last the fire of my rage burned itself out, and I dragged myself towards the house and up the staircase, and sat down in this chamber. I sat down in yonder chair with my head erect, as if waiting for something. I waited, waited; my servants came in and told me that dinner was ready, and my friends were not come home. No, they would not come home till somebody should go and fetch them. I knew this well, but I durst not tell it to any one.

I fell into a fever that hour, and for days and nights I knew nothing. When my senses returned it was in the dead of the night; I saw a shaded lamp, a sleeping nurse; I knew all that had happened, and I got up and went to see if those two had been brought home. I groped my way through chambers and passages and down staircases in the dark, till I saw a light shining out through a doorway, and there I went in. There, upon a bier, lay the two who had loved me, whom I had loved, and hated, and murdered in their youth. There was little Röschen, with the ribbon round her neck and the rose in her breast, stiff and stark, with a wound upon her forehead, and a look of terror and agony in her open eyes; and there was my gallant Fritz; how noble and manly he looked lying there, with his eyes half closed and a smile on his mouth! I touched their hands and they were cold. I spoke to them; I talked to them for an hour; but

they were sullenly silent and would not answer me. People came in and stared at me and shook their heads; and I went mad again, and they took me up and carried me away, and I knew no more for another spell of time. When my sense came back the second time there was no trace left of Röschen and Fritz. They were buried in the ground; the earth covered them, the sunshine saw them no more. And I was restored to health, and got up, and walked, and carried my load of guilt.

People suspected me of their murder, but there was no proof against me, and I remained unmolested. I sat perpetually on the terrace walk and gazed at that break in the wall, from which my lover had drawn me back, and through which I had overthrown him to his death. After a time I grew tired of this, and I got up and went out into the world and lived among my kind. I had beauty and gold; the good people shrank from me, and the bad gathered round me. I struggled no more against my evil fate; I gave myself up to the demons; I led a wicked life.

There came a time when I sickened too of this, and left the crowds where I had made myself famous, and returned here to the peaceful valleys which could hold no peace for me. I lived again in solitude, and once more I made my constant walk up and down the terrace, from which those two had descended so horribly to their doom. One day I was over-wearied with the thought of them, and I laid myself down on the edge of the precipice; and I fell as they had fallen, and I died as they had died. More than this I dare not tell you—I may not speak of what I have suffered since, of what hope I see, of what tortures I have yet to go through!

Hardly had the last words been uttered, when the speaker seemed to fade from before Blake's eyes, and the figure of another woman stood suddenly before him. Tall and stately as her predecessor, this figure was remarkable for an air of vigour and determination. Her skin was soft and creamy, her eyes were bright and burning, her ruddy auburn hair curled crisply round her shapely head; but there was no feminine softness in her voice as she began, with a hard laugh—

“Bah! Revenge was yours, and you regret it, kinswoman mine. You would undo your work, weak wretch, if that were possible. And you killed too swiftly, too

suddenly. Your victims tasted not the bitterness of death before-hand. You but half did your task. Listen, Englishman, and judge whose vengeance was the most terrible—that poor weak woman's or mine—whose faithless lover, whose treacherous rival, suffered most."

ILMA'S VENGEANCE.

THEY said we made a striking couple, my sister Otilia and I. We were not the usual contrast of lily and damask-rose, gold and ebony, the milk-white blonde and swarthy brunette, such as you so often see; but we were nevertheless distinct enough in person, and as distinct in character. Look at my sister as she is painted by my side, and then look at me. You can understand the story better if you study us well. See how her flaxen hair warms into the richer auburn of mine, like the sun on autumn leaves; how her blue eyes, that never varied in colour or intensity, come in me to be that changeful and uncertain hazel which no words can describe and no pigments portray—eyes that flicker like the opal, flashing red with rage, shining deep and tender with love; eyes that draw men's hearts to love as the magnet draws the needle; eyes that send men mad, as magic philtres send them mad. See, too, how her pure transparent skin, flushing so readily with the delicate tint of the monthly rose, is in me that low cream colour which never flushes, and which passion itself seems to have made so pale. The very position is different. She is painted with her hands crossed in her lap, her head half turned, like a startled doe, a wondering expression on her up-lifted face; I, standing by her, look out from the canvas straight and resolute, a lioness whom nothing daunts, standing there as strength protecting weakness, power accepting the burden of dependence—as I was, and did, in those days!

How beautiful she was! nay, how beautiful we both were! Do you think I did not know my own gifts as well as hers? Surely! I was none of your weak fools who stand aside for every paltry girl to come to the front, simpering pretty platitudes about modesty and humility, and giving honour to others, and the like. I knew my own worth, and I gloried in it. But Otilia was lovely too. When she was dressed as you see her in that white satin gown, silver-embroidered, with those costly pearls about her waist and neck, pearls in her streaming flaxen hair, and

a pale pink rose against the white of her bosom, she was like an angel, for the grace and purity of her.

My sister was known as the fair Otilia, I as the royal Ilma; and more than one bold Baron and wealthy Count had asked our hands in marriage, though she was only seventeen when that portrait was taken. But I had always refused for both. Otilia was—let me speak it gently; as gently as the fact itself, else I shall mislead you—well! she was, not imbecile, no, not that! not that!—but with a brain slightly clouded like a misty summer moon—a creature of unbounded simplicity, of warm affections, of no power of resistance, and of no will. She was but a child, fond of music and flowers and the song of birds, and all things beautiful and soft and gentle; a child needing a protector. And I was that protector.

Our brother, though the head of the house, was scarcely the kind of man to whom our mother would have bequeathed Otilia. True, he was legally her master and mine; but I was morally supreme so far as she was concerned, and he did not interfere with my management. He was a fierce-natured man, a true Von Wehrendorf, whose violent angers terrified Otilia, and more than once shook her intellect, frail as it was, rendering her for the time incapable of everything but fear. Besides, he was not often at home. He was with the army, fighting our eternal enemies, the French, in that war where the English General Marlborough and Prince Eugène helped our cause; and Otilia and I lived by ourselves at the castle, ruling our lives according to our liking—for I was his lieutenant, and supreme—but also according to the obligations of our high estate and family repute.

It was a dull life at the best, but I did what I could to enliven it, for Otilia's sake, as well as for my own. I was no ascetic either by principle or temperament. Only four-and-twenty—seven years older than herself—of fuller vitality, more imperious desires, was it possible that I should devote myself wholly to the pale rôle of quasi maternity, and keep no thought for myself, because giving all to her? On the contrary, though I did my duty by her faithfully—for in what way else could a strong nature act?—yet often when I sat before my mirror and let down the heavy waves of auburn hair on my shoulders—those large white shoulders which I knew were so beautiful—it

seemed hard that I should be in a manner relegated to the position of a duenna, I who had such wealth to give, and such power to receive; hard that I might not love because I was not free! I had vowed to our mother on her death-bed that I would not leave Ottilia under our brother's care; and I had equally vowed that I would not suffer her to marry until she was of age and capacity to choose for herself. It had been a hard vow to keep, more than once; but I had resolutely steeled myself against all weakness, and Baron and Count had come and sued in vain—Ottilia was still too much of a child to choose; and I had kept my vow unbroken.

The country at this time was desperately unsettled. Brigands swarmed like locusts, and volunteer bands made war on their own account, chiefly against unarmed peasants and defenceless women; while rumours of approaching armies, now of foes advancing, now of friends retreating, held town and castle in check, and filled all hearts with fear. In such a state of things, my sister and I dared not go far from home; but when there was, as it were, a lull, we ventured to leave the immediate precincts of the castle, and as yet had come to no disaster. I was passionately fond of hawking; and, whenever I could, mounted my horse, and went out with Ottilia and our attendants for a day's sport in the plain and by the skirts of the forest.

One day we were out by the forest side as usual, with hawks and hounds; and I do not think we had ever had fairer sport. The day was a glorious golden summer day, with a fresh wind that brought the roses out in Ottilia's face, and that made the blood in my veins leap with a quicker bound—run with a swifter flow. We rode, and flew our birds, and hunted all through the bright summer hours; and then the westering sun warned us that it was time to turn for the castle.

As we were making for home, riding at a foot's pace down the forest path, I heard groaning at a little distance. I reined up my horse to listen, and again I heard the same sound; it was evidently a human creature in distress, a man in some grievous strait. The moaning came from the side, in the direction of a small clearing made in the trees; and there I spurred my horse, followed by two of our attendants. When I came to the place I found lying on the ground a wounded man. He was dressed in a uniform unknown to me, and was evidently a man of con-

dition, and an officer. I called to my attendants to dismount and see to him; and then, impelled by some strange impulse, I flung myself from my horse, and went near to where he was lying. As I came up to him he opened his eyes, and feebly attempted to rise, but, impelled by the same strange impulse as before, I knelt down by him on the ground, and took his head on my lap. His blood stained my hunting-dress; the red drops standing out like rubies on the green.

"I am grieved to disturb you," he said, faintly, as I bent over him; "but I have just fallen in with du Maillet's men, and, as you see, have come off but badly."

Du Maillet was the captain of a volunteer corps noted for their infamous cruelty, but also for their daring and their skill. I had not heard they were in our neighbourhood, and the news of their being so near was not reassuring.

"And you are badly wounded?" I asked.

He closed his eyes, as if in pain.

"Yes," he murmured.

What was there for me to do but to order my men to take him among them carefully, and carry him to the castle? The warder's orders were strict against the introduction of a stranger, but I chose to take the breach of them on myself, and in spite of the wondering looks of my men, repeated my command, and was obeyed. They made a litter of branches for him, and thus tended we carried him to the castle. As we left the wood I heard a mocking laugh behind us; and I crossed myself devoutly. It was surely the wood demon, angry that his victim was snatched from him.

The ride seemed somewhat to revive the stranger, and he was able to converse a little with me. He told me that he was the Count Dei Secchi, one of Prince Eugène's army then before Turin, sent with important despatches to our head quarters; when he unfortunately fell in with du Maillet's band, who murdered his attendants, took his papers from him, and left him for dead in the forest. Nothing could exceed the delicate gratitude which he threw into his voice and manner, as, without seeming to dishonour himself by assuming any doubt as possible in us, he yet strove to make it clear who and what he was, and how he had come into the strait in which we found him.

As he talked to me, turning on me those large lustrous eyes of his, I felt all my blood gather round my heart, and I knew

that I turned pale—paler even than my wont. Involuntarily my own eyes dropped under his, and the hand on my rein trembled. When I roused myself to look up again, I met a gaze so ardent, so full of admiration, that I had to convince myself I had not heard a voice as well; indeed, that look was as eloquent as words. Then he turned to Ottilia, riding by my side.

“I have a sister strangely like your young sister,” he said, with a tender smile. “But,” he added, and again that burning gaze stirred my very soul, “no sister who resembles *you*, fair lady.”

And it pleased me to hear this.

As we rode over the draw-bridge, Götz, the old warden, looked stern and forbidding; but I was mistress in my brother's absence; and I had hitherto never given occasion to have my authority disputed.

I had him taken to the inner chamber next my own, and here I myself was his nurse and doctor, and saw to his hurt and his recovery. It was but a small wound apparently; I could not understand, indeed, how one so small could have had such almost fatal effect. But it had evidently done more harm than showed on the surface; for our guest was long an invalid on my hands.

The time passed as none other had ever passed in my life before. The Count was marvellously accomplished, and brought a new element into the duller ordering of our days. It was he who painted that picture of Ottilia and myself: and he played on various instruments, and sang as well as he played and painted. He was universal—a man without an equal. For it was not as if he had been small, effeminate, less than manly in any way. On the contrary, not the biggest German boor among them all could match him for daring, strength, and skill in all manly exercises. He was all a hero should be; and he was more beside.

What need to say more? True, I was a Von Wehrendorf, but I was also a woman. I loved, I was beloved; time and circumstance stood my friends; my beauty claimed from him the madness his roused in me; the rich current of my youth ran like wine, and burnt like fire in my veins; Ottilia was a child who neither saw nor suspected; and, for the rest, I was supreme and free to work my own will. So the time passed. God and Heaven, family, duty, pride, and honour, all were forgotten—all swallowed up in the passion that possessed me, and that found its answer in him.

News came to the castle of the ravages of du Maillet's band. Keeping always in the forest, they were like wild beasts in ambush, springing out on the unsuspecting passers-by, carrying fire and sword, robbery and rapine, wherever they appeared. A band of mounted Jägers was sent to the castle to protect us and the country; and Dei Secchi lamented more than ever the unlucky chance which had disabled him and prevented his joining in the pursuit with the rest. He assisted, though, with his councils, and was always present at the little war-parliament, which deliberated nightly in the castle hall and drew out its plan of attack for the next day. But surely some demon inspired that ferocious band outside! It was as if, day by day, they had had prevision of our course of action, for our best-laid stratagems failed; and, wherever we turned, taking them, as we thought, at their weakest point, there we found them entrenched the most strongly, and were sure to be repulsed with loss.

I speak as “we,” for I demanded a seat at the council-table as my right—as the representative of the Von Wehrendorf's and the mistress of the castle.

“To the devil with these open doors!” cried Karl von Hoffman, the bull-necked, large-fisted captain of our garrison. “It is as if we had a spy among us; or is it the Hangman himself who is defending his own?”

At the word “spy,” each man looked at his neighbour with ill-concealed menace and doubt; and I saw old Götz, the warden, turn his eyes on Dei Secchi. He, for his part, looked up straight and clear into Karl von Hoffman's face.

“It is what I have long thought, Captain,” he said, in his strong, but silvery, voice. “It seems to me that some one must betray us to the enemy; some one who sits here among us—holds a place of trust among us—and who has the power to effect the villany he has planned.”

And he, in his turn, looked sternly at Götz.

His words were too pointed to be passed over.

“Spy yourself!” cried Götz, starting up. “Who are you, a base-born stranger, who dares to say such a word to a true German?”

“The man who knows your infamy,” said Dei Secchi, also rising. “Gentlemen,” he then said, facing the small assembly, “I have thrown no word at random. I knew my mark, and I have hit it; for I have seen the proof of that man's

treachery—a treachery I have long suspected, and that I have set myself to track and discover. You know the peasant you have just brought in prisoner? Search him, and on my head be it if you do not find on him evidence of your warden's crime. He is the same man who, affecting to act as my guide, took me straight into the midst of the band. When he was brought into the guard-room, where I was on duty with the watch, I saw a glance pass between him and the warden, which showed me that more masters than one claimed the dog's soul. I stood so as to prevent the delivery of the paper, one end of which I could see beneath his vest. From that moment he has never left my sight until now at this hour of our deliberations, when I know that he is in trustworthy hands. Call him in; search him; and I will give my life as the forfeit if I have accused an honourable man wrongfully."

"Bring in the prisoner, and let him be searched," said Karl; "and if you have spoken the truth, Count Dei Secchi, Götz shall swing from the battlements by to-morrow's sunrise, as a warning to his friends and accomplices in the forest."

The peasant, a poor half-witted looking fellow, was brought forward; and sure enough, as the Count had said, they found a paper under his ragged vest which, when they read it out, proved to be rough notes of the day's proposed movements, made the evening before in Götz's hand-writing.

"Can you deny this?" said Dei Secchi, sternly, laying his hand on the paper.

"No; those notes are mine. I made them last night, as I made them this, and as I have always made them," answered Götz.

"No one doubts that; it is only their destination of which you must give an account," said Karl von Hoffmann, with a curious mixture of anger and bewilderment; for Götz was an old man with the honourable traditions of a life-time round his name, and it seemed almost sacrilege to believe him guilty of the basest act of treachery possible to a soldier.

"I can answer nothing to that," he said. "How they got into that fellow's hands is as much a mystery to me as to you, Captain. It is the work of the devil, by his agent yonder," and he pointed to Dei Secchi; "it is a plot, gentlemen, a plot as black as night, and the Italian is the plotter!"

Dei Secchi smiled sarcastically.

"I bear on my body the marks of du

Maillet's hand," he said; "I have my blood to certify on which side I am."

"And I have a lifetime of service and devotion, of honour and fidelity," retorted Götz.

"Or shall we say of hypocrisy well-masked?" said Dei Secchi with a smile. "However, gentlemen, if there be a question of doubt in your minds as to which of us two men to believe, keep to your own and let me be the sacrifice. It is but a small matter, the expulsion of a stranger—albeit a friend and an ally. For me, I can carry my sword and my services to head-quarters, where I am known; but I shall regret to leave the castle in the hands of a miscreant who has not scrupled to sell his cause, his country, and his master's family to the foe, and in whose base keeping"—turning to me—"are entrusted the most precious jewels of all."

I felt my eyes grow dim, my heart fail; Dei Secchi gone, of what good would my life be to me? He turned his dark eyes again on me.

"Let the lady decide my fate," he said, "she is the only representative of the Von Wehrendorfs here—let her say to whom she will trust herself and her young sister. Shall I go, lady? or shall I remain to devote my poor energies to your service, and watch you and your sister till your brother the Count can return?"

I looked up. The eyes of all the men were on me; Götz's with a sad and sorrowful look in his, that I dared not meet twice. I was grieved for him—yes, yes, I was grieved; but I none the less spoke out strong and clear.

"No," I said, rising, and laying my hand on Dei Secchi's arm, "the Count must not go."

"Which condemns me to death," said Götz, in a slow voice.

"If you have betrayed us to the enemy you ought to die," I answered, steadily, my hand still on my lover's arm.

His dark eyes blazed out with sudden triumph.

"You have spoken well and wisely, Lady Ilma," he said; "for your sister's good as well as for your own."

"I say no more then," said Götz, looking at me with infinite compassion. "All I ask at your hands, Captain," speaking to Karl von Hoffman, "is my life for a few weeks, till the Count von Wehrendorf can return. Keep me in any dungeon you choose, but keep me alive till this sad play is played out. It is a small grace for

an old man who has served his lord as well as I, to ask a few weeks' delay, as his sole guerdon for a life's devotion, his sole defence against the lying plots of an enemy and a spy."

"Keep him, and du Maillet will be master of the castle to-morrow," said Dei Secchi. "Who knows what information he has not already given? There is but one doom for traitors; let that be the doom of Götz."

By this time the small council had got madly excited. It takes but little to convince men at such a moment of the treachery of one among them, by which their arms have been brought to defeat and dishonour.

A hoarse murmur ran round the hall. "Let him die!" they said; and Karl von Hoffman also said, "Let him die."

"Lady Ilma! grant me one word alone with you," said Götz, who was surrounded by the guard; "one word for the love of God and your father!"

I stood for a moment irresolute. I feared what he would say, but it did not become me to show fear; and with the step of a queen I walked down the hall, and came to where the old man stood.

"Unhand him," I said to the guards. "I will answer for him."

The old man took me in his arms, and pressed me to his heart, as he had done so often when I was a child.

"My poor deceived child," he whispered, "do you think I do not know your shame? Do you think men's tongues will be silent because your own eyes are blind? Ilma, rouse yourself before it is too late! Have the Von Wehrendorfs sunk so low that the daughter of the house should make herself the prey of a stranger—an adventurer, and, Ilma, mark me well, of a traitor and a spy? Oh, my child, wake to the truth before your sleep is death! Save yourself and the sister who was given to your care while you can. Let me die or not, but send that man back to the infamy whence he sprang. Get rid of him, shake him from you, before you are all destroyed."

Something in the old man's manner and words curdled my blood, but did not move my resolution. Get rid of him? Spy or no spy, he was my life; and if his place was infamy, mine was beside him. I would not have lifted a finger to save the old servant who had been like a second father to us all, nay, nor my family nor my country, if it had hurt a hair of *his* dear head.

"I love him," I said to Götz, looking him full in the eyes. "If you know all, you know that; and if my love drags me down to hell, I shall love him still."

Then I turned and went back to my place near Dei Secchi; and I knew that my face was as white as the face of the dead; but I felt my eyes burn and flash like the jewels on my throat, as I walked proudly, steadfastly, across the hall, and gave the second sacrifice to my love. I had given the one which costs a woman most; this of an old servant's life might well follow.

So Götz was hanged from the battlements, and the post of warden given to one Johann Baumeister, a man who had Dei Secchi's good word; and consequently mine.

But the death of the old warden did not bring any more success to our arms. In the next sortie, in which Dei Secchi took part, the little garrison was half cut to pieces, and Captain Karl was killed. He was shot in the back; and yet his men said that he had died with his face to the foe. The case was becoming serious indeed. No messenger that we sent out for help ever reached his destination. Those murderers had scent of him from the beginning, and waylaid him before he had accomplished half a day's journey. So it never came to my brother's ears that we were in such extremity, till the end was at hand.

In the absence of any higher authority, Dei Secchi took command of the castle and the troops; but owing—as I thought then—to his being a foreigner, he could not do much good. The most fearful demoralisation set in among the men. They were always drunk, and the watch was a mere name—no more; while bold looks and jeering words were flung after me as I passed, and I knew that tongues were wagging. But I went with my white face set and my head held straight and high, and my step like a queen's, looking them all down. I had his love; for what else cared I? Not when our men were brought in dead or wounded; not when my woman's shame was tossed from lip to lip; not when my very servants shrank from me as I bade them come near and tend me, and I knew that the poorest chamber-woman of them all scorned me from the heights of her honesty. What cared I? with his hand in mine, with my head on his breast, with his eyes looking into my very soul! Ah! it was shame and sorrow, and humiliation

well bought! Had I the price to pay again, I would pay it; and more.

What change had come over Ottilia? Radiant and alive, full of glee and tenderness, she seemed to have suddenly thrown off the grave clothes in which her intelligence had been so long bound, and to have entered a new world of poetry and happiness. Her very beauty took a colour, a depth it had never had before; and she reminded me of that story of the statue whom love warmed into life. Had I not been so sure of Dei Secchi I might have thought that perhaps he had been her Pygmalion; but he loved me too well for me to doubt him; and besides, she was but a child, and the splendour of my beauty far surpassed her's. Still, I could not understand her change; and, preoccupied though I was with the burning secret of my own life, I could not refrain from watching her. But I saw nothing that enlightened me; only was made more sure of my lover's faith; for her manner was noticeably quiet and reserved to him when they were together, and she seldom spoke. He, on his part, treated her as a child; and frequently assumed a tone of authority to which she submitted with her innocent happy smile; and which I did not check. It was well that he thought of her as a child; that she reminded him of his young sister away in Rome, as he said; and that he treated her as if he had been her brother.

It was early one night when I woke from sleep with a strange horror possessing me. I could not disentangle my feelings, but for the first few moments earth and heaven seemed to have come together, and hell seemed yawning at my feet. I started up, threw on a crimson wrapper, and, barefooted as I was, with my ruddy auburn hair lying like gold touched with blood about my shoulders, stole out into the passage leading to Dei Secchi's room. Though I had parted with him only so lately I felt as if I must know of his safety, must see him and hear his voice, else I should go mad.

As I came to the door I seemed to hear strange whisperings and smothered tones from his room, and stopped to listen.

"My queen, my pearl, my one and only love!" said Dei Secchi's voice; and then I heard a girl's happy sigh as she met her lover's kiss.

I pushed the door gently ajar and looked through. Ottilia, dressed as she had been for the evening banquet, in that white satin gown, silver-embroidered, which you

know, was sitting on a chair, Dei Secchi kneeling at her feet.

"But shall we be discovered?" asked Ottilia. "Will she ever know? She will kill me if she does!"

"No, we shall not be discovered, and she shall never know," said Dei Secchi, kissing her hands. "Trust to me, and all will go well."

"I love her, but I am afraid of her," said Ottilia, and I could see her shiver. "You have never seen her eyes flame as I have. When the red light comes into them she could kill."

Dei Secchi laughed lightly.

"She will not kill me," he said; "and she shall not kill you. By to-morrow at noon, you shall be free, safe, and my wife."

"Your wife!" she sighed; and passed her hand caressingly over his upturned face. "It makes me faint and dizzy, Ernesto: frightened too—for I am not worthy of you. It seems to me you should have loved Ilma."

"Love Ilma!" he returned, scornfully. "No, I love virtue, and faith, and modesty, in a woman. I could not love Ilma! I love you, Ottilia, you and you only. I love you as one loves the angels—and God's salvation."

I heard no more. Swift as a panther, noiseless and cruel as one, I was on them before they had heard the loud beating of my heart, or knew that I was there. With one hand I seized my sister, with the other snatched up the pistol lying on the table beside me, and faced my lover. He was no craven, but he cowered before me, and his eyes went down. He had seen the red light in mine, and, like Ottilia, he knew what it meant. He soon however rallied, and his hand went mechanically to his sword; but with a bitter laugh I levelled the piece I held full at his heart.

"Stir one step," I said, "and by all the saints in heaven you are a dead man! You have known my love, you have now to learn my vengeance."

He bowed haughtily.

"I am in your hands," he said; "I ask nothing for myself, but ask your mercy for her."

I had loved my sister; heaven is my witness I had loved her, and done well for her! I had kept my promise to our mother, and I had sacrificed some of the sweetest flowers of my youth to keep it. Even in the passionate madness of my love for Dei Secchi, I had been mindful of her, and had cared to keep her innocent and pure from all evil. How she had repaid

me I would have let pass. She was but a child, scarcely of full understanding; and if she had stolen her lover deceitfully, she had not known he was mine before he was hers; and so was free of the sin of treachery.

But when I heard him plead for her, all the love, the pity, the sentiment of protection which I had cherished for so many years seemed to be burnt out of me; and I hated her—nay! hate is a word too mild and tender to express what I felt as I turned and looked at her—this fair, deadly snake who had poisoned my love and destroyed my life, who had repaid my care with an injury death itself could not wipe away!

"She shall have the mercy she deserves," I said between my closed teeth. And then I laughed; and my laugh sounded strange to my own ears as I added: "If it will make your doom the lighter I will tell you what hers has been, when I have fulfilled it."

He clenched his hands, and big drops started like beads on his forehead as he turned his eyes to her—those dark large eyes in which I had read the full tenderness, the fire, the passionate eloquence, the pleading of his love. And now they looked at another; and with something in them more than had ever been given to me; while I, even at this moment, would have trailed myself in the dust at his feet to have gained his heart again!

"Ilma, I did not know that you loved him," said Otilia's gentle voice. "Forgive me if I have done you a wrong!"

"Silence!" I cried, gripping her arm, while she blanched and shuddered. "You will have time enough to pray and prepare your hypocritical speeches by-and-by. May the saints have more mercy on your sinful soul than I! Count Dei Secchi," I then said, turning to the Count, whom I still covered with my piece; "you are a prisoner; *my* prisoner—do you understand? You can amuse yourself by calculating your chances of escape."

"Are you a fiend or a woman?" cried the Count.

I looked at him steadily, and still held the pistol levelled straight to his heart.

"Woman so far that I do not shoot you as you stand there," I cried. "Perhaps you are reserved for better things; in which case I shall still be the woman, even when I stand by the rack or the wheel and watch your agony. Back, sir!" for he had advanced one or two paces stealthily; "back, I say! it wants

but the turn of a hair and you are dead at my feet!"

"Otilia!" cried Dei Secchi, and his voice was that of a man in anguish. "Forgive me for what I have brought on you."

"I love you, and I have nothing to forgive," said Otilia, with a gentle dignity as new to her as the rest of her late life had been.

But I could not bear to hear her words. I struck her on the mouth, and bade her hold her shameful speech; it was as if I had struck Dei Secchi; and then I thrust her out of the room, while I too, always with my face to the Count and my piece covering his heart, gained the door, and shot the massive bolt on the outside as I went through.

It was in the first watch of the night, and the castle was as still as death. Only a few sentinels paced the ramparts, and a half-sleeping, half-drunken guard lounged and caroused in the guard-room by the postern gate. We were as if alone in the world, Otilia and I; and she was helpless and in my power. She made no effort to soften me. She neither wept nor moaned, nor yet besought my grace. She made no outcry of any kind, but patiently waited for me with her hands clasped in each other, and her head turned in the direction of Dei Secchi's room. I knew too well what she felt. In losing him, she had lost all for which she cared to live.

I took her by the arm, not looking at her face, and pushed aside the arras masking the secret door, that opened on to the stair leading from my room. She knew too well where it ended! But she came with me unresistingly; and I only heard her breath drawn in heavy gasps as we mounted the winding stairs, one by one; she, with her silken skirts sweeping over the stone; and I, with my unslipped feet falling without a sound. So we wound up till we came to the passage leading round the castle, made in the thickness of the wall—that passage, with its ear-holes and eye-holes looking into the banqueting-hall below for the use of clever spies. We went along this dreadful way till we came to a ponderous door opening into a dead-dark chamber; the dungeon whence no one who was once thrust was ever known to return.

Then, and only then, Otilia gave a cry.

"Ilma, have mercy!" she said, clinging to me, as she had clung to me, how often before!

"The mercy you have had for me I will have for you," I answered, as I flung her off.

She shrieked aloud; but she might shriek here as long as she would. No living ears could hear her, no living soul could find her, save I and my brother: and he was far away. She, like Dei Secchi, was my prisoner; and I could trust the gaoler.

"Have pity on me, Ilma! I am innocent! I knew nothing!" she cried again.

She fell at my feet and clasped my knees. Her fair hair swept the ground. By the light of the lamp I carried it shone like a veil of silver. Her large blue eyes looked up with the appealing look of a terrified child or a hunted deer. For a moment her innocent beauty touched me. I thought I saw my mother's face look out at me from the dark depths of the dungeon, and I half relented. Then I remembered all—that Dei Secchi had loved her for her fair face, and for love of her had deceived and deserted me. And with this I steeled my heart, and was once more the judge and executioner.

Again I flung her away, and she fell on the floor of the dungeon bruised and bleeding; but I looked on unmoved. Had she not stolen my lover from me?

Still and stern as fate I stood looking at her, holding the lamp above my head. At first she seemed stunned, and lay without moving; then gradually raising herself to her knees, she looked into my face with a bewildered stare, and burst into a wild and childish laugh. I cared to see no more. My blood froze round my heart as I turned, with that laugh ringing in my ears. I had done all I intended, and more than I had foreseen. My sister, my care, she whom I had sworn to my mother's soul to protect, was mad: and I had made her mad.

I closed the heavy door and shot the cruel bolts. The echoing clang sounded her knell and my eternal doom. Then I crept along the secret passage and down the winding stair, and so gained my own apartment, with more than the stain of blood on my soul.

By the earliest light of the morning the castle was all astir. The watchman on the tower had sounded the alarm, and the men sprang to arms. There were cries in court and turret for Dei Secchi, their captain, for who else was to lead them, either in the sortie or the home defence? We were surrounded. The enemy had come in the night; and as far as the eye could reach we saw their arms gleam in the morning sun, with du Maillet's flag borne in the midst.

I went to Dei Secchi's room. My

heart burned, and my blood seemed to leap like flame to my face, as I opened the door and went in. He was sitting by the table, with his face resting on his crossed arms. He did not move as I entered, nor till I went close to him and touched his shoulder. Then he started to his feet and our eyes met.

"The castle is surrounded—we are besieged," I said; "and the men are calling for you."

"I know it," he said, quietly; "it is du Maillet's band."

"And you can wait here doing nothing!" I cried, for war made me brave, not afraid, and the sight of blood fierce, not faint.

He smiled calmly, scornfully. "You forget you have yourself made me a prisoner. I am powerless," he answered.

"Ernesto!"

I could not keep back the cry. My soul went out in it. It was a cry of love, of despair, of beseeching. I loved him—have I not said it? I loved him more than I loved God or good—dignity, honour, or virtue!

"You relent, Ilma?" he then said, steadily.

Our places were changing. It was he who was now the judge: I who was the culprit, the petitioner.

"For your love! for your love, Ernesto! give me back your love," I cried.

Pride and anger had gone; and all that was left of jealousy was its pain. I kneeled at his feet; I held out my feverish hands to him for grace; I raised my hungry eyes imploring him for one look of love. I loved him, and I besought.

He laid his hand on my head, gently forcing it backward, and his glorious eyes looked into mine.

"You were mad, to-night," he said; "blinded by jealousy you would not see the truth that was before you. This poor child of ours loves me, and stole here to tell me so; could I repulse her or betray you? Tender as she is I treated her tenderly; but I love you, if I pity her. Can you doubt my love for you, queenly Ilma? It is not that you can doubt me, but that I doubt you. You do not love me."

"Oh Heaven!" I cried. "With my very soul, Ernesto! I have given you my soul!"

"Prove it," he then said, speaking slowly and distinctly. "I offer you my love, my hand, my name—which is as honourable as your own—my whole life for the proof I ask. I am du Maillet,

-serving my country from this castle. Give me the right of peaceful surrender—prove that you love me more than family and country—and nothing but death shall part us. If you refuse me this, I will go down into the courtyard, tell them there who I am; and die the death of that patriot whom men call a spy. If you grant me this, there shall not be a queen in Europe more royally blessed than my royal Ilma!”

“Will nothing else content you, Ernesto?” I asked.

Truly it was a great thing to demand even of my love, and I was troubled.

“Nothing,” he said. “Give me the castle and I will give you my life—my love. Can you hesitate, Ilma? Then you do not love me? and I, oh, how I love you!”

He stooped and raised me in his arms, pressing me to his heart while he kissed me. When I felt the touch of his lips, the pressure of his hand, it was almost like death for the pain, but heaven itself—greater than heaven—for the pleasure.

“I love you,” I said, “and for your love I will consent. Deal with me, with all, as you will.”

A flash of joy came over his face; and he laughed aloud; but he kissed me again, hurriedly, and less warmly.

“Go to your own room,” he then said. “You will be safe there.”

He took my ring from my finger—the signet ring that gave command—and I went back to my apartment. What passed then I scarcely knew. I dared not think, I could only feel. The frightened women gathered round me, some weeping, others reproaching, and all asking for Ottilia. I sat in the midst of them like a statue, as if I had been stricken to stone. What could I say to them? Could I tell them that for my guilty love I had betrayed my trust, and given up the honour of our house into the hands of the enemy? Could I tell them that Ottilia was in the high dungeon, mad, by my deed? I said nothing. My eyes were fixed, my lips rigid, my face set; I was the queen among them all still—but a traitress and a murderess. I heard shots fired, the tramp of many feet, the sound of many voices, some cheers and more curses; and then my lover came into my room, followed by a dozen soldiers.

“Take that beautiful witch,” he said, pointing to me; “and make her confess where she has hidden her sister. If she will not by fair means, perhaps the rack can persuade her. I will set the castle in flames but I will find Ottilia.”

Then I knew it all. I rose slowly from my seat; the queen still. Tricked, betrayed, sold to eternal shame—but I had my beauty, and my revenge.

“Yes, find her,” I said; “I will show you the way. And when you have found her—coward, traitor, spy—perhaps you may wish this day’s work undone. Come! I will lead you to your fair-haired bride, and wish you good luck on your marriage!”

I pushed aside the arras, unslid the secret fastening, and we all mounted the winding stairs in silence, only for the tramp of the soldiers’ feet, till we came to the bolted door behind which was Ottilia.

The heavy bolts were unbarred, the door pushed back, and we went in. On the floor, face downward, lay my sister, her fair hair spread around her stained with blood, and the white satin of her bride-like robes also stained deep with blood. She was breathing still, but dying. Silently Dei Secchi raised her in his arms. His grief was, as my wrath had been, too great and deep for words. She opened her eyes and looked at him, at first vacantly, then by degrees her reason seemed to come back to her, and she held out her hand as she whispered with a smile, “Beloved!” and then to me; “Dear Ilma, I forgive.”

She said no more. Still looking at him with the same sweet smile on her face, she gave one deep sigh, and her eyes closed for ever. As for me all life seemed to pass away from me, and to leave only the spectacle of Dei Secchi holding Ottilia in his arms, kissing her dead mouth, and weeping; and then the terrible face that turned to me and cursed me again, and yet again.

What happened more I cannot tell you. I was vaguely conscious of being in the dark and the cold; of food coming to me I knew not whence nor how; of the dead, sad face of Ottilia always beside me; of my mother’s eyes, stern and forbidding; of Götz beseeching for his life in vain; and, worst of all, of Ernesto’s look, as he had last looked at me when he jeered me before his men. After this, I only remember, as a picture standing out from the darkness, the King seated on his horse in the court-yard, my brother standing bareheaded at his stirrup; many bodies of dead men lying about; the smoke and flames of the still burning castle; and the figure of Dei Secchi bound to the wheel. In one rapid glance I saw all this, and then the end of my sinful life in the world came swiftly to me.

As Ilma concluded, there was a chorus of "Ho! ho! ho!" but it was very subdued, and the ghostly company, amongst whom there was evidently a diversity of opinion, began talking together with much gesticulation and clamour.

"The lady is evidently not so popular with her friends as was the swaggering Grenadier," said Vernon Blake to himself; "and the reason is, that Dei Secchi was such a scoundrel that many of them have a fellow feeling with him and think he was hardly treated. I have never had the pleasure of perusing the 'Newgate Calendar,' but I should think it would be light reading in comparison with the history of the members of this noble family. Who comes next?"

"Where is Franz Von Einsten?" asked the Ritter.

"Here, father," said a tall young man, with long hair falling over his shoulders and a deep gash in his forehead, stepping forward. He was dressed in a tight-fitting green garb, and had the air and appearance of a University Renowner.

"Speak Franz," said the old man, "and tell us the history of Karl Weiss, the pillage of the gold, and thine own wretched end."

Thus instigated, the young man commenced:—

KARL WEISS'S TREASURE.

KARL WEISS,—so, at least the story goes—a student of Göttingen, paid a visit to the ruins of Plesse, situated at a short distance from the town. After wandering about alone, he sat down and read until a deep sleep came over him, from which, after some hours, he was awakened by a heavy clap of thunder. By so thick a darkness was he surrounded that he at first believed that he was blind, till a vivid flash of lightning convinced him to the contrary, and, while the heavy rain fell densely upon him, he felt that his condition was nearly as desperate as possible. After a while, he observed a light, which the storm had not been able to extinguish, advancing towards him, and soon perceived that this was carried by a little old man, with a long beard. Seeing that he was somewhat alarmed, the little man bade him not to be terrified, but to follow in his footsteps; and they went on until they came to a deep well, covered by a sort of scaffolding, which, when they had taken their station upon it, gradually sank till it brought them to a level with the water.

"Would you like to remain where you are, or would you rather go down further and see the wonders of the inner earth?"

Though Karl was sheltered from the rain, the situation in which he was placed was not very desirable, and he naturally expressed his preference for a visit to the inner earth. He only asked how, in case he met a race of people to whom he was unaccustomed, he had best conduct himself. The advice given was simple. He was to adhere to the maxim which teaches us to see, hear, and say nothing, as closely as possible, and rigidly to avoid impertinent questions. The people whom he was about to visit were remarkable for their taciturnity: they had but little to do with the upper world, which they only visited at night, and, though they were rather well-disposed than otherwise towards mankind, they were certainly tetchy, and were very likely to avenge an insult by damaging somebody's cattle.

Thus advised, Karl Weiss followed his leader through a narrow passage, being compelled to bow down his head all the way, while the guide, thanks to his short stature, strode on as briskly as possible; and so uncomfortable was this position, and so oppressive was the air, that Karl felt on the point of fainting. Just, however, as his feelings were at the worst, he suddenly found himself on a broad plain, in the open air, dotted about with a number of small villages, which gave signs of rich cultivation, and the darkness which he had hitherto endured was now exchanged for a sort of twilight. After resting a while by a flowing stream, they proceeded till they came to an exceedingly well-paved street, bordered by small houses, remarkable for brilliancy of colours, resembling those which we see in Chinese pictures. One of the handsomest they entered: it was the residence of the guide: and Karl, conducted into a beautifully-furnished room, was introduced to two very aged men and three very aged women, who, with great state, occupied five chairs, but received him graciously on hearing that he was a well-behaved, docile young man, who had followed his guide without grumbling, and requested him to seat himself beside them. The company was presently increased by the appearance of a young lady, who, though no taller than a child of six, had evidently attained her full growth, and who, with the most winning air, invited them all to supper. Karl, somewhat doubtful as to the nature of his new friends, had resolved,

though he was devoured by hunger, not to let a morsel pass his lips; but, at a tacit sign given by his guide, he not unwillingly altered his mind, and entered the supper-room with the others.

The meal was not on a large scale. Three dishes only had been served, but the table was most tastefully decorated, the dishes, plates, knives and forks were all of polished silver, and by every cover stood a richly chased golden goblet. When the first was finished, the eldest of the company raised his goblet and said what you would call grace, thanking Providence for the good things afforded. Karl, who had consented to eat, felt reluctant to drink; for the liquor in his goblet was of a suspicious colour, and he did not like the look of it, but so earnestly was he pressed by his munificent hosts that he could not persist in a refusal without a breach of courtesy. He raised the goblet to his lips, and so thoroughly delighted was he with the exquisite flavour of the draught, that he not only expressed his admiration aloud, but begged a recipe, which would enable the less fortunate inhabitants of the outer-world to enjoy a beverage so delicious. He was informed by the little woman that it was not a manufactured article, but flowed naturally from the earth, and when he asked his hosts why they were so especially blessed, the eldest man looked somewhat serious, and spoke thus:—

“Your brethren above, and you among the rest, have all one fault. You do not sufficiently appreciate the gifts which Heaven has bestowed upon you. While you envy us, because our wine comes to us naturally, and without trouble, you forget that you have the privilege of beholding the sun in the day-time, the moon and stars by night, which is denied to us, who are obliged to content ourselves with a fainter light.”

When these words were concluded, a sound like that of a horn was heard, and all the company falling on their knees, prayed in a low voice. The evening was approaching in this strange country, just at the moment when day was breaking in the other world, and candles in silver stands having been brought in, all retired to the room into which Karl Weiss had been first introduced. The eldest man told the student that the storm was now over, and that now he must return to the upper world, assuring him that his hosts could not let him go without a little keepsake.

By this delicate hint, Karl was decidedly upset. His visit had proved so agreeable, that he had hoped to remain with his new friends for at least a fortnight, and further pursue his subterranean studies; however he found himself compelled to take leave without further ado, and followed, in very sour mood, the little man who had previously been his guide. Soon a sunbeam of joy lit up his dismal features, for he unexpectedly entered a large vault, where grains of gold and silver, as large as beans, had been collected in large heaps, and precious stones of incalculable value sparkled in every direction. All his feeling of disappointment was utterly obliterated as he surveyed the glittering treasure, and mentally calculated how much of it his pockets would hold. His brow was indeed a little clouded when his guide made him a present of a dozen precious stones, but the cloud at once passed away when he was informed that he might take as much gold and silver as he could carry. He did not wait to receive that information twice, but in the twinkling of an eye, not only his pockets, but his hat, his handkerchief, and even his boots were full. So generous too was the little man, where only metal was concerned, that he made him a present of a small box filled with golden grain.

Having returned to the earth by the way of the well, and taken leave of his munificent guide, he rested himself after a while on a craggy part of the mountain, walking, under the circumstances, being a somewhat painful exercise. Lumps of gold as big as beans in a boot, though affording matter for agreeable reflection, are apt to cause a sensation less pleasant. Nor were the reflections of Karl altogether of an unmixed kind. True, he had not unlawfully come by his unexpected wealth, it had been given to him by one who was, to all appearance, its rightful owner; but then, what was the character of the donor? The discourse and the demeanour of the small subterraneans had been decorous and even pious; but, whereas some people are not so black as they are painted, others are a great deal worse. Had he possibly been tempted to sign some compact, after the fashion of Faust, and forgotten all about it? Somehow he felt inclined to wish that he was just as poor as he had been on the day before, when who should come up to him but his fellow student young Baron Franz, who had also been indulging in a mountain stroll, and who, in spite of his high lineage,

appeared to be in very shabby condition. Now this same Franz, while in the receipt of handsome remittances from his friends, had been remarkable for his insolence towards his more needy comrades, and Karl could not help teasing him a little by making him acquainted with his own good fortune, so completely had the sight of threadbare clothes banished all his scruples on the subject of strangely acquired wealth. So he gave, in full detail, an account of his visit to the little people and its valuable results, and was answered by a shout of incredulity on the part of his hearer, who refused to believe one word of the narrative. Thus challenged, Karl took off his boots with a triumphant smile, showed their contents, produced and untied the pocket-handkerchief, unlocked and opened the little box, and suddenly—fell off the crag to the path below.

It is possible that a slight push administered by Franz had something to do with this accident. At all events the fall was mortal, and the first proceeding on the part of Franz was to secure the box and the handkerchief, and to retreat as fast as his load would permit him, leaving in his haste the boots behind him. About an hour or so afterwards they were discovered by Count von Stutterheim, also a student of Göttingen, whom chance had brought to the very spot, where what we will call the accident occurred. Boots containing gold are not to be seen every day, even by the rich, and the Count was turning over his treasure-trove with much curiosity, when the lifeless body of Karl was discovered on the path below by a number of labourers. The Count was arrested, boots in hand; suspicion that he had caused the death of his fellow-student fell heavily upon him; and though, on the ground that evidence against him was not sufficiently conclusive, he was acquitted by the magistrates, a slur was upon his character, which could not be removed.

How, as a matter of fact, Karl Weiss obtained the gold which was the cause of his untimely end, I never knew. As to the inner-earth story, I did not, of course, believe one word of it, nor, indeed, did many other people. I need not, however, trouble you with all the speculations and theories which gradually grew up round Karl Weiss and his gold. It is enough that he undoubtedly had the property. Were not his boots and nether garments, stuffed with gold, preserved for years in the town museum?

Of the Baron Franz, no more was heard at Göttingen. Indeed, he felt no desire to revisit the town where he had very imperfectly pursued his studies, but proceeded, under an assumed name, northwards, until he reached the coast of Schleswig, whence he crossed over to the island of Sylt. The old proverb, that ill-gotten wealth never thrives, was in his case forcibly illustrated: the gold, which had once belonged to poor Karl, offering Franz an opportunity to lead a reckless, drunken life, which caused his room to be preferred to his company at every hostelry which he favoured with his patronage.

While he was at Wenningstedt, a considerable village in Sylt, it happened to be the season when one Wilken Hahn, a wealthy farmer, was in the habit of giving a grand harvest home, to which all the neighbours were invited. On the day of the festivity his house was adorned with wheat-sheaves and garlands, his tables were spread with a sumptuous repast, and wooden goblets, foaming with beer, were in abundance. The merry-making was of the most general kind; the old people ate and drank, the young danced, and no one was refused admission. As the evening proceeded heads became less cool than they had been in the morning, and the joy of the festival was at last interrupted by a young girl, who, rushing from the end of the room which was occupied by dancers, implored Frau Ose, the farmer's wife, to protect her from a young man who had grossly insulted her. She was soon followed by the culprit, who was no other than Franz, in a state of inebriety, and who insisted on dragging her back to the dance. Frau Ose could not tolerate anything of the kind, and hoped comfortably to settle matters by recommending Franz to choose another partner. Not he! In a maudlin tone of voice he vowed that the frightened damsel, whom he had, in truth, never seen before, was the only woman he had ever loved in his life, and that he intended to marry her; while the girl constantly interrupted him by shouting out declarations of utter abhorrence. The only plan left to Frau Ose was to entrust the girl to a neighbour with orders to take her home; but this plan, when put into execution proved a dismal failure, the boisterous lover using his lungs to the best of his ability to forbid the beloved one's departure. The noise was at last sufficient to awaken the master of the house, who, overcome partly by fatigue, partly by beer, had gone to sleep in an adjoining room,

and who, on hearing his wife's statement of what had occurred, resolved to eject the brawler without further ado.

This operation, however, was not easily to be performed. Franz, though generally an object of dislike to landlords, usually contrived to make himself popular with the loungers, sots, and scapegraces, in the towns through which he passed. He was a tolerable boon companion, and told amusing tales, which never comprised the story of poor Karl, and never referred to the town of Göttingen. Hence many of the persons assembled at the farm-house espoused his cause, and a scene of tremendous confusion ensued, the partizans of Franz and those of Hahn being pretty equally balanced. Tables were upset, benches, and broken plates, and goblets, flew about as missiles, and the battle had just reached at the point where all distinction seems to be lost, when a shout of murder acted as a centrifugal force, and the combatants readily formed a circle, in the centre of which stood Hahn, with a blood-stained axe in his hand, while the dead body of Franz lay at his feet. The general fury was succeeded by a general panic. The women ran out of the house shrieking, the men were puzzled and paralyzed. Wilken Hahn, pale and trembling, looked like anything rather than the victor in a fight, and the only person but one who retained presence of mind, was a smart lad, who leaped upon an unsaddled horse, and rode off to fetch the officers of the law. The other person was Frau Ose, who, taking advantage of the panic, dragged her husband, almost against his will, from the room.

When the officers arrived a general search took place, but Hahn was nowhere to be found, and his wife declared that she was herself ignorant of his place of retreat. At last it was discovered that a boat, which had belonged to him, was also missing, and as this led to the natural inference that the murderer was no longer on the island, the pursuit was abandoned, and the affair became a nine-days wonder—the poor woman, in accordance with the law of the country, having been compelled to forfeit all her husband's large property, nothing being left her but her house and garden. Only by constant work could she maintain herself and her children, who were three in number; but in spite of all obstacles, she made herself noted by her charity to the poor, and was regarded by her neighbours with even more respect than was paid to her in her days of prosperity.

After a lapse of about two years, however, her fame was somewhat tarnished by her pertinacious refusal of a rich widower, who wished to become her second husband. So advantageous would have been the match, especially to one in her straitened circumstances, that the gossiping old women in the neighbourhood came to the conclusion that she must have some secret lover, and the scandal was increased by certain indications that the number of her children would soon probably be increased from three to four. A watch was set upon the house one night, and sure enough, Frau Ose, when she had put her little ones to bed, issued softly from her door with a large basket upon her arm, and proceeded in the direction of the sea, followed by the curious observers till she reached the downs near the village, which had never been inhabited. When she had arrived at a certain spot a figure suddenly rose from the ground, and she was heard to say, "Wilken Hahn, I bring you your supper." The fact was Hahn had never stirred from the island, but had dug himself a sort of grave in the downs in which he had remained concealed, receiving nourishment from the hands of his devoted wife. When the truth came to the knowledge of the magistrates he received a free pardon; the miserable condition in which he had lived being regarded as a sufficient penalty for his offence.

If you marvel at my acquaintance with all these matters, I need only tell you that I myself was the student, Franz, and that being compelled to haunt the house at Wenningstedt, every year on the anniversary of my death, the subsequent events necessarily came under my notice.

Vernon Blake's attention had wandered considerably during Franz von Einsten's story—he was getting accustomed to the company of ghosts, and had been looking about him as he might have done in less grim society; and when the phantom ceased speaking, he found himself examining a rough water-colour drawing, almost a sketch, that hung upon the wall—the only picture in the room that was not a portrait. It represented simply a stretch of calm blue sea, breaking on the coral reefs around some far-off island, on the summit of which grew one tall, solitary palm tree. It was rough enough and very small—so small, indeed, that Vernon Blake had not noticed it until now—but to his excited fancy there was something weird and mysterious in that solitary island with

its single palm. Involuntarily he turned to the figure of the old Ritter, who seemed to be the master of the ceremonies in the ghostly company around him, for an explanation of its presence there.

The spectre seemed to read his thoughts.

"The man who perished on that island was one of our blood," he said, "though less of it flowed in his veins than even in those of Hans Dietrich there. His portrait hangs not in this room, therefore is he not of our company to-night, and none among us may tell any story but that which burdens his own guilty soul. Yet, if you would know his fate, so far at least as it is known to any mortal, read!"

Hardly knowing how it had come into his hands, Vernon Blake found himself gazing at a folded paper, yellow and torn with age, and of a most uninviting appearance. It was endorsed with these words, "All the information I have ever been able to obtain as to the fate of the wretched creature calling himself Joseph Staffel. Sent me by the Englishman, with a sketch of the island. Wolfgang von Wehrendorf." As Blake turned this packet over in his hands, hardly caring to have anything to do with it, the ghostly Ritter's hollow tones again sounded through the Blue Chamber, "Read, Engländer." So he unfolded the paper and read as follows:—

ONE-PALM ISLAND.

SOME eighteen or twenty years ago, when travellers were few in those parts, I passed a winter in Wurtzburg. Sent out for that especial purpose by the great architect whose pupil I had been, I spent my days in making plans and elevations and copying architectural details in the Marienkirche, the Cathedral, and the Church of the Augustinians. The season of the year was not favourable; but time pressed, and the work had to be done. So I used to rise every morning by candle-light; and get to my post as soon as there was light enough to draw by.

I lodged in a bare upper chamber of the Gasthaus of the "Angel Gabriel" down near the bridge over the Main; a decent inn towards the outskirts of the town, chiefly frequented by country folk, and doing a great business on market days. My diet here was as spare as that of a Spartan; my way of life as retired and monotonous as that of a cuckoo in a Swiss clock.

Bitter winter as it was, I preferred my own

draughty garret of an evening to the recking after-supper atmosphere of the public room of the inn. There I used to sit reading far into the night—my only fire a handful of charcoal ashes in an earthen brazier; my lamp, a single candle placed behind a decanter of water by way of magnifier. It makes me shiver even now only to think of the draughts that used to come under the door, and down the chimney, and through the cracked panes in the rattling window.

Sitting up thus one wet January evening, I was startled by a trampling of feet upon the stairs, followed by a single heavy knock at my bed-room door. Before I had time to say "Come in," it was opened from without, and Gretchen, the kitchen-drudge of the establishment, followed by a tall stranger, appeared upon the threshold.

I rose, and laid down my book. The stranger, whom I now saw was a priest, came forward and bowed.

"Do I address the Herr Hugh Pender?" he asked, in German.

I replied that my name was Pender.

"An Englishman, I believe?"

"Yes—an Englishman."

"Then I am sure you will forgive me for intruding upon you at this hour," he said, "when I tell you the object of my visit."

I begged him to be seated. He bowed again; dismissed Gretchen with an authoritative wave of the hand, and went on to say that, being himself an Inspector of Hospitals and Prisons, he was anxious to draw my attention to the case of a poor fellow then lying dangerously ill in the Julius Spital. The man was a foreign sailor. They thought he might possibly be an Englishman, but his tongue was, at all events, quite unintelligible to those around him, and he had no letters or papers about his person by which it was possible to identify him. He might lie there for weeks, and his friends be none the wiser; he might die to-night, and leave not even a name to be cut on his gravestone.

"Having heard, only half an hour ago, that an Englishman was staying at the Gasthaus of the 'Angel Gabriel,'" said he, "I made haste at once to find you, that I might beg you to come with me to the hospital. It may be altogether useless. Though no English scholar myself, I do not believe that he is an Englishman; yet there is just the possibility—and soon it may be too late."

I was up and buttoning my great-coat, before he had done speaking.

"I am quite ready," I said. "Let us go directly."

We went downstairs, and out into the pouring night. There was not even a dog to be seen in the streets. The sentries outside the Polizei gates were comfortably invisible inside their sentry boxes. The turbid gutters raced and eddied. The rain rebounded in bubbles from the pavement. Wurtzburg was not lighted with gas in those days, and the oil-lamps, of which there were plenty, flared and flickered dimly. It was not a night for conversation by the way. The priest strode on first, and I followed.

Arrived at the building known as the Julius Spital, we crossed a paved yard, passed through a dimly lighted hall, and threaded a labyrinth of passages before coming to the ward in which the sick man lay. It contained some six or eight beds, only two of which were occupied. In the one lay a dead, in the other a living, patient. The rigid form of the first was vaguely outlined below the sheet; the second lay almost as still, with his face to the wall and his long black hair straying over the pillow.

A Beguine sister who was sitting by the patient's bedside, rose at our approach.

"How does he seem now, sister Theresa?" asked the priest.

She shook her head.

"The pulse is very quick," she said, "and his mind seems now and then to be wandering."

I took down a small oil lamp from the wall and looked at him—a wiry, swarthy, weather-beaten man of about forty-five or fifty, sleeping the prostrate, half-insensible sleep of extreme sickness. In his ears were small gold rings, and on his left arm were tattooed an anchor and two crossed hatchets. I felt confident, at the first glance, that he was no Englishman.

"What is that?" I asked, seeing a corner of some dark object under his pillow.

The priest smiled compassionately.

"It is his pocket-book," he said. "He likes to have it there, but there is nothing in it—nothing, save a scrap or two of paper covered with illegible figures—sailing directions, apparently, which give no clue to his name or nation."

At this moment, disturbed perhaps by the sound of our voices, the sick man moved and muttered in his sleep.

The priest then went on to tell how the poor fellow had been brought up there nearly three weeks back from a little river-side Gasthaus in the lower town,

where he had already been lying for some days. He seemed to have come into Wurtzburg on foot. His shoes were much worn, and his clothing consisted of a coarse woollen Jersey, a rough blue top-coat, trowsers of the same, and a moleskin cap. His bundle contained only some socks and a second Jersey, and his purse about eight thalers in paper money, and a few copper coins, two of which were of Hamburg currency.

As he still slept, only moaning from time to time, or murmuring inaudibly, it was arranged that I should stay there for the night, so as to be at hand when he next awoke. The priest then went away; the Beguine resumed her old place by the bed-side; and I settled myself in an arm-chair by the stove in the corner.

A long time went by thus—I cannot tell how long, although I heard the clocks strike, and the watchmen calling the hours as they went by.

Suddenly he spoke. I must have been asleep then; for I started up, wondering whose voice it was, and fancying for the moment that I was in my own room at the "Angel Gabriel." I found him sitting up, flushed and trembling and talking vehemently; but it was a language that I now heard for the first time.

The Beguine looked up anxiously. I shook my head. Those harsh and hurried gutturals bore no kind of resemblance to any tongue with which I was acquainted.

We wrapped a shawl about him, and got him, with some difficulty, to lie down; but he started up again presently, and began wandering as before. It was during this second paroxysm that it first occurred to me to speak to him in English. I no longer remember what I said; but, delirious as he evidently was, it had the unexpected effect of arresting his attention. He stopped—caught his breath—looked at me—and was for a moment silent. As often as I repeated this experiment, it produced the same result. I even found that if I went on speaking, my voice seemed to soothe him; and towards morning I succeeded by these means in quieting him off to sleep.

I was now convinced that he either knew some English, or had been accustomed to hear the language spoken.

At dawn I left him sleeping; and at mid-day I went back to learn how he was going on. I found him lying in a kind of torpor, open-eyed, but quiet and unconscious. In the evening, after supper, I returned to pass the night there as before.

For three days and nights successively I did the same thing at the same hours, and still nothing came of it. He was very ill indeed, now—wasted and racked with fever, unconscious when not delirious, and so weak that he could scarcely lift his hand to his head.

Suddenly, about the middle of the fourth night, he woke, and was sensible for some minutes. Seeing by his eyes that he no longer wandered, I offered him water, and asked him in English if he would drink.

He looked at me vaguely, drank, closed his eyes for a moment, then looked at me again, and moved his hand towards the pillow.

"Your pocket-book is quite safe," I said; "no one has touched it."

Having felt that it was there, he murmured something in his own unintelligible tongue, and seemed to fall asleep.

After this he had occasional gleams of consciousness, during which I used to fancy that he knew and looked for me; but these gleams of consciousness alternated with long relapses of torpor, varied now and then by a brief but fierce access of delirium. Thus day by day he sank lower and lower, till I used to marvel each time when I returned and found him yet alive. At length, when the seventh night came, I was myself so fagged out for want of proper rest that I could sit up no longer; so, the Beguine promising to wake me if any change took place, I made a sofa of one of the empty beds and slept soundly.

It seemed to me that I had scarcely closed my eyes when, two hours later, she roused me quickly, saying—

"Wake, wake, mein Herr! He is conscious, and I think looking for you."

In an instant I was up and bending over him. He was tossing his head from side to side; but seeing me, desisted, and breathed a faint sigh of relief.

"I am here," I said. "Try to tell me what I can do for you."

His lips moved, but no sound came.

"Is there anything I can write for you?"

He shook his head feebly.

"Have you no wife? no children? no parents?"

Another negative.

"Yet there is something you want to say. Try to speak. I am a friend, and will do anything in my power to help you."

He pointed to the pocket-book. I took it from under his pillow, and, seeing a look of assent in his face, opened it. It con-

tained a pierced cowrie shell, two or three rough pearls of no value, a morsel of pink coral, some dried leaves, and three scraps of folded paper yellow with age. All these I spread out before him on the bed, that he might see nothing had been abstracted.

He looked at the papers, and he looked in my face.

"Am I to read them?" I asked.

Again his eyes said "Yes;" and, one by one, I unfolded them. The first looked like a rough chart scrawled with the pen; the second contained a column of figures; the third a few faint lines of writing in very pale ink. All three were blistered and water-stained, and almost worn through at the creases. I took down the lamp and examined them carefully. Of the two first I could make nothing whatever; but the third, which I deciphered with some difficulty, was written in English and ran thus:—

"Between Mulgraves and Carolines, steering N.N.W.—Five and half N. of Equator—a group of Three—Long: 162 deg. 25.—merid: Paris."

These were evidently the sailing directions of which the priest had spoken. I read them over twice; first to myself, then aloud; but having no knowledge of the terms used in navigation, they conveyed no definite ideas to my mind. The sick man's eyes brightened, however, as I spelt the words over, and, concentrating the last of his strength upon this one supreme effort, he opened his hand for the paper—pressed it feebly back into mine—and said, trying back in his memory for every word as he brought it out:—

"Two hours before sunset . . . the single palm-tree . . . where his shadow points . . . at low tide . . . under the rocks . . . the mouth of the cave . . . the—the—"

His voice died away; his eyes became vague; and the next moment he was again unconscious.

That night we gave him up, never believing he could live till morning; and I, sitting by his bedside, fell asleep with his poor wasted hand in mine. But when I woke at dawn—woke with a pang of self-reproach, and the feeling that all must by this time be over—I found his hand moist and his breathing gentle, and his eyes closed in sleep. It was the sleep of life, and when he woke from it twelve hours later, he was out of danger.

His recovery was, of course, very gradual; and for the first ten days or so he just drifted dreamily on, sleeping, and

being fed, and taking no notice of anything. As he got better, however, I used to read to him of an evening; and by-and-by, when his strength began to come back, he would crawl out with the help of my arm and a stick, and sit out a bit in the sun, on a bench in the public garden. But he was a weary time getting well; and we were close upon the beginning of April before he could walk alone even so far as the Cathedral.

His name was Christian Bjornsen. He was a Fin from the neighbourhood of Helsingfors, and had served before the mast in many waters—up North, in the whale fisheries; to and fro in the Baltic with cargoes of hides and tallow; about the Mediterranean with oranges; in the West Indies aboard a sugar-trader; in the Brazils, and the Spanish Main, and the wide wastes of the Pacific. For the man was of a wandering turn; and having, as he said, nor kith nor kin, was content to seek his bread from day to day, careless of the morrow. His last trip having brought him from Havannah to Hamburg, he had taken it into his head that he would walk through Germany and find his way down, somehow, to Trieste, or Venice, or one of the Mediterranean ports. Of the distance that it might be from sea to sea, or of the nature of the countries he would have to traverse, he knew scarcely anything. As to languages, he had picked up a little Italian and Spanish here and there, and a fair smattering of English. He also knew a few words of German. But, as not unfrequently happens, he no sooner fell ill than he forgot all these foreign scraps, and could speak and think only in his own native tongue—a dialect of the Russian. When I reminded him that once, and once only, he had spoken to me in English during the time of his illness, he had no remembrance whatever of the fact.

"But what did I say, Master?" he asked, somewhat anxiously.

How or why he came to give me that name, I know not; but he never called me anything but Master in those days. I need scarcely say that it implied neither servitude on the one side nor authority on the other, nor anything on his part save the most unbounded gratitude and devotion. You know what the love of a dog is—how faithful, how watchful, how worshipping. I can compare the love of that poor Fin to nothing else that I know of on this side of the grave.

Now when he asked me what it was that he had said, I was able to give it to

him word for word; for—wandering and meaningless as they were—those three or four broken sentences had struck me at the moment as having something strange about them, and I had written them down in my note-book.

"Two hours before sunset—the single palm-tree—where his shadow points—at low tide—under the rocks—the mouth of the cove."

I read the entry aloud. It was on a Sunday afternoon, and we were sauntering slowly along a raised path by the riverside just beyond the town. At the first words, he turned his face away.

"No more, Master?" he asked, presently.

"Not another syllable."

He plucked a weed from the grasses beside the path, and shredded it leaf by leaf as he went along.

"But there is more to tell, Master," he said, after a long silence.

"What more?"

He looked round, as if to make sure that no one was near; then pointed to a bench a little way farther on. We went there, and sat down.

"It is a long story," he said, hesitatingly; and I could see that he was fighting against some strong inward reluctance. "Long—and strange—and true. Every word true, Master—every word."

It was indeed a long story, and a very strange one, and was interrupted by pauses and digressions innumerable. Enough if I succinctly repeat the substance of his narrative.

He was a foundling, reared upon public charity; and he had been a sailor all his life. Counting from the time when he took his first trip as cabin-boy on board a small trader plying between Helsingfors and St. Petersburg, he had made no fewer than twenty-seven voyages. That he should have known both good and bad fortune, that he should have been thrown into both good and bad company, was as inevitable, as that he should have been subject in the course of all these years to every degree of fair and foul weather. And he had experienced plenty of bad fortune, and plenty of foul weather—and worse company on one or two occasions than falls to the lot of most men, even on the high seas. Wrecked once off the west coast of Africa and tossed about for nine days and nights in an open boat, he had, with two of his messmates, been picked up by a slaver and forced to work his passage to New Orleans, amid scenes of unspeakable barbarity. Chased

and captured another time by Chinese pirates; half murdered in a riot at San Francisco; struck down with yellow fever and left to die in the seaman's hospital at St. Thomas's, he had each time escaped, as it seemed to him, almost by a miracle. Once, too, many a year before, while he was yet quite a young man, he was concerned, entirely against his will and inclination, in a bloody and successful mutiny, unknown and unsuspected to this day.

It happened on board a Portuguese trader, with the captain of which he had taken service for the trip from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro, out and home again. For the first half of the journey, all went well. The captain was a good seaman, and a steady disciplinarian; the crew, composed mainly of Portuguese with a sprinkling of other nationalities, worked well together, and had nothing to complain of. Arrived at Rio, the Santa Cruz (that was the name of the vessel) put into port for the space of one month, at the expiration of which time she started again, homeward-bound, having a valuable cargo of sugar, rum, tobacco, and indigo, and four passengers on board—namely, one of the ship's owners with his wife and his wife's brother, and a Mexican diamond merchant, about whom the report went round that he had with him a hundred thousand pounds worth of gold and precious stones.

This rumoured treasure aroused the cupidity of certain of the crew, and a deadly plot, well-laid, well-concealed, swiftly and surely carried out, placed the ship and all in her at the mercy of the mutineers and their leader. This man, who went by the name of Joseph Staffel, was the second mate, and a German by birth. The brave captain was shot down while defending the door of the cabin in which his unfortunate passengers had taken refuge. They, and such of the crew as were not in the plot, were butchered and cast into the sea. Christian Bjornsen, because he happened to be the only man on board who had made the voyage across the Pacific, was offered his life in exchange for his services, provided that he cast his lot in with that of the mutineers; and, having no alternative but that of immediate death before his eyes, he accepted it. They then put the ship about, and made straight for that part of the great Equatorial ocean where the islands cluster thickest, and which is known as Oceania on the maps.

Their plan now was to deposit their treasure in some place of safety; to lead

for awhile an idle rollicking life in the softest climate and amid the loveliest scenery on the face of the globe; and by-and-by, when the disappearance of the Santa Cruz had somewhat faded from men's minds, to get off in the direction of the East Indies, land quietly somewhere along the coast, and dispose of their booty up the country, where they would be sure to find customers among the native princes. It was an ingeniously-contrived scheme, and it worked well, up to a certain point. They buried the diamond merchant's treasure in a little uninhabited island lying about half way between the Mulgrave islands and those known as the Caroline, or New Philippic, islands; then bore away to the N.W.; landed on one of the Pelew group; ran the Santa Cruz into a little natural harbour well out of sight of any passing sail; and there, being trustfully received by the gentle people of those shores, built them a village of huts, and lived a lawless life for many months.

At length, however, what with drink and self-indulgence and excesses of all kinds, a fatal sickness broke out among the men, and spread from them to the natives. Of the mutineers there were sixteen, including Christian Bjornsen; and of the islanders upon that one island where they settled, there were about three hundred. In the course of a fortnight from the first appearance of the epidemic, there remained only five out of the sixteen strangers, while more than fifty of the aborigines were either dead or past recovery. Before the end of the third week, the five were reduced to three, and the sickness was fast spreading to the neighbouring islands. At this desperate juncture, the natives rose and expelled the three last white men from their coasts. Those three were Christian Bjornsen, Joseph Staffel, and a Portuguese named Lopez, who had taken service originally as cook.

Having now no alternative but to abandon the Santa Cruz, they put off in the ship's pinnace, taking with them all the food, water, and ammunition they could carry, besides a considerable sum in specie; and steering N.N.W., made straight for the Philippine islands. There they hoped to take refuge for awhile in the isle of Luzon, and thence to get off by-and-by on board some Spanish vessel. On the second day, however, the wind changed, and they were beaten considerably out of their course; on the third, the cook sickened; and on the fifth, after twenty-four hours of great suffering, he died horribly. They

throw his body overboard, and it was immediately devoured by a shark that had followed the boat since sunrise.

There now remained but two heirs to the buried treasure. Staffel, who had been foremost in the work of crime; and the Fin, who had only acquiesced in it to save his life. Cast adrift together thus on the wide ocean, buffeted by contrary winds, pursued by death and disaster, mutually fearing, hating, and distrusting each other, these two men, with only a plank between themselves and destruction, beat about for the space of three weeks and a day—only to be encountered at the end of that time by a Japanese war-junk, stripped of all they possessed, and left to perish between sea and sky, with never a biscuit nor a drop of fresh-water to keep body and soul together. They now gave themselves up for lost, and, for the next fifty hours, suffered all the torments of thirst and starvation. Twice during this brief interval Staffel, maddened by despair, attempted to murder his unoffending fellow-sufferer. But Bjornsen, though the smaller man, was, in truth, the stronger, and succeeded not only in defending himself, but in binding the hands of his antagonist. At length, towards the afternoon of the third day, they had the unhopèd-for good fortune to be picked up by a French corvette bound for the Cape; and with this signal deliverance their trials came to an end.

Now Bjornsen, being persuaded that his life was in danger, was anxious to shake himself free of Staffel as soon as possible; so, having arrived at Cape Town, he sought, and found, a berth on board an English merchantman just about to weigh anchor for the port of London, and by these means succeeded in getting off to sea again almost immediately. Had he not done so, he was confident that the German, in order, perhaps, to destroy the only surviving witness of the mutiny, or, more likely still, in order that he might himself remain in sole possession of the secret of the treasure, would surely have had his life. Once since then, and once only, had the two met face to face. It happened some five or six years ago at Toulon, where Bjornsen, being in port for a few days with his ship, recognised his former messmate at work in the quarries—a convict, chained leg to leg with another felon, and condemned for life to the galleys.

“And the treasure?” said I, when at length he ceased speaking.

“Master,” he replied, “the treasure is there—the treasure is for you.”

“Nay,” I said, “these things happened more than twenty years ago. It has been found and taken away long since.”

He shook his head, and smote his hands together. It was an old habit he had when he meant to be emphatic.

“No, no, no, Master,” he said; “the treasure is there always. I know it. I go down into the cave, and I see it every night—in my dreams. We sail together—we find it—it is there—it waits for you.”

“Then it belongs to the family of the diamond merchant.”

Again he shook his head. The diamond merchant was a solitary man—as solitary as himself. He knew this; for, hoping to be rewarded for his services, he had at one time made enquiry for the heirs, in order to help them to the recovery of the treasure. No—it belonged of right to no man. It was as free as the ore that awaits the hand of the miner. And the secret was his only; for Joseph Staffel was as a dead man in the eye of the law, and could neither claim nor seek his ill-gotten booty. As for his having already found his way back to the island, and so gained possession of the spoil, that was a suggestion not to be entertained for a moment. Where and how should such a man as Joseph Staffel find the means for an expedition of the kind? And how could he possibly undertake it without a boat, however small; without a crew, however few; without money; without credit; above all, without betraying the blood upon his hands?

All this was no doubt true; but then was it not equally true as regarded myself? Granted that the treasure yet remained intact, where was I to find the boat, the crew, and money enough to traverse half the globe? It might as well be buried in the moon, for any benefit that I was likely to get out of it.

But the Fin's heart was set upon the enterprise. The treasure was there—was for me—and we must seek it. For himself all he desired was to pour this wealth out at my feet—to see me rich—and to know that he had been the stepping-stone to my fortunes. It was his one topic; and from that day forth he could think and talk of nothing else. At length the man's intense earnestness produced its effect. I had begun by thinking it a wild, impossible scheme; I ended by embarking in it with a strength of purpose

that bore down every hesitation, and by staking my dearest hopes, and all that I possessed, on that one issue.

Far yonder, over the sea, in a quiet little far-away port in the curve of a sunny Cornish bay, there dwelt one for whom I had worked, and waited, and hoped from my boyhood upwards, and for whose sake I desired to be rich. Her name was Jessie Trevanion. She lived with her mother, the widow of a lieutenant in the navy, and had a brother in the merchant-service named Job—one of the best fellows in the world, and my greatest friend. Jessie and I had loved each other as long as we could remember anything, and were to be married some day—who could tell how many years hence? She had nothing; and all my worldly possessions consisted of a small house and five acres of very indifferent land, on the outskirts of the town in which we both were born. It was a tiny inheritance that came to me on the death of my mother, and it brought me in just thirty-five pounds a year. We used to dream sometimes, Jessie and I, that when we both were old, and I had earned enough to retire upon, we would rebuild the house and make a pretty place of it to end our days in.

Well, these were but dreams; and like dreams they vanished, and were forgotten, and were succeeded by others. I now thought only of the treasure; and soon no sacrifice that might enable me to seek it seemed too heavy for the occasion. For what were my petty prospects in comparison with such a chance as this? I saw all my hopes realised at a blow—one brilliant moment replacing years of toil—love, wealth, position, influence, the power to do good, and the power to enjoy, all achieved by one daring speculation which, if even it failed, could only throw me back for a year in my profession. In a word, my mind being made up for the venture, I decided to go home to England, as soon as my Wurtzburg work was completed, and, if the necessary money were obtainable in no other way, to sell or mortgage that small property of mine, and go to sea with the proceeds.

How I did all this eventually, and what it cost me to do it, I need not say. My story grows long, and I must not weary you with minor details. Enough that I had opposition to encounter, and encountered it; ridicule to bear, and bore it; difficulties to overcome, and overcame them. Happily for me, none of these

which I could have least borne to combat them. My little Jessie trusted me as perfectly as she loved me; and, like a true woman, speeded me on my way, no matter at what cost of secret tears and sorrow. The end of it all was that, having mortgaged the little place for the sum of three hundred pounds, I found myself free and ready to start, just as the first sickle was put into the corn, and the harvest moon was on the increase.

Our plan was to go from Southampton to Colon, from Colon across the isthmus to Panama, and at Panama to charter a small vessel for the remainder of the voyage. It being absolutely necessary that all this should be done in the cheapest possible way, we arranged that I should take a steerage passage in one of the Southampton and Hamburg steamers, while Bjornsen would work his way out as a seaman, and so meet me on the other side of the Atlantic. The boat once chartered at Panama, we should be able to manage, he thought, with one able-bodied seaman and a boy. Nor was this all. The trip must have an ostensible object—that of trading with the natives for coral and spices. For this purpose we laid in a small cargo of beads, knives, gunpowder, printed cottons, and the like, and sent it on in advance as merchandise, to be picked up at Colon. This was Bjornsen's idea—as, indeed, the whole scheme of action was of Bjornsen's planning. Simple as a child in all else, the man showed himself to be wonderfully clear-headed and practical in all that bore reference to the expedition.

At length, the money being to hand, the cargo bought and shipped, and everything settled, we started. I felt my little darling's last kiss upon my cheek for hours that bright sunshiny morning, while the train was carrying me every moment farther and farther away; but the die was cast now, and it was of no use to be down-hearted. I tried to comfort myself by thinking of all the pride and joy with which I should return, to make her mine for ever; but I remember, also, how I leaned back in the corner, pretending to be asleep, and how I shut my eyes to force back the tears that would keep starting.

We went first to Plymouth, where Bjornsen found no difficulty in getting a berth on board a merchant steamer bound for Colon; so we parted there, and I went on to Southampton alone, arriving just in time to step on board the *Allemania* a couple of hours before she steamed out of

a bright face came forward to welcome me, and a familiar voice rang in my ear, saying—

"Dear old Hugh, how are you? I have been looking out for you these last four hours."

I could not believe my eyes. It was Trevanyon.

He then went on to tell me how, having unexpectedly come off his own last voyage and gone straight home only two days before, he had heard all the story from his mother and sister, and taken it suddenly into his head that he would like to go with me.

"I don't altogether believe in the treasure, you know," said he; "but there is a buccaneering spirit of adventure about the whole affair that takes my fancy. So, here I am, just paid off, with money in my pocket and my time at my own disposal. Jessie tells me you want an able-bodied seaman. I am an able-bodied seaman—though it is the first time I have offered myself in that capacity. Will you have me?"

Would I have him indeed! Was it not the one thing I would have desired above all else?

"Job, my dear lad," I said, "it seems altogether too good to be true!"

And so it did. I could scarcely believe it, even though his hands were on my shoulders and his laughing eyes were looking into mine.

It was true, however; and from this moment I felt that his handsome face brought good luck with it. We had a merry time, I can tell you, from Southampton to Colon, even though we were only steerage passengers and somewhat over-crowded. My bright boy was the life and soul of the voyage, always helpful, always joyous, popular alike with the crew, the passengers, and the children. As for the women, it is not too much to say that they idolised the very deck he walked upon. When at length we neared the end of our time, having touched in due course at all the usual ports by the way, there was not a man on board who would not have gone with us for the asking.

Arrived at Colon—for it was Colon and not Aspinwall in those days—we had to wait nearly three weeks for Bjornsen's arrival, and then went all three across the isthmus to Panama. Here, after some further delay, we succeeded in getting the sort of craft we wanted, and at last there came a day when we actually weighed anchor and set our faces westward.

After this it was all one long, endless

monotony of sea and sky, with now and then a gale, or a fog, or a calm to vary the programme. Sometimes, during the first fortnight or so, we sighted a sail or a steamer in the offing; but soon we seemed to have the great lonely ocean to ourselves, and went on for weeks together without seeing even a sea-gull on the wing. At such times, when all went well, and the sun shone in a cloudless sky, and the light breeze filled our sails continually, and the waves chased each other for ever towards the same horizon, a strange sort of despair used to fall upon me—for we seemed to be always going on, yet never approaching anything, never passing anything, never drawing nearer to the goal of which we were in search. I had never, in truth, realised till now the vast extent of the great ocean, and it overwhelmed me.

And now our dreams were all of that solitary speck of barren rock to which Job, after hearing Bjornsen's description of the place, gave the name of One-Palm Island. We talked of nothing else, and we talked of it so continually that Job, who began by having no faith in the object of our voyage, ended by believing in it as heartily as either the Fin or myself. Every night as we sat round the oil-lamp in our little cabin, he would question Bjornsen about the island and its bearings. Every night Bjornsen would prick out the spot upon the chart, and tell how the group lay, and what its bearings were; how the coral reefs were to be found on this side, and the best landing place on that; how the larger islands produced cocoa-palms, and bread-trees, and various kinds of mulberries, oranges, and peaches; whereas the small one bore only barren bushes and aloes, and on its highest point, one ancient solitary palm. Then he would bring out his pocket-book—that same old greasy pocket-book that used to lie under his pillow when he was ill of the fever—and explain its contents for the hundredth time. This pen and ink outline was a rough chart of the coast-line; this paper full of figures was a table of soundings; the third, as we all knew, recorded the geographical bearings of the island. The fragment of coral was a specimen brought up from under the rocks close against the mouth of the cave in which the treasure was buried; these pearls were from an oyster shell found near the same spot; and those dried leaves were leaves from off a camphor tree in one of the two larger islands. As for the treasure, it was buried, at a depth of four

feet below the sand, at the farther end of a cave under the rocks on the east side of the island, the mouth of which could only be entered at low water. It consisted of gold dust in bags, gold and silver ore in bars, and various kinds of precious stones. The papers of sailing directions and soundings, and the rough chart, were copies, he explained, of those originally taken on the spot by one of the mutineers, an Englishman named Ellis, who was one of the first to die when the great sickness broke out. Nothing, in short, could be more precise or consistent than his whole narrative.

So the time passed, and so we sailed on (for the most part with favourable winds), during eleven weary weeks, without sighting land of any kind, or once coming within hail of any vessel. At the beginning of the twelfth week, we made our first island—a solitary, wooded peak, lying off to the northward; the first of four, all of which presently came into sight. These, according to our large ocean chart, must have been the islands discovered by Walker in 1814. Never was any sight more welcome; for we were getting alarmingly short of water, and were only too glad to replenish our casks at the cost of turning a few hours out of our direct course. And what a paradise it was, that first island on which we landed!—a paradise of gorgeous flowers, and fruits, and pleasant springs; where the jasmine thickets were alive with Lorys white and red; and the green parrot chattered among the ripe bananas; and the tiny azure parroquet of the tropics flitted, a flying sapphire, through the topmost plumes of the cocoa-palms.

After this, we sighted more islands from time to time in the far distance; but, not knowing whether they were inhabited, or whether, if inhabited, the natives were likely to be friendly, we held on our course and turned aside no more.

At length, in the beginning of the fifth month of our voyage, we entered upon a vast archipelago; and soon, look towards which point of the compass we might, we saw islands innumerable dotting the horizon. Some of these appeared to be quite large—as large, say, as Teneriffe; while others, again, were mere specks upon the face of the ocean. Job, whose delight it was to identify them by the chart, gave them all kinds of names, most of which I have long since forgotten. Then, at last we came to the Mulgrave Group—a flat, fertile cluster, inhabited by a gentle copper-coloured race, from whom we

bought good store of bread-fruit, oranges, and maize; and with whom we spent one day before pushing on for the end of our journey. For we knew now that we were really drawing towards the goal, and every hour's delay had become intolerable.

It was about a week after this that I was awakened one night by Bjornsen's voice in my ear, saying:—

“Master, master! Get up, for the love of God! Get up and come on deck.”

I sat up, bewildered. The moon was shining down the companion-way, and making a square patch of silver on the cabin floor. It seemed to me that the night was unusually brilliant; and the vessel was evidently running gaily before the breeze.

“What is the matter?” I said, startled and half asleep.

The Fin pointed up the companion ladder, and putting his mouth to my ear, said in a low, awe-struck whisper:—

“Joseph Staffel is dead, and his ghost is sitting on the taffrail in the moonlight.”

“Nonsense,” I said, peevishly; “you have dreamt it.”

“Master, I have not dreamt it. It is my watch—I never sleep on my watch. I was more awake than you are. Come and see.”

I hurried on my clothes and went on deck with him. A wonderful sight awaited me. The sea was as I had never seen it before—one sheet of moonlit phosphorescence to the farthest horizon. Each wave as it rose was as a wave of molten silver; each little foam-crest as it shivered was as a shower of diamonds; in the wake of the bark there flashed a trail of white fire that blinded me with its splendour.

The Fin laid a shuddering hand on mine.

“Oh, master,” he said, “do you not see it?”

I looked where he pointed, but I saw nothing—nothing but the moonlight. I shaded my eyes with my hands; I went nearer. *Did* I see anything? Did I see a faint, strange outline—a something as palpable as a shadow on a blind, or a breath upon a mirror—a something so vague that it was gone before I could say it was there?

“No, no,” I said, “it is impossible. It was an illusion. It was nothing.”

The Fin shook his head, and smote his hands, palm to palm.

“Master,” he said, solemnly, “it was there, in the same spot, when we came on deck; but when you looked at it, it vanished.”

Nothing after this could move him from the belief that Joseph Staffel was dead, and that his restless spirit, the harbinger of evil, had crossed our path for woe. Possessed by this belief, he lost heart and desponded. He nailed a little print of the Madonna to the mainmast, and vowed a silver heart to St. Christopher if we came to our journey's end in safety. No seamanship, however skilful—no winds, however favourable, would avail us now, save through help of Our Lady and the saints; for the dead had tracked us on the high seas, and ill-fortune was fated to come of it.

Even Job, being a sailor, was not without a touch of superstition. Sound asleep all the time in his hammock, he never heard of the thing till next morning; but I could see that he more than half believed it. Thus, although we had started so joyously and fared so prosperously, a gloom fell upon the last days of our voyage out.

It was just at the first flush of dawn, some four days after this, that we first sighted the islands we had come so far to seek. I had just swept that part of the horizon with my glass and seen nothing; yet the next moment they were there—faint, cloudlike, distinct—as if they had suddenly risen up out of the ocean. Silently, I put the glass into Bjornsen's hand. As silently, he looked—returned it—bent his head affirmatively—and, walking quietly aft, took the helm into his own hands. That same afternoon, we dropped anchor off the largest island at the spot indicated in the table of soundings; and, leaving only one seaman in charge of the bark, took to the small boat, and rowed over to One-Palm Island. The three lay to each other just like the three points of an equilateral triangle, at equal distances, and about half a league apart. The largest appeared to be some nine or ten miles in circumference—that is, about the size of the Isle of Capri; the second largest was perhaps two-thirds of that size; and the third (a mere wedge-like summit of rock and bushes crowned with a single cocoa-palm), was no bigger than that little island on Lago Maggiore, known as Isola Madre.

The afternoon was very warm and still, and the sea beneath our keel was so transparent that we seemed to see down fathoms deep into the green abyss below. Even on the side of the coral reef, the water only creamed a little where it fretted against the rocks, or lapped in and out of the hollows. As we rowed on, the island from which we started seemed to diminish, while that we were approaching rose

higher out of the water at every stroke of the oar. Soon we were so near that we could see the shell-fish clinging round the rocks, and almost touch the long tresses of green and purple sea-weed that swayed to and fro at their moorings, as the soft swell came and went. Meanwhile, knowing that the far-sought goal was reached at last, I rowed on mechanically, scarcely believing that it was not all a dream, from which I must wake presently.

"I don't see where we are to land," said Job. "There isn't footing here for a goat, and the rocks go sheer down into the water."

But Bjornsen replied only by a sign, pointing round silently towards the northward.

All at once, having rounded a jutting point of rock, we came upon a tiny cove of pure white sand, some thirty or forty feet in breadth; and here we ran the boat in, and hauled her up upon the shore.

Suddenly the Fin threw up both his hands, uttered a strange guttural cry, and ran wildly forward.

"Oh, master," he said, hoarsely, "see—see what is here!"

It was a boat—an old broken-up, abandoned boat, gaping at every seam, half-filled with sand, and green with the mosses of years. There was even an empty nest in it, long since deserted, in which some sea-bird had once reared her brood in undisturbed possession.

We stood round in silence. We looked at the boat—we looked in each other's faces. Job was the first to speak.

"It may have been cast up by the sea," he faltered.

Bjornsen shook his head.

"It may have fallen from the sky," he said, bitterly.

We had brought tools with us—a pick, a spade, and a small hatchet. We each took one; but we knew now that we should have no use for them.

The Fin led the way, and we followed. He struck up the cove and along a steep ravine that brought us out presently upon the upper part of the island. The sun was now dropping westward, and the palm-tree, towering alone above our heads, cast its lengthening shadow along the barren slope, like the gnomon of a gigantic dial. Following the path of this shadow, we came to the edge of a steep cliff overhanging the sea. It was a place quite unapproachable from the side of the water—all broken rocks and sunken reefs below; but accessible to a sure-footed

climber descending upon it from above. Here we took off our shoes and stockings, and, clinging from ledge to ledge, let ourselves down the face of the precipice as far as a shelf of slippery rock about six feet above the level of the sea. Here Bjornsen struck off towards the left, and, crawling round a projecting corner of rock, disappeared from our sight. We followed, and found ourselves looking down upon a handful of wet shingle, and the mouth of a low cave hidden back among the rocks.

Bjornsen was already at the bottom, and staring into the cavern. In another moment, Job and I had jumped down after him, and were staring in also. It seemed to reach a long way, and was quite dark within. We then struck a light, lit a candle that we had brought for the purpose, and went in.

The entrance was low and narrow, and the ground all wet where the sea had just retreated; but when we had penetrated some three or four yards into the heart of the rock, the roof rose suddenly, and we found we were treading on dry sand above the level of the tide. Bjornsen, always leading, held the candle low, that we might see where to tread.

All at once he stopped. His foot had struck against some dark object, and he bent down to examine it.

"What's this?" he said, drawing back hurriedly.

What was it? A drift of tangled seaweed? A bundle of mouldy rags washed up by the sea? Nothing—merciful Heaven! nothing—that was once a man?

Yes—just that. A man once, now a huddled, shapeless, undistinguishable heap, horrible to look upon! He had evidently been murdered where he lay, face downwards, in the sand. The skull was cloven almost in twain, and a rusty marlinspike—probably the weapon with which the deed was done—lay close beside him.

And the treasure? Ah, well—there was a pile of sand and a deep hole at the upper end of the cave, and that was all. I had expected it all along—the treasure was gone.

* * * *

I have already written too much, and I must tell you the rest in as few words as I can. We could not bury the body in the cave; it would have been impossible to move it, but we piled sand over it where it lay, and so left it. Bjornsen believed to his dying day that it was the corpse of Joseph Staffel; and it was not

impossible. He learned from subsequent enquiry that the German, with two of his fellow-convicts, had escaped three years before from Toulon, and that none of them had ever been heard of since. He might have gone with them in search of the treasure, and there been murdered by them. Who can tell?

As for our expedition, it did not turn out such a dead loss, after all. We found no treasure of gold and jewels, it is true; but we turned our little cargo to account, and brought back a valuable freight of coral, rare feathers, spices, and the like. By the sale of these, I not only cleared my expenses, but paid off my mortgagee and cleared a fair profit, which I divided with my companions. Bjornsen, my faithful Bjornsen, is no more; Jessie has been my wife these fifteen years; Job commands a fine vessel, of which he is half owner.

And this is all I have to tell you about One-Palm Island: this is all I have ever been able to learn about the fate of the man called Joseph Staffel.

As Vernon Blake looked up, after reading this manuscript, he noticed that the old Ritter was growing fidgetty, and scarcely had the voice ceased, when he threw up his arms, exclaiming, "Children, the dawn is at hand, our allotted time of emancipation is over, and for another twelvemonth we return, motionless and speechless, to our canvas prisons. As for this stranger——"

"Listen, father, listen!" cried Ilma, gliding to his side, and holding up her hand to call his attention.

At that moment the shrill crowing of a cock echoed throughout the room, and ere it was repeated, the forms of the company grew misty and indistinct. One by one they faded from Vernon Blake's view. Last of all, the walls of the Blue Chamber seemed to close in upon him, and he sank down upon the floor in a state of unconsciousness.

"Will not the Herrschaft rouse himself and come to breakfast? The Herr Graf has been waiting more than half an hour, and the coffee will be cold."

The voice, accompanied by frequent rappings, came from the outside of the chamber door, and Vernon Blake waking up, found himself stretched on the funereal bed in the midst of his own chamber, into which a bright light was already streaming.

"What is it?" he cried, jumping to his

feet at a bound, and admitting a pleasant, ruddy-faced man, whom he recognised as one of the servants who had been in attendance on him the previous evening. "Where is the Ritter, and the Fraulein Ilma, and the murdered student, Franz Von Einsten?"

"I know nothing of the people of whom the Herrschaft speaks," said the man, smiling good-humouredly; "I only know that the Herr Graf is waiting breakfast, and that the coffee is already cold."

"Well, but where am I?" asked Blake, rubbing his eyes.

"In the Castle of Treuenfels, the guest of His Highness the Graf Von Wehrendorf," answered the servant, bowing low.

"But what could have made me think of these strange people, their murders, hangings, jealousies, and all the rest of it?"

"Perhaps it was the *vixki*," answered the servant, with a slight smile.

"The what?" cried Blake.

"The *vixki*! the wine of Ireland, which the Herrschaft drank after his supper."

"Ah, the whisky! Sir Cato Clay's present to the Graf—I recollect now; there may be something in what you say. Tell your master I will be down directly." And having dismissed the man he hastened to make his toilet.

When Vernon Blake arrived in the dining-room he found his host and Made-moiselle Ernestine at table, waiting for him.

The gentleman greeted him with a jolly laugh; the lady looked demurely at the table-cloth, as though she, too, were inclined to smile, but considered that politeness required her to conceal her amusement from the guest of the house.

"They evidently think I am not quite sober," thought Blake to himself. "That confounded fellow has spread the story about the whisky, and nobody will believe a word I say."

When breakfast was over—and an uncomfortable meal it was for Vernon Blake—the Graf invited his guest to prolong his stay, but on learning that that was impossible, he ordered the sleigh to be in readiness, to convey the Englishman to Linz.

"One word before I go, Herr Graf," said Blake, as they were walking up and down in the long picture gallery, while waiting for the vehicle, "Let me give you a word of advice about your Blue Chamber there. Never pass Christmas Eve in it, or, better still, destroy the portraits of all those ill-looking ancestors of yours. They are a fearful company to have under one's roof. I have good reason for saying so," he added, as he saw an amused smile on his host's face. "Last night——"

"Ah! the portraits troubled you in your dreams, I suppose?" said Von Wehrendorf. "Ludwig told me, that when he awoke you this morning, you asked him a number of mysterious questions about murdered students, and strange Ritters, and all sorts of horrors."

"Dreams!" echoed Blake, "Dreams! I was never more wide awake in my life than when I left my room late last night to find my note-book, and was compelled to hear the secrets of that infernal Blue Chamber," and, with some warmth—for when you have seen a ghost, not to speak of a whole roomful of phantoms, it is annoying to find that people don't believe you when you relate your experiences—he proceeded to pour into the politely sceptical ears of his host all the marvellous adventures of the previous night. But the Graf was not to be convinced.

"You must have been perusing the family documents in the muniment chest, which is in the room where you slept," he said, as they reached the hall door, before which the sleigh was now standing ready. "and your brain, excited by your laborious journey of yesterday, raised up a crowd of phantoms in your dreams."

"A plausible explanation, Herr Graf," cried Vernon Blake, as he shook hands heartily with his host, and sprang into the sleigh. "A thousand thanks for your hospitality, but—they were real ghosts all the same, on the word of a special correspondent!"

"The papers in the muniment chest, on the word of a Von Wehrendorf," laughed the Graf, waving his hand to his departing guest.

"And the *verdammte Vixki*!" muttered Ludwig.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MANSFIELD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXI. JUDITH'S SUGGESTION.

EVY'S first thought in the morning was upon the quarrel, so much more serious than their ordinary disagreements, that had taken place between her uncle and aunt on the previous evening. When they had parted in the drawing-room it had certainly not been healed, but she had fancied that some time during the night she had heard Mr. Hulet's footsteps about the house, and it was possible that in the meanwhile he had sought a reconciliation with his wife. If she herself had been in the like position it would have been a natural course enough, she thought, to have adopted; for how could one go to rest with such anger in one's breast as he must needs have been tormented with? She took no side in these unhappy occurrences with either party, far less indulged, as Judith did, in railing accusation of them both; but she knew, whoever was in the wrong, that if an attempt at making matters up had been made at all, it would have proceeded from her uncle. At breakfast, to which her aunt never came down, this idea of hers received some confirmation from the expression of his countenance, which was grave and sad, but by no means stern, as of one who is not only no longer wrathful, but who repents of wrath. On the other hand, it might have been that he had made overtures of peace and failed; he was only calm, perhaps, because he had made up his mind to do what he had often threatened, but had hitherto from fear of the world's ridicule refrained from doing, namely, to separate from his wife a second time. If this were so, much as Evy had

hailed their reconciliation, she could not grieve at such a resolve. Separation was infinitely to be preferred to a union that only bred discontent, not to say hate; and as for the ridicule of the world, the unhappy pair could scarcely earn more of that by their divorce, than their daily disagreements brought upon them.

The morning meal was carried on in almost total silence. Judith, who rarely spoke in Mr. Hulet's presence, though she manifested little reticence about him or his affairs behind his back, never opened her lips except to eat: she was one of those few young women who make good breakfasts, such as young men do: a very wholesome sign, and the evidence, some say, of a good conscience. Mr. Hulet's amount of food at that meal rivalled that "glass of curaçoa and a pickled walnut," which is said to be the morning rations of some fast gentlemen of the town. Not indeed that he took liqueurs and pickles, far from it; the parallel held good only as respected quantity; he was well content with half a digestive biscuit soaked in his tea. But on this particular occasion his appetite seemed to be unequal even to that moderate provision. He played with his spoon with an absent and yet anxious air—the air of one who listens for some expected sound—and when spoken to, he started and flushed up, which, nervous as he was, Evy had never before known him to do. "I am afraid you are not so well as usual, uncle," were certainly not words that would have ordinarily put him into confusion, or cause him to drop his spoon; yet now they did so. Evy was glad for his sake to see that Judith was too much occupied with the contents of her plate to observe this, though she had been watching him narrowly just before, as she had

an unpleasant habit of doing. Evy herself, when somewhat self-occupied, had often looked up suddenly to find Judith's eyes fixed upon her with a searching expression, which had brought the colour into her cheeks, when she had happened to be thinking of Jack.

"Not well? No, I am not quite well, Evy," Mr. Hulet had answered.

This was a strange reply, she thought, for it was his custom, though she for her part judiciously ignored it, to consider himself always very far from well; and what was still more curious was, that on this particular morning he looked very indisposed, and might have been expected to issue a worse bulletin than usual.

"It is the heat, I think," he went on; "it was so hot last night that I got scarcely any sleep at all."

"Then that accounts for my hearing you move about in the night," said Evy, her hopes that a reconciliation had been effected falling to zero.

"No, not I. I never left my room."

"Indeed! I also thought I heard you, Mr. Hulet," said Judith, quietly. She raised her eyes to his, and regarded him very steadfastly.

"No," said he, decisively, but without the irritability that contradiction generally excited in him. "You are both mistaken; it was not I."

"Then it must have been my aunt," remarked Evy. "She has not yet rung her bell, though it is past her usual time. She doubtless feels fatigued."

To this neither of her companions responded one word. There was no look of contemptuous incredulity, however, upon her uncle's face—such as an allusion to his wife's invalidism now generally awoke; and Judith's lips also forbore to wear their usual cynical smile. A quarter of an hour passed, during which the latter finished her meal, yet showed no inclination to leave the table; while Mr. Hulet delayed over his sopped biscuit in a very unusual manner.

"Why, you have not opened your newspaper, uncle," said Evy; surprised to see the copy of yesterday's Times, which it was his custom to peruse at breakfast, still lying in its wrapper beside him.

"I had forgotten it," said he, taking it up at once, but unfolding it, not as usual with fussy impatience, but very slowly, and waiting after the rustle of each fold, as one who does not wish to dull or interrupt his sense of hearing.

"It is no use waiting for aunt to send down for her breakfast," observed Evy, presently; "some more tea had better be made for her. Oh, here is Jane at last."

It was the lady's-maid who entered, but without that prim and exclusive air that Mrs. Hulet's own attendant—who had lived with her for years, was the chief of the domestic staff, and sometimes disputed the sovereignty even of her mistress—was wont to wear.

"If you please, sir, mistress is not in her room."

"Not in her room!" echoed Evy in alarm, then looked mechanically towards her uncle.

"Eh, what?" said he, putting down the newspaper and speaking in an absent way. "What is that you say, Jane?"

"Mrs. Hulet is not in her room, sir; has never been in her room all night, or at least not to bed. The bed has not been slept in."

Not a word said Judith, but kept her watchful face on Mr. Hulet's as he turned an inquiring look from one to the other, and at last met her own.

"Do you know anything about this, Judith?" said he, sharply.

"Nothing, sir. I went to my room last night, when Mrs. Hulet did. It was very late, if you remember, and my impression was that she intended to retire to rest at once."

"This is very distressing, very alarming," observed Mr. Hulet, nervously. "Can anybody suggest any possible explanation of my wife's absence?"

"I trust mistress didn't go down again to the cliff walk last night after Miss Judith had left her," observed the maid, with a frightened look.

"That is not at all likely," observed Mr. Hulet. "It is a spot I have always warned her against, even in the daytime."

This reply was scarcely conclusive, as the fact of his having warned his recalcitrant spouse against going anywhere was always a temptation with her to visit the place. That objection, however, could not be urged just then, and other suggestions to account for Mrs. Hulet's absence were therefore made—none of which were very probable. She might have gone for an early walk into Balcombe—so early that she must have sat up all night to take it—or she might have walked in her sleep. These explanations in short were felt to be untenable even by those who proposed them. A search was instituted throughout the

house and grounds, in which everybody took part, but without noise. A solemn hush pervaded the little household, such as arises from a sense of serious calamity.

"It is my opinion, miss," whispered Jane confidentially to Evy, "that missus has left home for good and all."

"Why so, Jane?"

"Well, miss, it is idle to deny that she and master were not on the best of terms; and last night there was a battle royal between them. My mistress rang the drawing-room bell in the middle of it, and bade me get to bed, for she should not require my services. I shall never forget how they two looked when I went in. I thought to myself it was quite lucky Miss Judith was with them."

"Why lucky?" inquired Evy, pretending not to understand the other's meaning.

"Well, perhaps I should not say 'lucky,' miss, for I am sure master would not hurt a fly; but my poor dear mistress could certainly be very trying at times to any man's temper."

It was not the hideous notion of personal violence suggested by these words which made Evy's heart stand still, as she listened to them, for she knew that such an idea was ridiculous, but the use of the term "poor dear," and the quiet adoption of the past tense; this woman, who knew her mistress well, seemed to have taken it for granted that Mrs. Hulet had fled from her own roof for ever, if she had not found refuge in death itself.

"I hope things are not so bad as you think, Jane; that is, that my aunt has taken no such extreme step as to leave her home."

Jane shook her head. "No, Miss Evy," returned she, gravely, "she has not done that; leastways, in the manner you suppose. She would have taken some things with her if she had done that, you see; if it was but her bonnet and shawl. And there they are hanging up in their usual place."

"Good Heavens, Jane, what on earth do you suppose she has done?"

"Well, miss," answered Jane, dropping her voice to a stealthy whisper. "I do think it is only too probable as she has committed—Lor, Miss Judith, what a turn you did give me! coming upon one all of a sudden, at a time like this."

"I didn't mean to frighten you, Jane," said Judith, quietly. "But what is that

which you think your mistress has committed?"

"Lor, miss, nothing; at least, I was only going to say that I was afraid that she had committed a sad mistake in leaving master in this kind of way—which is sure to make people talk—instead of separating from him by mutual agreement as she did before. She can't a got a clambering up them rocks, and hiding in the caverns, just to give him a good fright I suppose?"

Jane gazed at the indented face of the cliff, up which it would have taken an expert gull catcher "all he knew" to have climbed ten feet, and tried to appear impressed with this new theory of the cause of poor Mrs. Hulet's absence—it must be confessed not with great success.

"You are not telling the truth, Jane," said Judith, sternly; "and it is the duty of all persons under such circumstances as these to tell all they suspect as well as all they know. You were about to say that you thought Mrs. Hulet had committed suicide. You will have to repeat that at the inquest, remember."

"Oh, lor, I trust not, miss," exclaimed Jane, in inexpressible alarm. "I do hope you won't go telling upon me for having taken such a foolish—such a wicked idea into my head."

"As to its being foolish—wiser people than you will have to judge of that," said Judith, coldly; "and as to its being wicked—nobody can help their thoughts."

"I think it is very wicked," broke in Evy, indignantly. "Why should Jane or anybody imagine that my aunt should have committed self-murder, Judith? I beg that Jane will not repeat such an idea to any persons, no matter who they may be. I cannot imagine anything more likely to distress dear uncle, who is already in a most miserable state, as you can see."

"You think that Mrs. Hulet fell over the cliff-walk by accident then, as was first suggested?" rejoined Judith.

"I think nothing of the sort," exclaimed Evy, angrily, "except that you ought to be ashamed of yourself for talking so coolly of the possibility of so terrible a mischance. I hope and pray that this mysterious affair may be cleared up without any such shocking solution. If you really thought what you say, Judith, I should consider you very hard-hearted and ungrateful."

"Yes; that is because you are so impulsive, Evy," returned Judith, quietly. "Your affections are so strong that they

weaken your sense of duty. As to my being hard-hearted and ungrateful, I should be open to both those charges if I did not feel as I do, most resolute to see justice done. I owe very much (as you so delicately hinted) to Mrs. Hulet, and it is for that very reason that I am not so much inclined to consult other people's feelings, but rather to have this matter sifted to the bottom."

"If you mean to suggest that my uncle's behaviour to his wife, Judith, was cruel or tyrannical to the extent of driving her out of this house——"

"We know that much," interrupted Judith coldly; "that at least. She may have magnified her troubles, but that the sense she entertained of them has caused her to leave her home (unless that cliff-walk suggestion is the correct one) is, in my opinion, certain. For my part I shall feel thankful if it turns out that she has done no worse."

"Pray do not raise your voice, Judith," said Evy, earnestly, "for my uncle is quite near, and I should not wish him to suffer the pain that your words inflict on me. What I have to say in answer to your most unwarranted suggestion is this; that if the catastrophe you hinted at—which Heaven forbid—shall actually have happened; if it were proved that my poor aunt had made an end of herself; I would not hesitate in the presence of her dead body to affirm that nothing in my uncle's behaviour towards her ever justified, excused, or even palliated such an act on her part. They have lived together very unhappily, it is true, but I am prepared, if necessary, to swear before that tribunal, with the notion of which you so terrified Jane, that the fault lay more on my aunt's side than on her husband's; he was rarely the first to begin a quarrel, and never the last to end it."

"Of course, you stick by Mr. Hulet," observed Judith; "that is not to be wondered at."

"Stick by him? It is very much to be wondered at that *you* who owe him months of kindly hospitality, and the material independence which you once told me would make you his debtor for life, do not 'stick by him' as you call it, also. Nay, that you seem to find pleasure in imagining a catastrophe, which, if it has really happened, would fall on him with crushing weight."

Beneath Evy's flashing eyes and scornful face, Judith's gaze, for the first time since she had been her own mistress (for before

that time it had been submissive and meek enough), sank slowly down until it rested on the gravel-walk on which they stood. "It is no use our arguing this question, Evy, and far less our falling out together about it," answered she, doggedly. "I am grateful enough, I hope, to Mr. Hulet for all favours, but they cannot bribe me to forget facts."

"Since you value facts so highly then," replied Evy, with a contempt that she made no effort to conceal, "pray remember this one. It was only last night that my aunt observed—though I grant she spoke under great excitement—that she intended to live as long as she could, if it was only to vex my uncle."

"I remember it quite well," owned Judith; "but in repeating her words you have omitted an important portion of them. She began by saying that she knew her husband wished her dead."

"That is true," replied Evy, "and very shocking to reflect upon, though, as I have said, she was scarcely mistress of herself at the time in question. If any meaning is to be attached to that speech at all, however, it does away, you must needs admit, with all idea of suicide."

"Of suicide, yes; but it suggests something worse in place of it."

"Worse than suicide," echoed Evy, "what can you mean?"

"I mean nothing. I am speaking of what Mrs. Hulet's words meant, if they meant anything. She may reappear to-day, or to-morrow, alive and well; but if she does not—if she is dead, and has not met with her death by accident, it must have been by design. She has not committed suicide, you say. Then something else and worse must have happened. What is worse than suicide?"

"Murder!" gasped Evy, clinging to the garden-chair by which she stood.

"You have said it, and not I," said Judith, coldly. "Let us hope it is not so." And with that she walked away and joined the other searchers.

CHAPTER XXII. JUDITH AND HER BENEFACTOR.

NOTHING that yet had happened at Cliff Cottage, or, as it seemed, that could happen, no matter what evil Fate had in store for that dwelling, had affected Evy so painfully, as Judith's conduct with respect to her patron and benefactor. When the day was done, and the cause of Mrs. Hulet's disappearance still remaining unrevealed had necessarily given that circumstance a

more serious complexion, Evy could scarcely think upon it, through thinking of Judith's look and words. That, in vulgar phrase, there had been "no love lost" between her uncle and the girl to whom he had, nevertheless, been uniformly courteous, as well as generous, she was well aware, but that that serpent should have turned and bitten the hand that had caressed it, at such a time as this, was a thought so monstrous that it shut out all others. Hitherto, and even notwithstanding Judith's questionable conduct with respect to Captain Heyton, Evy had stood her friend, and tried to recommend her to the regard of others; but all that was over now. When once this unhappy mystery of her aunt's absence should have been explained, she made up her mind that Judith should no longer abuse Mr. Hulet's hospitality by remaining beneath that roof. The girl had ample means of her own to live upon—if her old patroness was dead, indeed, she would possess what might almost be called a fortune—so that she was no more to be pitied as a poor dependent. The only person to be pitied was her Augustus. For what sort of wife would such a woman make? what meaning could she attach to such words as "love" and "honour" who, at a period of inexpressible anxiety and distress to her host, had not only openly put the worst construction upon his wife's absence from his roof, but in Evy's private ear had dropped the poison of suspicion that he himself had been its guilty cause? Perhaps even that much of reticence was owing to mere accident; had Jane chanced to have remained longer in their company Judith might have suggested that "something worse than suicide," to be repeated to gaping mouths that night in the servants' hall, and to pervade all Balcombe on the morrow. If such a rumour should reach to her uncle's ears, Evy verily believed it would kill him. Even as it was, should it turn out that his wife was dead, and had come to her end by any means that might seem to reflect upon his conduct towards her, she felt that it would try him to the uttermost. She knew how sensitive he was, and how he shrank even from the ridicule of the world; how much more, then, would he shrink from its malevolence! If the reflection that such a step would excite public derision had restrained him from a second separation from his ill-chosen wife, how would it be with him in case an opportunity should be offered to ill-natured tongues to say that he had driven her to part

from him, to seek death rather than dwell with him any longer? Even now he was evidently consumed by some miserable reflection, which might be the apprehension of that very thing. Within the twelve hours that had elapsed since his wife's disappearance, he had already got to look older by as many years. His pale face had blanched to the colour that comes upon man's cheek in extreme age, never to change for a more wholesome one; his limbs tottered as he moved with aimless steps from room to room; his voice, which had been always clear and incisive, was become low and broken; only his eyes maintained their former brightness, and something more—they glittered like those of a fevered man, and turned hither and thither at every sound, in restless expectation of evil news.

For it was now become scarcely possible that any tidings respecting the missing woman could be aught but evil. It was the second day of her disappearance, and it had been made tolerably certain that she had never left the gates of Cliff Cottage. Her physical weakness was such that she could not have walked far, and no vehicle had picked her up on the road, nor had any person met her. That she was not within the house, nor in any part of its grounds, was still more certain, and the conviction was gathering strength with every hour that the mistress of Cliff Cottage was dead. Now who is it that kills and hides her victims—or does not hide them, just as the whim takes her capricious bosom—but the relentless sea? It was to the sea, then, that all eyes were turned, all footsteps bent, in search of the lost woman, and at last, on the shore, a mile or so to the southward of the cottage, they found her corpse.

The body had evidently been in the water many hours, but there was no difficulty in its identification. It had been somewhat bruised by the action of the waves, but there were no other marks of violence about it whatever. The fact seemed evident enough that the unhappy lady had fallen off the cliff walk on that fatal night at high water, and had drifted about in various currents to the place where the searchers discovered the body.

It was Captain Heyton himself who was the first to bring the news up to the cottage to Evy, as she sat alone in the drawing-room, with her neglected work upon her knees, and her eyes gazing with thoughtful sorrow upon the little garden on which

springtime had fallen in all its beauty, but never to gladden the eye which had once so delighted in it; for the only thing in which her aunt had taken any lively pleasure was in her flowers.

"You have bad news, I see?" said Evy, rising, with frightened looks, as her lover entered.

"Yes, darling, it is bad news; yet scarcely worse than this suspense has been to us all. Mrs. Hulet has been found—but, alas! dead and drowned."

"Heaven help my uncle!" answered Evy.

"Yes, indeed. Every one feels for him. Even the foolish persons who have said such ill-natured things about him will be silenced now."

"Tell me about it, that is, if you can, Jack—if it is not too terrible."

"Nay, dearest; there was nothing terrible. The poor lady—don't cry, darling, though you may well be sorry for her—she was a good creature, and meant well, I do believe, towards everybody, and was very, very kind to us. Well, there was nothing painful about her looks. Her face is almost unchanged, and quite serene and placid. She must have fallen over yonder"—he pointed towards the cliff walk—"at the flood, in very deep water. At all events, the poor soul struck against nothing; it must have been over in an instant."

"But how could it have happened?"

"Easily enough, of course. It was very nearly happening once before, you know, and I think Hulet was wrong in not having the wall—"

"Hush, for heaven's sake!" exclaimed Evy, suddenly. "My uncle is coming."

The next moment there was a noise as though somebody was fumbling at the handle of the door; then the door was pushed open slowly, and with effort, as when a young child pushes it, and in came Mr. Hulet. He looked like a man who has not slept for many a night.

"How are you, Heyton? You have news, I see. What is it?" He tottered into a chair, and put one hand before his eyes, stretching the other out as if for silence. "One moment," he murmured. "Go on now; I am ready to hear you. You need not tell me she is dead. How, and where, did you find her?"

Jack told the story of the discovery of the body as feelingly, yet concisely, as he could, to which the other listened without a word. Then, when all was finished, "How was my poor wife dressed?"

"In her evening apparel, sir; it must have been as we apprehended. She must have gone downstairs, and out upon the cliff walk again alone. There is one article only missing—a shoe—which probably was dropped when she fell. I am sorry to pain you so, sir."

Mr. Hulet was weeping bitterly, and the unwonted sight quite overcame tender-hearted Jack.

"I am sure," added he, with a blundering attempt at consolation that made him shiver directly he had uttered it, "that you have nothing to reproach yourself with."

"Ah, but I have," groaned the widower. Some reflection seemed to be touching his very heart-strings as he wailed out, "Oh, I would to Heaven it were not so!" He sat silent for a moment with hidden face, then added, "Oh, Evy, what a day before death your poor aunt had? How soiled with ignoble thoughts and vulgar passion—and it was my fault, my fault!"

He looked round the room that had been the scene of their quarrel on that fatal night, and shuddered.

"Oh, Evy, darling Evy," cried he, suddenly, "it is too late for me to make amends; but at least let me afford a warning to others. There is no fear of you and Jack falling into so sad an error, I know, but there is Judith—Sophia was fond of the girl at one time, and I would fain see her happy—let her take a lesson from my fate. Tell her—tell her from me—to avoid sharp words and bitter thoughts, lest some day she may speak and think them upon the threshold of the undreamt-of grave. Nay, lest she herself may perish as poor Sophia did. From here, from this very chamber—think of it—she passed in a moment, with anger in her heart, and scorn upon her tongue, into the presence of the All Wise and the All Just. May He have mercy on her, and make allowance for her, though I made none. Fifty years ago, Evy—it seems an age to you, it seems a day to me—that woman was as young and beautiful as yourself. I loved her, Heaven knows it, as dearly as Heyton yonder loves you. Yes," continued he, with an absent air, "I must have done so, since the bare remembrance of it, notwithstanding all that had happened to destroy the illusion, caused me to take her once more to my hearth and home. This hearth, this home, that might have been so happy, that are now made so desolate, so wretched. She is coming. I hear the

steps of those who are bringing her to my door."

There was a muffled tread without, and presently a shuffling of feet upon the stairs, such as is caused by those who carry some heavy burden. To these dreadful sounds all listened in silence, till the door was opened, and in came Judith, looking very grave and calm.

"Have they laid her in her room, Judith?" asked Mr. Hulet, in a low gentle voice.

"Yes, sir. I have seen that done," returned she, in a tone of unmistakable reproach.

"It is well, and I thank you for it. Do not look at Evy as if she were to blame for being absent. I kept her here with me. It was my place to have been there; I know it; but I had not the courage. Judith, you and I have not been the good friends I could have wished. For the sake of her who is lying dead yonder let this be amended; she loved you much at one time, and she has left proofs of it behind her. Take my hand."

Judith hesitated a moment, then with a hurried look towards Captain Heyton, placed her hand in Mr. Hulet's, and suffered him to press it, but without response. "Henceforth," said he, "let us be a united family. There will be a welcome, Judith, under my roof for the man that you shall make your husband, though it will not be here." And once more he looked round the room with shuddering horror. Judith answered nothing, but stood with downcast eyes and a flushed face, and one foot beating softly on the ground.

"If you will permit me, uncle," said Evy during an embarrassing pause, "I would like to go up-stairs, and say—and take—" Here she broke down into a pitiful sob.

"Say farewell to your poor aunt," said Mr. Hulet, finishing the half-formed sentence. "Do so, dear Evy; and kiss her cold cheek for me. Heyton will go with you." When the young couple had left the room he turned once more to Judith, whose hand he still retained. "He has begun early his task of comfort, has he not? Let us trust he will continue it to his life's end. If anything could make this terrible time endurable to me, Judith, it is the thought that they, at least, will be happy. I was just bidding them take warning by what has happened, to be gentle and forbearing to one another. I

give the same advice to you in all kindness."

Judith quietly but firmly disengaged her hand from Mr. Hulet's hold. "Thank you," said she, coldly; "I trust my husband will not be always quarrelling without cause with me."

"I trust not, indeed, Judith," answered the old man, softly. "Nothing you can say can equal the bitterness of my own contrition, yet I am sorry that you reproach me. I fear it shows that you cherish ill-will against me, though I know not how I have offended you."

"I have nothing to forgive upon my own account," said Judith, slowly; "and nothing more, Mr. Hulet, to say—just now." And she moved slowly towards the door. There was a curious sort of menace in her air, though he did not notice that, but only the studied coolness, not to say hostility, of her tone.

"I had thought," said Mr. Hulet, with a slight flush, "that nothing—nothing could have added to the wretchedness of this hour; but this behaviour of yours, Judith, does give me still another pang. I do not think I have earned it at your hands. You say you have nothing to forgive. Is it upon my poor wife's account you scorn me so?"

She turned round upon him with a stern and searching glance. "It is."

"It may be so," answered Mr. Hulet, humbly, "and in that case I do not blame you. I have behaved ill towards your friend and benefactress. I have been very much in the wrong. Still, Judith, if she herself yonder could speak she would surely say, 'Forgive him for my sake.' Your manner compels me to believe that my home will not be yours in future"—she shook her head with a contemptuous smile—"so be it; but let us be friends for the little while that we must needs remain under the same roof. To appear otherwise would just now be most unseemly. Why do you smile, Judith, a smile more cruel than your frown?"

"Did I smile?" answered she, stopping, but still keeping her eyes upon the ground. "I did not know I smiled. Is there anything more you wish to say to me, Mr. Hulet?"

"Nothing, Judith; only once more to express my hope that until you are free to leave us, you will refrain in this house that has already, alas, witnessed so much of domestic discord—I entreat you, I say, until, at least, my poor wife is buried—"

"Buried!" echoed Judith, turning round upon him, with her hand upon the door. "There is something to happen before burial, I conclude."

"I do not understand you, Judith. What is to happen?"

"The inquest."

Each looked into one another's eyes; the girl with a fierce glance of menace, the old man with a crowd of emotions—surprise, dismay, despair—pursuing one another over his pale furrowed face, their rear brought up by a certain conscious dignity which effaced the rest.

"I understand you less than ever now, Judith. What is the inquest to do with me that you dare to look like that?"

There was no answer, save the same cold smile she had given him before, and the next instant she had left the room, and closed the door behind her. Mr. Hulet made as though he would have followed her, but his trembling limbs refused their office, and he fell into his chair.

"What does she mean?" he cried. "What can she mean? Oh God, is it that I am not even yet sufficiently punished, but that Thou art about to desert me altogether?"

NEW YEAR'S DAY IN LONDON A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

WHAT were the inhabitants of London doing, saying, thinking, eating, drinking, and reading, exactly a hundred years ago; that is, on New Year's Day, seventeen hundred and seventy-four?

As New Year's Day is holiday time, let us see what the theatres were about. The Italian Opera of those days was called the King's Theatre, and stood on the same spot as the present handsome building known as Her Majesty's Theatre, in the Haymarket. Instead of opening at Easter, as is our present custom, it was in full season, and gave the opera of *Lucio Vero*, by Sacchini "and other composers"—a production that has gone quite out of memory. The primo tenore was Signor Millico, and the prima donna Signora Cecilia Davies, an English lady. Monsieur Petrot's grand ballet of *Orfeo è Eurydice* followed, "with new cloaths, scenes, and decorations." The pit was half a guinea, and the galleries five shillings and three shillings (no amphitheatre or stalls existed in those days). With doors opening at half-past five, and opera beginning at seven, we see that the fashionable dinner hour was

comparatively early. The visitors to Drury Lane Theatre witnessed *Richard the Third* and *High Life Below Stairs*; while those at Covent Garden were regaled with the dismal *Jane Shore*, and a fairy spectacle on the subject of *Golden Pippin*, which seems to have presented an early attempt at the gorgeous transformation scenes now so familiar. The pantomime of the *Sylphs* was an alternative source of attraction at Drury Lane. The King's Theatre, the two patent or legitimate theatres, and "the little Theatre on the Haymarket," were the representatives of the thirty-three Theatres and Opera Houses open to the public on the day when this sheet is published. The performances at these theatres commenced at six o'clock. There were private theatricals too; for, on or about the date we have selected, a distinguished company performed at the mansion of the Honourable Stephen Fox. The pieces were the *Fair Penitent* and *High Life Below Stairs* (the latter an immense favourite in those days); and the dramatis personæ comprised the hospitable host, Mr. Charles Fox, Lady Mary Fox, the Earl of Pembroke, Miss Herbert, Sir Thomas Tancred, the Honourable Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and other notabilities.

Concerts and balls were held in public rooms for the "quality," as tested by the standard of half guineas. At the Pantheon in Oxford-street entertainments were given, twelve nights for six guineas. A concert, partly Italian and partly English, commenced at eight and terminated at ten, Doctor Arnold being musical director. After the concert, "Should the nobility and gentry form any parties for dancing, proper bands of music will be ready for that purpose"—a singular *ad libitum* arrangement, certainly. There were refreshments in good variety, comprising "tea, coffee, cakes, orgeat, capillaire, lemonade, and jellies." Judged by present appearances, one of the least tempting localities we should select for a half-guinea entertainment would be Cross-street, Hatton Garden; but in those days it was one of the gentilities. At Hatton House was given a "Grand Concert and Ball;" the concert lasted from seven till eight; the ball, beginning with a minuet, and continued with cotillons and country dances, was kept up till eleven. The half-guinea ticket admitted a lady and gentleman, or two ladies; and the nobility and gentry were assured that "the whole will be conducted with the usual politeness

and decorum." There seems to have been some kind of pyrotechnic display in a tea-garden belonging to a tavern; for we are told that "Mr. Caillot's Christmas fireworks, at the Star and Garter, Chelsea, are quite knocked up by the vigilance of Mr. Williams, the high constable of Westminster." We infer that the neighbours regarded the Christmas fireworks as a nuisance.

Royalty had its New Year's doings. His Most Gracious Majesty King George the Third ordered his bounty of one thousand pounds to be distributed amongst decayed housekeepers, as was always the custom at this season, to nine of the parishes within the city and liberties of Westminster." At noon, forty Blue-Coat boys had the honour of a patronising reception at court. After this, in the Great Council Chamber of St. James's Palace, in the presence of a glittering assemblage of royal and noble personages, a New Year's Ode was performed, the words by William Whitehead, the music by Doctor Boyce. The poet contrasted George the Third with Xerxes, of course to the manifest advantage of the former.

Were there many out-door holiday doings or in-door exhibitions for the Londoners? Not many of the former, for midwinter is scarcely the season for them; nor many of the latter, for they had hardly become an established institution in the land. The Thames was full of great lumps of ice on New Year's Day; and people went down to the bottom of Norfolk and Arundel-streets to see it. Signor Grimani invited the public to his half-crown exhibition of the model of the Cities of London and Westminster, eighty-eight feet in circumference; it was in the "Fantoccini room" in the Haymarket; and every visitor was assured that he could "trace out the street he lived in." There was much more rollicking joviality than exhibition-visiting; and (we opine) much more "dead-drunkenness" than we have at the present time. A convivial party was held near Covent Garden; one guest rolled down and fell asleep, with his legs very near a roaring fire; when roused, he could not move, for the sinews were contracted by scorching; and he died on the following day.

It is pleasant to find that London housewives of the middle class had the same liking for tidy rooms as at present; and that the Saturday scrubbing was a recognised inauguration of Sunday. A good-

humoured correspondent, sending to the Annual Register an account of the Saturday's washing and scrubbing, says: "One of our girls, who is little and handsome, to accommodate herself to the task, is obliged to lower her head-dress half a foot, and put on a close flat mob; as well as to descend from her stilts, which are usually worn instead of shoes . . . We are hurried from room to room, floated from the cellar to the garret, and starved to death with thorough airs (that, is draughts) . . . Our stomachs pinch for it, too. All is to be reserved for Sunday. The dinner must be made of small scraps; the pantry must be cleared, though the meat be musty and the bread mouldy. If a friend, quite regardless of his own felicity, attempts to swim through the piles and forests of implements of cleanliness, and gains the fireside, a thousand apologies are made for the Saturday's dinner." Many a London family will recognise this description as being still true, allowance being made for the exaggeration of banter.

Concerning the prices of provisions on or about that said New Year's Day, the first certain fact is, that all kinds of meat and poultry were much cheaper than they are at present, and that stock was not fattened up to so great a degree. We cannot always trust statistical estimates; but there was probably a near approach to correctness in a tabular statement drawn up about that time, concerning the average wholesale prices paid in London for articles of food. We are told of bullocks at six pounds each, sheep twelve shillings, calves twenty-four shillings, lambs eight shillings, pigs for pork and bacon twenty shillings, sucking-pigs half-a-crown; of poultry there were capons at twentypence each, turkeys three and sixpence, geese half-a-crown, pullets fourteence, chickens ninepence, ducks ninepence, pigeons twopence. We learn incidentally that fivepence per pound was regarded as a high price for pork, seeing that at Chingford in Essex it was sold at threepence-halfpenny. Other kinds of provisions were not so tabulated as to be available for comparison here, seeing that they were reckoned at cost per day per head, not at the market prices of the commodities. Bread had no natural or spontaneous price at that time; the Legislature claimed the right, in the supposed interest of the public, of determining what the price should be. On the very day to which this paper refers a new Act of Parliament came into force, compelling bakers

to sell none other than standard bread, the standard being a legislative settlement of the question of quality, weight, and price. How it was that statesmen in more recent generations adopted the advice of political economists, and left the price of bread to settle itself, we need not here explain. A notion prevailed at that time that the price of corn for bread would be materially affected by the quantity used by the brewers for making beer and ale; it was to this that a correspondent of one of the newspapers probably referred, when he said, "I congratulate you and the public on the porter brewers stopping work; for from such a stand being made by so respectable and opulent a body, the community may expect to have the price of grain reduced." Spirits, beer, and ale were all cheap, because little or no duty was imposed on them. At a wine and spirit shop opposite St. Sepulchre's Church (long since swept away to form Skinner-street, which has in turn been swept away to form the Holborn-viaduct), there were advertised primest cognac brandy at twelve shillings a gallon, old Jamaica rum at ten shillings, brandy and rum shrub at nine shillings, Holland Geneva at ten shillings, and English gin at six shillings. If such prices are far below the present level, a still greater difference in the opposite direction is observable in tea and coffee. The monopoly possessed by the East India Company in the one, and the near approach to a monopoly by the West India merchants in the other, maintained those two commodities at prices which the working classes could seldom afford to pay, and the middle classes only sparingly. Two of the every-day constituents of breakfast and tea tables, now familiar to most industrious families, were at that time luxuries. We have significant evidence of this in the announcement of an advertising grocer, "at the sign of the Coffee Mill, corner of Berners-street, in Oxford-road;" he names prices as low as he can, to attract customers; and yet the prices were such as these: fine hyson tea at half-a-guinea a pound, very good souchong at seven shillings, and very good fresh-roasted coffee at four shillings.

When people walked about London on that New Year's Day, they saw streets which have since undergone many and strange transformations, and fields where there is now neither a tree nor a blade of grass. Mr. Watmore, a tailor in St. John's-

street, Smithfield, was returning home from Islington, where we will suppose he had been to wait upon a customer; he was stopped in the fields by two footpads, who robbed him of "a suit of laced cloaths" and three guineas. The garments possibly belonged to his customer, the guineas to himself; but the incident tells us there were then green fields where now are St. John's-street-road and its numerous lateral family of streets. Across the fields between Westminster and Chelsea was a pleasant walk, especially for ladies and children bent on a visit to the famous old Chelsea Bun House; but at night it was not safe from footpads. Where are those fields now? Let Belgravia and Pimlico answer. As to the Yorkshire Stingo, and the Jews' Harp, and White Conduit House, and Bagnigge Wells, they were quite out of town then, with greenery to render them attractive as suburban tea-gardens. Nevertheless, we meet with incidents, noticed in the newspapers of the time, connected with the names of persons whom we might suppose had long since passed away. A man was sentenced to death for stealing a cow at Laycock's dairy, but was respited by the gracious mercy of the king. Ask an inhabitant of Upper Islington where Laycock's dairy is; he will tell you —albeit there may be no Laycock now living. A pocket-book was lost "between Anderton's Coffee-house in Fleet-street, and the Somerset Coffee-house in the Strand." The great thoroughfare knows them both still, but under the more modern designation of hotels. Spitalfields had its silk-weavers then, and it has now; indeed it was the head-quarters of this branch of industry. A police case lets us into a knowledge of these two facts—that the London weavers were much sought for abroad; and that the law claimed a voice in determining whether they might go abroad or not. "Two agents were taken up in Spitalfields, for inveigling some of the most capital hands in the silk trade to go abroad. It is said they had engaged a great number." Poor Spitalfields! It has since then been robbed of most of its silk manufacture by the Northern Counties.

New Year's Day, a hundred years ago, witnessed the publication of a considerable number of sixpenny monthly magazines in London. This seems to have been the recognised price; the few monthly publications of greater cost being addressed to special professions or classes of the community. We find the *Lady's Magazine*,

the London Magazine, the Town and Country Magazine, the Universal Magazine, the Westminster Magazine, the Sentimental Magazine—all at sixpence, all thin and small, and all containing moral or sententious essays, attempts at wit and humour, and lackadaisical poetry; but seldom having any solid stuff in them. Of course the Gentleman's Magazine, the veritable Sylvanus Urban, was an exception; the old volumes are worth reading, even at the present day, for subjects possessing more than mere current or temporary interest. There was one sixpenny magazine, the name of which need not be embalmed in these pages; it appealed to a very "fast" class of readers, and had brought the publisher and proprietor into imprisonment and other troubles. The New Year's number was announced with an extra sounding of trumpets, and an invitation to a free and enlightened public to defy the tyranny of the law by rallying round the persecuted publisher, who had just emerged from prison for the naughtiness contained in the earlier numbers. There were shilling books for New Year's Gifts then as now. One was *The Impenetrable Secret, or Young Gentlemen and Ladies' Pleasing Instructor*, published by Nicoll, at the Paper Mill, St. Paul's Churchyard. The Paper Mill was, we presume, the sign of the shop; the numbering of houses had not by any means become general at that time. The imperishable Mrs. Glasse's *Cookery Book* appeared in a new Edition, which included (a singular adjunct to cookery), *How to Keep Clear from Buggs*.

The daily newspapers were well worth comparing with those now published; four small pages, poor paper, clumsy type, bad ink. The price was either twopence or twopence-halfpenny. One of them, the *Morning Post*, still lives, a majestic and greatly amplified centenarian; another, the *Morning Chronicle*, survived till a few years ago, and then gave up the ghost. The *Morning Post*, on that particular New Year's Day, published an Ode, which we should very much like to give in full, as a good example of the mode in which the poetasters of those times mixed up pastoral sentimentalism with high-pressure loyalty. We can, however, only find room for the first and last stanzas:

Come ye shepherds, bring your lutes!
Bring, oh bring your warbling flutes!
Bring your pipes and oaten reeds
From the green and flow'ry meads!

Come each rural nymph and swain,
Haste to join the glorious train!
We'll be jocund, we'll be gay,
On this smiling New Year's Day.

Come my lovely Beauty's Queen,
Let us revel on the green;
Let us dance and sportive sing
Joy to George our glorious King!
Long may he and Charlotte reign,
Monarch o'er the British main,
Gliding with resplendent rays
Through a thousand New Year's Days.

An achievement which Great George would have found it rather difficult to realise. The *Morning Post* devoted a portion of its scanty columns to gossiping correspondents, who replied one to another in small essays on small subjects, with mild wit and weak humour, and occasionally a little departure from decorum in satires on persons of quality—printed with dashes instead of full names, to keep clear of actions for slander. Among the Notices to Correspondents we find—"Timothy Catgut on Tuesday." "There is not sufficient wit in Mary Crumpet's letter to make it worth inserting." "Granger's paragraphs are not of importance enough to be paid for; when he can send us good intelligence, he may be assured of our rewarding him."

All the daily papers (four or five in number) contained advertisements, relating to two lotteries, which were driving the speculative portion of the public half-wild with hopes of gaining vast fortunes by means of lucky prizes. Messrs. Goodluck and Richardson expatiated on the great advantages of the Museum Lottery and the Adelphi Lottery—gambling advertising schemes, which were treated very leniently by the Legislature of those days. Prizes of fifty thousand pounds and thirty thousand pounds were announced to be plentiful; and shares were divided into such small fractions as sixty-fourths, in order to draw persons of humble means into the net. Those legalised cheatings were allowed another half century of existence, and were not finally abolished until a few years after the death of King George the Third. One of the papers gave a most ungracious New Year's Gift to the Jews, in connection with fraudulent bankruptcies; it declared that "The Jews, the greatest r——ls on earth, are the sole cause." Another gave an account of a man who for a whole month had been in a state of trance; the only mode available of giving him nourishment was to pour a little milk down his throat, and stop the nostrils to prevent it from escaping by that channel. The advertisements comprised many which throw light

on the state of society at the time. In our own day a clergyman, whether incumbent or curate, and however small the stipend he may be receiving, tries to procure either a professional or a commercial position for his son, above the rank of journeyman mechanics. Not so the writer of the following advertisement: "Wanted an apprenticeship for a clergyman's son, aged sixteen, well educated and well disposed. Twenty pounds will be given. The master to find him in clothes and washing." Or perchance it may have been the poor widow of a poor clergyman, who had more olive-branches than she could provide for; still, even then, a clergyman's relations would now-a-days shrink from such an advertisement.

Among the tendencies of that day was the habit of announcing the amount of fortune which a wife brought to her betrothed. A recognised formula was—Married, Mr. — to Miss —, "a beautiful young lady with thirty thousand pounds," or "a lovely widow with twenty thousand pounds." It was evidently supposed to please both parties as well as the public, or this kind of announcement would not have been so often adopted. Another tendency was to excessive adulation of departed friends, attributing to them all the virtues under the sun, and a few more in addition. Ungrateful posterity does not seem to have a vivid recollection of Thomas Hollis, Esquire (to take one example as our New Year's illustration); and yet he must have been a man to whom this puny generation of ours is as a farthing candle to the electric light. For what does his obituary notice say? "This gentleman was formed on the severe and exalted plan of ancient Greece, in whom was united the humane and disinterested virtues of Brutus with the acute and determined spirit of Sidney; illustrious in his manner of using an ample fortune, not by spending it in the parade of life, which he despised, but by assisting the deserving, and encouraging the arts and sciences, which he promoted with zeal and affection, knowing the love of them leads to moral and intellectual beauty. He was a warm and strenuous advocate in the cause of public liberty and virtue, and for the rights of human nature and private conscience. His humanity and generosity were not confined to the small spot of his own country; he sought for merit in every part of the globe, considering himself as a citizen of the world, but concealed his

acts of munificence, being contented with the consciousness of having done well. Posterity will look up with admiration to this great man, who, like Milton, is not sufficiently known by this degenerate age in which he lived, though it will have cause to lament the loss of him." Brutus, Sidney, Milton, and Mr. Thomas Hollis—let us endeavour to associate the four names.

The London readers of the newspapers at that time learned, very much as a matter of course, that Sir William Mayne had bought the mansion, the park, the borough, the electors, and the votes of Gatton, in Surrey, for the sum of seventy-five thousand pounds. Constituencies were accustomed to be bought and sold in those days. In that New Year, too, almost precisely to the day, London, and England generally, learned the news of the decisive act which commenced the American War of Independence, and led to the loss by England of her valuable settlements in what are now the Atlantic or Eastern States of the great American Republic. A ship came to the Thames laden with tea; the same ship had taken out the same tea from London to America, but had been prevented from landing her cargo. The Americans refused any longer to be taxed by England for English objects, and had begun the practice of forcibly throwing thousands of chests of tea into the sea, to prevent the demand for customs' duty on landing; as an alternative course, they drove away the tea ships altogether. How this decisive policy led to the commencement of the American war in seventeen hundred and seventy-four cannot here be narrated.

The Londoners on New Year's Day, a century ago, it has been shown, had many matters to do, say, see, read, and think about, worthy of a little attention—chiefly in illustration of the changes which a hundred years have brought about.

THE WHITBY SMACK.

- "She ought to be in, she ought to be in,
Here's another moon begun;
She sail'd last Friday was a week,
And it is but a four days' run.
- "I've left our Jane at home,
She'll nor sleep nor bite, poor lass;
Just toss her wedding clothes about,
And stare at the falling glass.
- "The banns were out last week, you see;
And to-day—alack, alack,
Young George has other gear to mind,
Out there, out there in the smack!
- "I bade her dry her tears,
Or share them with another,

And go down yonder court and try
To comfort Willie's mother.

"The poor old widow'd soul,
Laid helpless in her bed;
She prays for the touch of her one son's hand,
The sound of his cheery tread.

"She ought to be in, her timbers were stout;
She would ride through the roughest gale,
Well found and mann'd—but the hours drag on;
It was but a four days' sail."

Gravely and sadly the sailor spoke,
Out on the great Ker head;
Sudden a bronst'd old fishwife turn'd,
From the anxious group, and said,

"Jenny will find her lovers anew;
And Anne has one foot in the grave;
We've lived together twenty year,
I and my poor old Dave.

"I've a runlet of whisky fresh for him
And 'bacca again he comes back,
He said he'd bide this winter ashore,
After the trip in the smack.

"We have neither chick nor child of us,
Our John were drown'd last year;
There is nothing on earth, but Dave, for me.
Why there's nought in the wind to fear.

"He's been out in many a coarser sea.
I'll set the fire alight;
We said, 'Our Father' before he went;
The smack will be in to-night."

And just as down in the westward
The light rose, pale and thin,
With her bulwarks stove, and her foresail gone,
The smack came staggering in.

With one worn face at her rudder,
And another beside her mast;
But George, and Willie, and staunch old Dave?
Why, ask the waves and the blast.

Ask the sea that broke aboard her,
Just as she swung her round;
Ask the squall that swept above her,
With death in its ominous sound.

"The master saw," the sailor said,
"A face past the gunwale go;"
And Jack heard, "Jane," ring shrill through
the roar;
And that is all we know.

I can't tell. Parson says grief is wrong,
And pining is wilful sin;
But I'd like to hear how those two died,
Before the smack came in.

Well, this morning the flags fly half-mast head,
In beautiful Whitby Bay;
That's all we shall know till the roll is read,
On the last great Muster-day.

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

IX. A MODEL LODGING-HOUSE.

IN the parish of St. Giles, within a stone's-throw of Holborn and the head of Drury-lane, there is a street which is a nest of mechanics' lurking places. The street cannot be called blind, neither can it be denominated prominent; it does not push itself forward as if it were proud of itself, and would flaunt its beauties in your face—neither does it retire under archways and round sharp corners, as though it were shy of observation. It is downright and unvarnished looking, sturdy

and simple, and not overclean, like the better class of working men who elect to abide therein. It boasts of tenements which began as yards and warehouses with rambling courts, but which, mindful of the value of land, pulled themselves together half way up their height, made up for extravagance below by an overcrowding of windows above, bridged over great arches with their swinging gates, and blossomed out into a wonderful growth of out-houses, dust-bins, cat walks, and hanging nasturtium gardens. Most of the tenements are low and crooked, bearing, painted on their fronts, legends signifying that accommodation may be obtained for single men; but, towering above these humble edifices, a great gaunt barrack rears itself aloft, here and there, hanging out over its swinging portal a lamp emblazoned with the device, "Model Lodging House." The largest of these rejoices in the high sounding title, "Bartlemy Chambers."

Bartlemy Chambers is always full, although it is licensed to put up one hundred and eight lodgers. It is a house-of-call for mechanics as well as a dwelling-house; for carpenters, masons, and indeed members of many trades, assemble in its spacious reading-room as in a club, when they pass to and fro from provincial jobs, to discuss trade matters, and weigh their prospects of obtaining town work. There are a few permanent lodgers at Bartlemy Chambers, unsuccessful waifs and strays from the most diverse trades or occupations, men of morose temperament, who, having been flung up by the waves of fate upon this unprepossessing rock, cling to it like forlorn limpets, obtaining nourishment no one knows how. Some of these mysterious mortals have occupied the same bed for five-and-twenty years, disappearing on some vague pursuit by day, to lounge in at night with elbows more and more frayed, and listless slipshod tread, and will do so day by day without variety, until the limbs shall become weaker, the joints more stiff, and then they will be carried down the bare stone stairs alone, with the secret of their lives in an elm box, to be helped into oblivion by a parish funeral.

In summer the house is lit up at ten o'clock, and the twilight previous to that illumination is passed in gossip round the doors or on the benches of the reading room, though that chamber is not in so much request as the kitchen realms below, in consequence of the printed announcement, "Smoking strictly prohibited." All

kinds of announcements dot its distempered walls. Over the chimney-piece, under the clock, hangs, framed and glazed, a printed license from the police, stating the number of lodgers allowed in this "common lodging house," its number on the roll, and threats of all sorts of awful penalties in case of scandal or disturbance. Near it, also framed and glazed, hangs a list of the library, which consists of some two hundred volumes, mostly terribly inane and improving. Not far off, transfixed by a tin-tack, a dirty scroll bearing names of subscribers and dates of payment to the private book club, a paper which depicts the folly of well-meaning but unwise philanthropists who make much parade of bestowing works of so vapid and serious a nature as they would be sorry to be forced to peruse themselves, instead of giving popular books of history or travel, such as could hurt no one, and possess the advantage of being amusing. "The Pious Footman," "Hooker's Sermons," "Grave Thoughts at Bed-time," "Guide to a Solemn Celebration of Advent." What mechanic would be likely to read such books? And yet, there they are in all the panoply of copperplate on parchment, girt round and fenced in with a halo of their own unutterable dulness. Here and there on the benches sit old men, spectacles on nose, superannuated people who ought to be in an almshouse, but who, having in a course of years scraped together a pittance of their own, prefer to vegetate here, where all is noise, and movement, and bustle, rather than retire to moulder on the shelf. But now the gas is lighted, each window from roof to basement twinkles, men in corderoy and linen jackets pass in at the door, throw down their tools anywhere, and descend to the floor below ground, where we will follow them. A large kitchen occupies the space immediately below the reading-room, with a great table in the centre. Dressers and drawers run round the walls, a huge fire blazes at one end, and a grimy jack towel, carefully chained and padlocked, is suspended from the wall. This room is crowded with a noisy throng, hurrying hither and thither, preparing each his own supper, depositing penny loaves and screws of tea and sugar on the common table. Every man seeks out his private saucepan or gridiron from a corner heap, and proceeds to place it among the many already on the hob. And now there is such a boiling of eggs, and frying of ham, and cooking of bloaters, as fills the place

with steam and turns one almost sick, accompanied by hoarse laughter and rough jokes, garnished with language more forcible than polite. But they are a hearty good-humoured set, amusing themselves, for the most part innocently, according to their lights, after the labour of the day. Under the stone stairs, behind a forest of mops, brushes, trade utensils, and a perfect foliage of dusty cobwebs, there are a hundred and eight little pigeon-holes, each one numbered, and having its key corresponding to one of the bedrooms above. From out of these receptacles comes a wondrous array of articles. Tea, sugar, half gnawed chunks of meat, bread crumbs, tobacco, pipes, even books and candles, for that small locker is the only private place assigned to the lodger, whose room upstairs is opened at will by the superintendent's pass-key, and whose deal box, that does duty for a chest of drawers, is devoid of lock. Crockery is evidently scarce, gallipots for the most part serving instead of teacups, tin pannikins for teapots, and pages of Lloyd's News doing duty for plates and dishes. In the centre of the table stands, in lieu of an epergne or vase of choice exotics, a great wooden bowl containing salt, into which people dip hands, or knives, or meat, as their taste or manners may direct. The evening meal over, each man washes up his "tea-things" in a scullery hard by, and having rinsed his hands and a small portion of his face at one of a series of sinks, and wiped the same on the grimy towel, either joins the kitchen group for a smoke and chat, or retires with his book or paper to the reading-room above. They are a strange crew, sitting around that fire; of all ages, attired in all costumes, alike only in a common enamel of dirt, and a common worship of the weed. By the dresser stands old Ben, a very venerable carpenter, his ragged apron tucked around his loins, his shirt-sleeves rolled above the elbow, rubbing his arms gravely with soap embrocation—a foul smelling compound that unites the smells of fish, of dust-bin, of scullery, and of trampled cabbages, in a general amalgamation of sweets which is enough to knock one flat. Somebody suggests that he should "put up that filth," to which the veteran makes answer, croakingly, "It's all very well for you with your youthful sinews to sneer at my old age. But I've got to live, my boy, as well as you, and the strength of

my old arms gains bread to fill my old stomach."

Near him is a journeyman clockmaker examining the watch of one of those present, at the same time that he feeds a cat and her litter of kittens with bread and milk. Somehow everyone is good to that cat and kittens. Everybody is interested in the progress of the family, chastening the cat for turning a deaf ear to blandishments with a stern species of kindness preferable to the senseless, brutal kick of ignorance, which might be expected from such rough men.

Two lunatics are of our party. One is an apparently innocent old gentleman, with bleared vacant eyes and snuffy nose, a preternaturally high hat, which he is always brushing, and a wonderfully plaited neck-handkerchief, which would have given pleasure to Beau Brummell. His life is spent in stirring saucepans now, and, like many another frail vessel, might perchance, but for adverse circumstances, have developed into the most adorable *pâte tendre*. He cracked instead, however, and being henceforth well nigh worthless, has been trampled on ever since. A grocer in a small way by trade, he one day took the craze into his head that his mission, direct from Heaven, was to manufacture with frenzied haste, no matter how, an unlimited supply of patchwork quilts—a noble mission, no doubt, but scarcely satisfactory when combined with larceny. From that moment he was always on the look-out to borrow specimens, hanging lovingly about his neighbours' wardrobes. Accordingly he feloniously snipped fragments from the attire of fellow-workmen, bits of aprons, of trousers, of coats, of carelessly tied neckerchiefs, even culling strips from such important items as stray shirts. This was more than nature could endure. Few of the dwellers in Bartlemy Chambers rejoiced in many such luxuries as shirts, and such as did objected to parting with them piecemeal, and so a dreadful *eclaircissement* took place in the form of a thrilling parody upon the drama of the three bears. "WHO STOLE A BIT OF MY SHIRT?" shouted the brawniest and most hirsute bear. "*Who abstracted a portion of my chemise?*" cried the feebly asthmatic, but otherwise threatening second bear. "*Who cut up my Sunday dickey?*" demanded in piping accents of anguish the juvenile last; and the thief being found out, passed under the ignominious yoke of the law. In course of time he returned to the lodging-

house, as the hunted cat returns to the fire-side—an acknowledged but harmless mad-man—as permanent drudge-in-chief.

The other lunatic mopes and mows viciously, bites his nails, and glowers and gnashes his teeth, under the impression that he created the lions which repose round Nelson's column, and that, as they roared underneath his bed, he sold them a bargain to Sir Edwin. He vaguely and spitefully blacks such boots as come within his reach; solemnly polishing his nose, till it glows like any coal, in a mysterious, murky, evil-smelling outhouse, when heartless obdurates decline to let him wear out with friction their second-hand shoe leather.

There is a violent uproar in a kind of secluded den divided by a glass door from the common kitchen, and looking something like a starved servants' hall—a rattling noise that somehow painfully recalls Paris and its festive boulevards to a mind sickened by obtrusive London squalor; a sound somewhat resembling castanets, followed by a scoop and sweep—yes, it is dominoes, the game sacred to *faneurs*, but under what singular auspices! An intricate *partie carrée* is going on among stray lettuce-leaves and egg-shells, with excited backers betting halfpence. Street boys of the lower errand class, conspicuous for frowzy hair and greasy, bandless hats, and clothes made for their great grandfathers, hold their ivories in sooty palms, as cleverly hidden away, and as cunningly scanned, as by any Parisian adept. They bang down their men, with an accompaniment of execrations whose ingenuity would severely tax a denizen even of the Vieux Chêne, and make one wish, even more ardently than one does in the French capital, that the game had never been invented.

In a corner sits a middle-aged man, red-bearded, clothed in a dirty apron and napless hat, whose square head belies the idiotic smile about his lips. He talks with a drawl, grinning the while inanely, as some one says, "like a cure." But appearances are often deceitful. He is much employed on detective work, being a man whom you would never glance at twice, and is endowed with great acuteness and with a patience which nothing can ruffle. All know old Juff to be a detective's spy, and lay traps to induce him to relate his experiences; but he only grins, as though that colourless screen masked nothing, and eats voraciously, in-

dulging, between his mouthfuls, in irrelevant badinage like the dancing of some fairy elephant. Two cabmen occupy a settle in a corner, discussing the grave question of covered cabstands, mooted some time since by a philanthropical individual. One of them speaks loudly in favour of the plan, descanting in glowing terms upon the diminution of catarrhs and consumption that would ensue; whilst the other, strange as it may appear, maintains that things are better as they are. In winter the cold and snow are pitiless and hard to bear, and nips of strong waters alone make life endurable; and yet, he argues, sleet and snow and sore-throats are better than the pecuniary ruin which would result from long idle hours by a comfortable fireside. Gambling, it appears, is the cabman's bane. Having nothing else to do on his stand, he plays a kind of "mora" with the man next on the rank, until, sometimes, he not only has no money to take home to his wife, but is unable to pay his master the fourteen shillings or so due for vehicle hire. If this is the case now, how much more so would it be, were he induced by comfort to shirk seeking for a fare, lulled in the embraces of a new Capua! "No, no!" he concludes, knocking out the ashes of his pipe and charging it afresh, "let us bear present discomforts that we may have a home to go to, or we may find ourselves sitting under a glass roof, with our wives in the workhouse."

A wretched, sodden object rests his head on the table, his long, iron-grey locks falling unhonoured over the deal among scraps of meat and spilt salt. His grimy shirt is open at the neck; his chin unshorn; his rusty, dilapidated garments once were black, for he was at one time styled "reverend," as a sign-post for erring brethren, leading to better things; but the sign-post has rotted, and crumbled, and fallen prone into the mire, leaving wanderers to grope along as best they may. Yes; this disreputable, drunken creature, snoring heavily in brutish sleep, was once a clergyman, who eloped with a parishioner's wife; became hopelessly involved in money troubles; attempted means of extrication which ended in a prison; and, finally, became the hopeless drunkard now sprawling before us. He is supposed to gain a precarious livelihood by writing letters for illiterate housemaids; but I have strong suspicions that he is the starving widow, with five infant children, who has bailiffs in the house, and will die

of a broken heart unless I send a remittance by return of post. This is the stuff of which begging-letter writers are made—men, cunning and desperate, with a remnant of education hanging about them, with nothing to lose and all to gain.

I am, by this time, deep in conversation with a sage old gentleman, who, in his communicativeness, tells me all about my fellow-lodgers, not excepting himself. He has lived in this establishment, off and on, for fifteen years, and can conceive of no combination of arrangements more delightful. "You have society," he says; "a bedroom to yourself; use of newspapers and books; a fire to cook by gratis from 5 to 10 a.m., and from 5 to 12 p.m. all the year round; and all for the modest sum of five-pence a day. What more can man desire? Once on a time I used to patronise another place opposite, at fourpence a day; but, then, we slept two in a bed, without choice of chum. That was bad; for, sometimes, one's companion was roaring drunk, as well as abusive, and much stronger than oneself, too, so that one got no rest; and I could not stand that, you know. Now, brats, look where you're a-going to, will you? Careless ragamuffins!" This adjuration was addressed to a party of youngsters—apprentices just returned in triumph from a visit to a pie-shop hard by, where each had purchased a plum tart and a bottle of ginger beer. These young gentlemen are artists in ginger pop, just as their betters are artists in champagne, although their crucial test of excellence is simpler than that of their superiors—consisting merely in the homely three-pronged fork of commerce. On entering the emporium they demand that their bottle's string be cut, and its cork extracted by means of the pronged fork. Should the drink be flat, the cork will be restive and decline the blandishments of the prongs, which, in their despair, will bend and droop; and then the cunning urchins will insist on another bottle, on pain of transferring their patronage to some rival establishment. To such sublimities of finesse does the London *gamin* rise!

But now, the clock being on the stroke of midnight, the superintendent appeared, in shirt-sleeves, and summarily turned off the gas at the meter, leaving us to stumble to our resting-places as best we might. Being accustomed to this method of procedure, nobody took it amiss, simply seeking his perch with a formal, "Good night, gentlemen." The frequent use of

the words, "sir" and "gentlemen" in the mouths of these mechanics was very remarkable. They never addressed one another without the complimentary termination, and all spoke of each other as "these gentlemen." Had I stumbled upon a peculiarly select set of nature's noblemen, or were they merely matriculating for the glorious days when the working man shall have his own, and when might shall be right indeed? With a truly gentleman-like compassion for a stranger, one of them took me under his wing, hearing that my number was thirty-one, and, his own being thirty-two, proffered his assistance as pilot to the second floor, whither we at length arrived.

Under the impression that we each were to have our own room, I was surprised, and not much pleased, to find that the house is disposed in four long corridors or dormitories, with a winding staircase up the middle, which divides each passage into two. Each dormitory contains twenty-six beds, railed off one from the other by a high wooden partition, like a series of exaggerated family pews in a church. Every pew contains a little iron bed garnished with one mattress, one pillow in dirty pillow-case, and two coarse blankets, one rush-bottomed chair, one box in lieu of chest of drawers, and about two square yards of space in which to move. Every enclosure boasts moreover its own little window, propped (mercifully!) immovably open, and its own awful police regulations. But as far as privacy is concerned, all, regarding aught but the eye, might well be in one great room, for conversations take place between one and another as they undress, whilst others standing on their beds command a view above the partitions, and playfully drop boots or pairs of socks upon unexpectant heads. But by-and-by, the superintendent appears with a candle to "look round," and all is hushed. Not for long though, for the ladies of St. Giles's are seemingly not early birds, preferring to converse by moonlight in bawling accents, and to belabour one another with threats of what they are capable of doing under provocation, to improving their complexions with much sleep. Even they, however, cannot swear, and scream, and curse for ever, and so with many a "Good night, Liz. Good night, Bess, my beauty," they are ultimately silent too, discouraged perhaps by too serious a competition of baby-

screaming. And now arises a fresh sea of sound, strange, weird, unearthly—like choking spirits somewhere underground—accompanied with ghostly murmured menaces, ending in unequivocal snores. Yes, the many-headed working-man is fast asleep, and is determined that all should know it, for his stertorous breath brays in regular cadence, broken now and again by an amateur attempt at strangulation, or a long fit of coughing, ending in an oath. Some babble in their sleep, performing once again the labour of the previous day, wandering among brick avenues, or tearing down aged walls, or fitfully repairing cast-off clothes, or snipping out shadowy new ones. And this is Rest, the only rest many a working man ever gets!

By five o'clock, with many a stretch and groan, and clumsy searching for hob-nailed boots, most of us were astir. Some to get their breakfast previous to a long trudge to some distant early labour, others because they could sleep no longer, others again to have an hour's fishing in the Serpentine before commencing the day's work. Out came the tea-things once again, the motley array of gallipots and pannikins, the half-consumed rasher, the diminished screw of tea and sugar. Some even produced pieces of meat which they proceeded to fry, before wrapping them in bread and an old bandanna for a mid-day meal. We each took our turn at the scullery, sink, and grimy towel, on which convenient cloth the gallipots were wiped, previous to being consigned once more to the locker among the cobwebs under the stone stairs.

As all are supposed to be busy over their several avocations, there is no means of preparing dinner at the otherwise accommodating Bartlemy Chambers, such of its inhabitants as are at home at one o'clock adjourning at that hour to a small tavern round the corner, which possesses the mysterious advantage of "a gridiron," that transcendent property being emblazoned in golden letters over the portal. The "Gridiron" means not that the house boasts of the unusual luxury of a square of iron bars among its Penates, but that a fire roars at one o'clock over which gentlemen are at liberty to toast their own steak, being supplied with a plate and knife and fork and a mug of tea for the sum of twopence halfpenny. Beer being licensed to be retailed on the premises, gentlemen may, should they think proper, imbibe

that liquid instead of tea. Moreover, so obliging is this hostelry, that ready cooked liver and bacon may be had for fourpence, vegetables for one penny, pudding at the same modest charge, or very superior steak pudding for fourpence, no charge being made for cooking, and accounts (references having been given) being payable weekly. Independent persons doubting the ingenuousness of so much accommodating amiability, prefer purchasing their meat by weight, grilling it sternly under their own superintendence, and consuming it with gratification in the gloomy little ramshackle building with no prospect but a brick wall a foot and a half from its window, and a landlady who, considering herself clothed with darkness as with a garment, considerably neglects most of the adornments of which her sex is supposed to be so fond. Less cynical individuals, on the other hand, roll in daily through the swing door, grope their way to the tottering clothless table, devour whatever is set before them, paying off their score each Saturday on receipt of their weekly wage. Thus we may gather that, exclusive of tobacco and casual liquorings up in public houses, the single working man can flourish, as a green bay-tree upon the modest sum total of about nine shillings a week, a slight augmentation being allowed in winter for the warming of the upper regions of Bartlemy Chambers.

A TERRIBLE ADVENTURE IN THE TYROL.

THEOPHILUS LANE and Francis Abbot were old college companions and fast friends; but though still young, their paths in life had diverged. Lane had become an ecclesiastic. He was not so broad perhaps in his religious views as his enunciation of them from the pulpit was long, but nevertheless he was an excellent fellow. Abbot was a barrister, eminently respectable in his conduct and behaviour, and a regular attendant at his parish church, but not a glutton for sermons. He had a logical mind. But the two men had still one taste left in common—that of mountaineering. They both delighted in the strength of their legs. They did not talk much together—no great pedestrians talk. A few words may be interchanged during the first six miles, but a solemn silence soon intervenes; the distance between them, as they plod on side by side, imperceptibly widens; they are hot, they are thirsty, they are

each a little bit cross because the other shows no external symptoms of weariness; not until kindly nature drops the veil of evening on the scene does either propose to halt. Then they eat enormously, and fall asleep immediately afterwards like anacondas.

In that part of the Tyrol into which the unreflecting legs of these two men had carried them in August last, there happened to be nothing to eat; there was no meat, no wine, no beer, nothing but a sort of thin meal made of the same bran with which pincushions are stuffed at home, stirred up in milk, and which they described eulogistically as "very filling;" the effect, indeed, was to give them both the appearance of pincushions. The Divine, being used to fasting, suffered no particular inconvenience from this scanty fare, but the Lawyer did: his spirits were greatly subdued—a circumstance which must be the apology for his apparent pusillanimity in the crisis to be presently described. Hunger will tame a lion; and it is probable that a continuous diet of bran and milk would much diminish the spirit of the king of beasts, even if it did not dinuce him to lie down with the lamb. This was Abbot's case; what he would have given for a lamb, on the sixth day of that involuntary abstinence, would make the high meat prices of our own metropolis seem cheapness. The seventh day (even in the Tyrol) was Sunday, and after their bran breakfast, instead of setting out to walk as usual, the Rev. Lane thus addressed his friend. His voice (as the matter was subsequently described to me by an unseen spectator of these proceedings, one whose beard and green spectacles concealed the fact of his British origin, and who kept his mouth shut lest he also should fall a victim to the oppressor), Lane's voice, I say, had an unctuous persuasiveness about it which it did not exhibit upon a week day; and while he spoke he held his doomed companion by his glittering eye, like the Ancient Mariner in the ballad.

"Don't you think, Abbot, it would be very nice if we had a church service this morning?"

"It would be charming," answered the other, confidently; "only unfortunately there is nobody to attend it! There is not a Christian, or at least an Englishman—for I am sure that hairy man with spectacles cannot be one—within a hundred miles of us, so I don't see where you are to get your congregation."

"My dear fellow," answered the Divine, softly, laying his hand in episcopal manner upon the other's knee, "there is you, and there is I."

The earnest gravity of this remark, joined with the contemplation of what it was evidently leading up to, was such as to paralyze poor Abbot's already enfeebled powers; and his grammatical sense, which at home would have been outraged by the expression "There is I," was now only faintly irritated.

"There is I," he repeated mechanically.

"Just so," continued the Divine, with cheerful acquiescence. "I will read the service to you!"

"But there is no room where we can be alone, my good soul," pleaded Abbot.

In one part of the rude apartment in which they sat was a party of natives (among whom they included the bearded stranger) carousing over bran and milk, and in another the goat which supplied the milk was being taught a variety of accomplishments by the junior members of their host's family; especially to stand with all four legs upon a penny piece, generously supplied for that purpose by one of the two English visitors.

"Nay, my friend, there is our bed-room."

The remark was undeniable; there *was* their bed-room; accessible, though with difficulty, by a ladder that led out of the common room through a hole in the ceiling. In the early days of Christian persecution, or in Covenanting times in Scotland, such an apartment would, without doubt, have had its advantages as a place of public worship, since nobody would ever have suspected its being used for that purpose even by the most fanatical; but in that year of grace, 1873, it did seem a little—well, incongruous. That two people, and one of them the clergyman, should join in supplications for the Royal Family and for the high court of Parliament was in itself a somewhat astounding proposal, but that they should do so in a rickety chamber, with a roof so sloping that the congregation couldn't stand up even when so commanded by the Rubric, and with a running accompaniment of Tyrolese jargon coming up through the open space where the ladder was, revived in Abbot a transient sense of the ridiculous; but he was gone too far (through bran and milk) to discuss the matter.

They accordingly climbed up the ladder into this wretched apartment, and from the breast-pocket of his coat the Rev.

Theophilus Lane produced a pair of snow-white bands, and tied them round his neck. His design, it was therefore evident, had been premeditated, and in his countenance was an expression not only of fixed resolve but of placid triumph.

"Has he brought a surplice with him," thought the unhappy congregation, "or will he put on the counterpane?"

He did not, however, proceed to that extremity, but sat down, with the washing-stand—the only article of furniture in the room—between him and his helpless victim. A spectator who had not overheard their previous conversation would have imagined that they were about to baptize an infant.

The victim had never been so near an officiating clergyman before, and the Divine apparently fascinated him. He could not keep his eyes off those bands, one of which he perceived had a spot of ironmould upon it; would it annoy him (the congregation seemed to be thinking) if he should mention the fact? Not of course now; that was not to be thought of; but when the service was over—if it ever should be over. He was spared nothing, absolutely nothing, except the Prayer for Rain; if a collection should presently be made from the congregation would he have to drop something into the soap dish, he wondered, and found himself reading the directions in the Prayer Book, instead of following his pastor. They were so close together that it was impossible to follow him. "In choirs and places where they sing, here followeth the anthem." Will he propose an anthem? The congregation could not sing; it would do anything to oblige, it had no force of will to resist its minister; bran and milk had sapped its vitals, but it could not sing. The reader was, for the most part, monotonous, but at times his voice gathered strength and volume—it seemed to the unseen spectator (who was now looking through the hole in the floor) at the wrong times; when he was talking about "the sinner," for example, he could not help casting a glance in the direction of his congregation, as much as to say, "You hear *that*." Abbot's lips were moving all this time—but as my informant imagined, by no means in devotional exercises. "This is hard," he seemed to be muttering to himself; "this is really very hard; he shall never have this chance again, by jingo—never, never. I will take care not to travel with him in future, except on week days; or if I do, I will take a Dissenter with us; somebody

that will protect one from him; who will have something to say on the other side of the question. How monotonous he is getting." . . . Here the victim (as my informant supposes) must have dropped asleep, for the tones of the Divine had a sharpness in them which savoured of reproof. But flesh and blood—or at least flesh and bran and milk, could not indefinitely endure such an infliction. The service had lasted three-quarters of an hour, though the congregation had not dared to look at its watch. However it was over now. The Rev. Lane was about to dismiss his hearer. "Now shall the priest let them depart," says the Rubric. A quaint but admirable sentence. What was he about now? "This is terrible, this is shameful," thought the spectator (and so do I). He produces a sort of black copy book from the pocket whence he took the bands. He is about to preach a sermon—a sermon, too, of his own composition.

The victim's emotions became obviously almost too much for him. His countenance revealed him to be indignant, irritated, and even revengeful, but he was not strong—the very worm it is said will turn, but not when it has been fed for six days on nothing but bran and milk—besides there was no room to turn. He was obliged to sit and listen. When he heard himself addressed as "my beloved brethren," and even as "my dear brothers and sisters," he did not remonstrate. In spite of those plural expressions, it is my informant's conviction that the discourse had not been delivered before; there were descriptions of Tyrolean scenery in it, allusions to a diet of locusts and honey, and other local colouring that proclaimed it to be a recent effort of its author, yet it was obviously framed for a larger audience. Poor Abbot was the housekeeper to whom this clerical Molière rehearsed his composition before trying it on his congregation at home. Its reception was ensured, even if it should not prove to be an oratorical success. Tied and bound by a delicate sense of the becoming, the unfortunate congregation had to sit it through. If every point did not "tell," at all events it could not be escaped, the missile being cast as it were at such a very short range. When the Divine rose upon the wind of eloquence, my informant described his own sensations as those of one who is blown from a gun. What then must the sensations of the victim

have been, who was still nearer to the impassioned preacher?

The victim never revealed his sufferings (though it is highly improbable that he ever forgot them), but my informant adjures me to make them public.

"Not," says he, "that it is possible such a catastrophe can occur in my own case; I will take good care of that. But I hope (in spite of what Lane said in his sermon) that I sometimes think of others; and I adjure you to put the human race upon their guard. Let no one travel alone with an enthusiastic Divine in a district unfrequented by his fellow countrymen, and towards the latter end of the week, lest a worse thing betide him than ever happened to that unhappy and depressed young man.

"Well, upon my life," said I, "I don't see how the adventure could have been more terrible."

"Yes it might," returned he in a hushed voice, "I have had dreams—nightmare dreams—since I was witness to that occurrence, wherein the infliction took a form even yet more aggravated. Suppose that this Divine, so young and enthusiastic, and with such excellent lungs, had had the gift of preaching extempore? What would have stopped him? certainly not a congregation enfeebled by bran and milk; he might have gone on for ever!"

And there is no doubt he might.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LII. I CHANGE MY LODGINGS.

THAT I was now an idler in London could scarcely be charged against me as a fault. My profession had, as it were, slipped from under me.

There was some pleasure at first in finding myself released from attendance at the office in Golden-square. I was free from morning to night. My task of copying legal documents under the supervision of old Vickery, my futile attempts to rival the exquisite handwriting of Rachel Monck, had become things of the past. My new liberty was most enjoyable—for a while. I rose at a later hour; lingered over my breakfast; became a diligent student of the morning paper. My toilet now occupied more time than of yore. I lounged about Bond-street and looked into shop windows very persistently. I

had some difficulty, indeed, in getting through the day.

Still I was well aware that this was by no means a satisfactory state of things. I was not a young gentleman of fortune. I had no real right to be idle. And the lack of occupation was irksome to me, insomuch that I was sometimes even wishing myself back again in Golden-square. It had been dull and tedious enough there most certainly; but did I not now and then see Rachel? Moreover I entertained at that time a foolish young fellow's notion that I had a mission of some sort to fulfil; that I had to share in the world's progress and a part of some importance to play in life; a name to make and fame to win. Certainly I was not going the right way to accomplish this.

I received from the Down Farm letters expressing deep regret at the death of Mr. Monck; no enquiries were made, however, as to my plans for the future. My mother seemed hardly to be aware that the loss of my master had necessarily an important effect upon the position of his apprentice.

Tony's health had, according to his own account, much improved. He spoke of his gaining strength slowly but surely. He made little mention, however, of rejoining me in London, very immediately. Indeed I was inclined to mistrust his report of himself. His handwriting appeared to me to be weak and tremulous. It was clear that he had been much shocked by the death of his uncle. I gathered that he had received tidings of Rachel of recent date. But he provided no clue as to her present address. The house in Golden-square, I had ascertained by frequent visits, still remained closed and untenanted.

I determined to seek counsel and aid of Sir George. I had some difficulty in obtaining an interview with him, for, at this time, he was often absent from Harley-street for days together.

He looked paler than ever, and his manner was nervous and fatigued. I thought him really very ill; he explained, however, that he had been travelling all the previous night, and was a sufferer from want of sleep. He received me most kindly. His hand, as he grasped mine, I noted, was burning hot.

I ventured to remind him of his promise to find employment in his studio for Tony, and then explaining the unavoidable absence of my friend, and the position in which I was placed by the death of Mr.

Monck, besought him, that I might, for the present, at any rate, fill the post that had been assigned to Tony. I spoke humbly of my ability to serve him, while I promised to spare no pains to content and to be of use to him.

He smiled languidly, as he said: "Oh, certainly. I shall be glad if I can help you. Something shall be found for you to do if you really wish it, and for your young friend too, if need be. I am pleased that you are now asking for yourself rather than another, and that I am able to give you what you ask, such as it is. But never underrate your own merits, Duke. That's hardly the way to get on. The world is often very content to accept our own estimate of ourselves. It saves trouble; and the world doesn't like trouble. You're quite clever enough to do all that you'll be wanted to do, here. I've not forgotten the drawings you showed me. I told you my opinion of them at the time. I've not changed it. Come and set to work as soon as you please." After a pause, he resumed—"I'm to understand, then, that you have finally abandoned the law, and that art is to be altogether your profession in the future?"

I said I hoped that might be so—but that, at present, I was in some doubt. Under the circumstances in which I had suddenly found myself, I had only ventured to think of a temporary and provisional arrangement.

"You mean, perhaps, that you must consult your friends at home—at Purrington, isn't the place called? Your quitting the law will, I suppose, be some disappointment to them, especially as they have no doubt been at considerable expense hitherto on your account in trying to make a lawyer of you."

"They are most kind and indulgent," I said. "I don't think they will complain if I am content."

"You ought to consider yourself a very fortunate young man;" and he smiled, rather cynically, I thought. "However, if they don't object, of course I cannot. I would not seem to cross or oppose their plans in any way. But, as I understand it, I am not chargeable with harbouring a runaway apprentice, or anything of that kind. And of course you have, after all, a right to please yourself as to your future career. But we'll let it be as you say—a provisional arrangement. You are at any rate welcome to stay here while you look

about you and make up your mind. Stay as long as you like, for that matter; I'm quite willing. And the question of remuneration—will you leave that to me? No, don't be too modest again. You must, of course, be paid for what you do. The labourer is worthy of his hire. Don't fear that we shall not make you useful, and obtain money's worth from you. Are you in want of money now? Pray don't be ceremonious. Nay, I know what young fellows are—how apt to outrun the allowance from home, to think it very tardy in falling due, to wish there were five quarters in the year. We don't, who have to pay rent and taxes. Better take this in earnest of future payment."

He took from his pocket a crumpled roll of bank-notes, and with a laugh thrust one into my hand. It was for fifty pounds.

"Nay, never refuse money. I may not always have it to offer you. You'll soon earn that amount and become a creditor for more. I don't doubt that you'll succeed, Duke. You shall if I can help you. Still you must bear in mind that art is really a serious business. You must look forward to being more than a mere journeyman painter; that's all you'll be here. I think you've taste and talent for the calling. I've not scrupled to say so. But young men are often disposed to believe they like art out of mere love of idleness. They think ours an easy, independent, unrestricted profession that releases them from ordinary rules and ties. They vote themselves geniuses and so disdain industry and application. They wait for inspiration, and meantime do nothing but lose the power of working and producing. That won't do, Duke, at all. But I didn't intend to inflict this lecture upon you, and the advice is not really my own. Sir Joshua used to say much the same thing, I believe, to the young men who went to him with their drawings, and who were held by their friends to be lads of surprising genius. Hard work, Duke, is the only real secret of success. I've worked hard in my time, Heaven knows, though now my strength fails me somewhat, and I can't do what I did. I grow old, Duke, that's the simple truth."

He was silent for some minutes after this. He leaned back in his chair and slowly passed his hand across his eyes. He seemed lost in thought. Certainly he looked older, much older, than when I had seen him last. And I now discerned lines

as of suffering upon his face that I had not before noted.

Presently he roused himself, rising with a weary air from his arm-chair.

"You told me, I think, that you were living in lodgings. I forget where, but I know I have a note of the address, though it would puzzle me to find it just at this moment. Now it occurs to me that you need hardly be put to that expense. This is a great rambling house. Room in it could easily be found for you, if you cared to take up your abode in it. Something tolerably comfortable could be rigged up for you, I don't doubt, without much trouble. Please, don't thank me. I'm only giving you what I don't want; what is, indeed, no sort of use to me. There are rooms in this house which I have never even entered. And don't fear that you won't be sufficiently independent—that your liberty will be interfered with in any way. You will be perfectly free. There are a good many rats and mice about upstairs, I believe, but you won't mind that. We'll keep an extra cat expressly on your account, if that will be any recommendation to you. And I shall not be in your way. Very likely we shall not meet for days or weeks together. I warn you that it's nothing very attractive I'm offering you. I confess that mine is a most ill-managed household. We want organization here terribly. If you can put matters on a better footing in that respect you'll be doing me a real service. But a bachelor, occupied as I am—and I was never what's called a man of business—what could be expected of me? Say you'll come and make the best of it, and call this your home; I mean for a time only, of course, until your plans for the future are quite settled. At any rate give the thing a trial. I'll not seek to detain you against your will. You consent?"

Of course I consented. I was most grateful to him for his consideration of my interests.

"I'll speak to Mole about it, and Propert shall attend to you and see that you have all you want; and the housekeeper shall be told to take care of you. But Mole is really the most important person in the house. He is got to be, Heaven knows how, a sort of general manager and major domo here; and you, it seems, already stand high in his favour. I know little enough about the fellow except that he makes himself very useful. Indeed, I could hardly do without him now. Mere chance

threw him in my way. He amused me rather; he's a strange comical sort of fellow, as you've no doubt found out for yourself. And I intended to do him a kindness; but I needn't speak of that, for Mole's quite as useful to me as I am to him. He's really clever in his way. Anything I've done for him he has repaid over and over again. And he's honest; at least I think so; as honest as most people at any rate. Otherwise he'd be better off than he is perhaps. It's clear he hasn't been very careful of his own interests hitherto. There's a sort of honesty in disregard of self. So you understand, Duke; you're to come and make this your dwelling-place as soon as you please."

In a few days I had quitted Featherstone-buildings and become the occupant of an upper room in Sir George's house. It was a spacious apartment on the third floor, fairly furnished, the windows looking towards the street. The adjoining chambers were empty.

"I hope you'll like it," said Mole, who had supervised the arrangements; "I've tried to make it comfortable for you. We'll hang up a picture or two, and that will warm up the walls a little and hide the paper, which is certainly hideous. Sir George didn't choose the pattern, you may be sure. It was here when he first took the house. I've borrowed furniture for you from the other rooms; altogether things look pretty tidy I think. If there's anything else you want you must tell me of it. I've Sir George's instructions to do all that's necessary, and to make you as comfortable as possible. But they're dreary quarters when all's said and done. I don't think I could live here myself. There's a sort of Haunted Chamber feeling about the place I should never get over. Not that I mean to set you against the room. But to my thinking there might have been a murder committed here; and that great cupboard in the corner looks to me just the kind of place a ghost would choose to hide in. But that's an absurd fancy, of course. This is a large dreary house enough; but it's of a common-place London pattern. I don't suppose Sir George ever came up these stairs. The painting rooms are underneath you; otherwise you've got this upper part of the house all to yourself. There's no doubt but you'll be quiet enough. And if you don't like this room, you can easily shift to another. You've a choice before you, up here. You're not likely to be

disturbed much, except perhaps by the mice in the wainscot and the cats outside on the roof. They make noise enough, at times, no doubt. I hope you'll sleep well. My own impression is that I couldn't manage a wink here though I tried ever so. However, I suppose you can easily give it up if you find it don't answer."

Mole's own abode was something of a mystery. He was generally to be found in Harley-street throughout the day, and sometimes, I think, passed the night there upon a rug in the painting room. Otherwise his habits were rather of an Arab kind, and he pitched his tent, temporarily, just as convenience dictated. So far as I could discover, he had no regular lodging. But tidings of him could often be obtained at a coffee shop in Red Lion-street, Holborn. And I know that letters were now and then addressed to him—to be left in the bar till called for—at a tavern in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane Theatre. It was an establishment of dramatic character and predilections. Numerous lithographed portraits of actors—all attitudinising in their favourite characters—adorned the bar. The house indeed seemed to enjoy much patronage from the theatrical profession. Mole frequently occupied a seat in the parlour, smoking his pipe and emptying many glasses there, the while he discoursed upon histrionic art. He was accounted, I believe, rather an authority on the subject, especially by those who brought to bear upon it more esteem than information. Here we met many members of the calling, who resembled him in that the art they professed had brought them little more prosperity than it had secured for him; and with these he held much converse. Upon minor subjects they might dissent from his opinions, which were somewhat dictatorially pronounced; but they never failed to agree with him when he declared that the drama—they preferred to call it, "drammer"—was in a hopeless state of decline. So much, to their thinking, seemed proved to conviction by their own lack of success. Their discourse generally, indeed, was of a saturnine character. On certain occasions I had opportunities of hearing it, having been introduced by Mole to the assembly. They harped much upon the bad business this theatre was doing and upon the impending close of that; upon half salaries here and "no treasury" there; upon the falling off of the veteran actor-manager Millstone, and upon the loss of favour

recently incurred by the once popular Miss Kneebone. They were severe, too, upon the degenerate taste of modern playgoers; they were mindful of past palmy days, when, as it happened, they were themselves prominently before the public; and they wondered gravely how long things could go on as they were going, having already decided that they must end disastrously.

"You've never been over this house before, have you?" Mole enquired. "This is Sir George's room. He's gone out now, and won't be back until late, so there's no danger in showing it you."

He led the way into a confined apartment on the ground floor. It was carpetless and very bare of furniture. In one corner stood a narrow iron camp bedstead, without curtains. Above it, affixed to the wall, was an antique crucifix of ebony and ivory, exquisitely carved.

"Something of the anchorite's cell about it, isn't there? or, say a soldier's tent? Sir George affects Spartan habits. That's his humour. Every man to his taste. Proper sleeps in much greater comfort, let me tell you. Those windows are left open winter and summer. Wind, or rain, or snow, it's all the same to Sir George. So, at least, he professes. If he had but a touch of my asthma he'd think differently. As it is, he suffers more from rheumatism, or neuralgia, or something of that sort, than he cares to mention."

"He suffers much?"

"He doesn't complain; but I'm sure of it, all the same. And you can read it in his face."

"He is really ill?"

"Don't you find him changed? He is restless and feverish, and though he doesn't lose his temper—he's too fine a gentleman for that—he grows more and more impatient and hard to please. Haven't you seen how his hand trembles of late? He can't sleep. Look here."

He showed me a vial that stood on the mantelpiece. It contained a dark ruby-coloured liquid.

"Is it wine?" I enquired.

He removed the glass stopper from the vial. It emitted a curious medicated odour.

"Tincture of opium," said Mole, in explanation, "commonly called laudanum. That is how Sir George obtains rest and relief from pain."

I was alarmed and distressed. Some-

thing I had heard or read of the habit of opium eating and its pernicious results.

"You look frightened. But you know a man must have sleep somehow. No doubt Sir George acts under medical advice. A good dose is about twenty-five drops, I believe. I've known him take more than that. And the habit grows upon him—or say, rather his state renders laudanum more and more necessary to him. Dangerous? I can't say. I'm not well informed—I'm without personal experience on the subject. And, to speak plainly, when I want to get fuddled myself, I find simpler drinks serve my turn, well enough. Say, beer or gin. No laudanum for me, thank you. Come away. Enough of 'prison house' secrets for to-day. I told you before that your relative is a strange man. And his house is a strange house. Things happen or may happen in it, that are no concern of ours. We've but to do our work, and take our wages. Don't think that too ignoble a view of your position. But we're both Sir George's assistants now. We'll go to work at another Royal portrait—one's sure to be wanted before long. And we shall have a good deal to do to the picture of the Comic Muse, soon. Come on. It will be like old times at the Down Farm, when I gave you drawing-lessons, in chalk, on a barn-door. You remember? I only wish that Mistress Kem was here—I don't forget, you see—to draw some strong beer for us. How good, and sound, and bright that beer was, to be sure. Is she married yet? There was the making of an uncommonly worthy sort of wife about Kem. For one to whom age was no object, so long as a comfortable wife was secured, Kem would be the very woman."

We were soon busy with yet another replica of His Majesty's portrait.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 1874.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MANSFIELD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXIII. AT THE DOG AND DUCK.

DEATH is a guest of himself sombre and sad enough, and casts a gloom, such as belongs to no other visitant of human household. The very air is made stiller by his awful presence, and through it every sound comes to the ear with such unnatural distinctness as seems discord. So dread and so indisputably by right divine is his majesty, that he who is clothed with it, although the humblest, exacts respect and deference from his lord; nay, for the time being, while he lies so stiff and strange within the house about which perhaps but yesterday he moved like others, the servant becomes master. The soul has fled, as we believe; the mind is no longer there, or has become unconscious, and yet we pay a homage to the cold flesh which, when alive and warm, it never had. The song is forbidden, the laughter hushed, even on the lips of children who know not what death means. A guest, ungracious, sombre, unwelcome at all times, and, when arriving unexpectedly, most dread and sad. How much more, then, when coming we know not how, yet needs must tell; and when in the house of mourning intrudes the unsympathising, irresistible arm of the Law. Your wife, your child, your friend is lying dead; but not to rest in peace till earth receives him; nor shall you weep in peace, but come forth amid the gaping crowd, and answer how he died. This is a terror added to death indeed.

On the morning after the finding of Mrs. Hulet's body, it was removed to a small inn between the cottage and Balcombe, to await the inquest, which took place on the same

afternoon. It was a roadside house much frequented by wayfarers of all kinds, but it had never been so thronged—"not even during the steeple-chases" it was observed—as on this occasion.

The crowd, indeed, were kept out of the house as much as could be, but in the road in front they clustered like bees, and from underneath the windows of the room where the body had been placed, sent up a hum as from a hive. The whole proceedings were dreadfully out of consonance with the occasion, and, though it mattered nothing to her who was the cause of it all, seemed especially so in her case. For the poor lady's life had been, through ill-health and fastidiousness, one of seclusion, and, at all events, it was certain she had never in her lifetime set foot in a public-house. Whether the drawing-room at Cliff Cottage, which, small as it was, was the largest room in the house, had not sufficient accommodation for the coroner's jury, or whether it is enacted by the wisdom of parliament—strongly influenced as it is known to be by the publican interest—that all coroners' quests shall be held in a public-house, I know not; but, at all events, at the Dog and Duck this particular inquest was held.

In the morning Evy had seen her uncle, and found him much more calm and collected than his behaviour on the previous day had led her to expect; but Judith he had declined to see.

"Tell your uncle," said she to Evy, when the latter was about to enter Mr. Hulet's study, "that I wish to answer a question that he put to me last night." And Evy, of course, delivered the message.

"No," said Mr. Hulet, quietly. "I will not see Judith. She used such words to me last night, as I cannot call to mind without their evoking feelings such as I

could not entertain to-day of all days. I have forgiven her, I hope, but I will not give her the opportunity of so offending again—at least not now.”

And Evy made no attempt to alter this resolution; in her heart, indeed, she applauded it, and felt much less delicacy than forty-eight hours ago she would have thought it possible for her to feel, in acquainting Judith with his decision.

Judith, however, took it very coolly. “I am sorry,” said she, “for your uncle’s sake, not mine. The question he wished me to answer, and which I am now prepared to answer, was one of importance to him. If his ideas should change upon this matter he may come to me if he pleases. I shall move no more in it; and, besides, I am very far from well to-day, and shall not leave my room.”

“But we have received notice, Judith, to attend and give evidence before the coroner.”

“Yes, you see it has come to that, as I told you it would,” replied Judith, with a triumphant air. “But as to my attendance, that will depend upon circumstances—that is, of course, upon how I feel; at present it is my intention not to attend.”

Evy could not understand her behaviour, except so far that it was obviously meant to be disagreeable; but she was sincerely pleased to find that Judith was not going to the inquest. She had taken such an aversion to her, by reason of her late conduct, that she almost believed her capable of saying something on such an occasion with the intention of giving her uncle pain. The change in her tone and manner had been considerable, and apparent even to the charitable Evy, so soon as her independence had been assured by Mr. Hulet’s liberality, but now, probably because she had become comparatively rich through his wife’s demise, her air had an assumption of superiority that was intolerable. Nor was this the worst; there was malice in it, and triumphant malice; symptoms of the possession of that devil, the desire to do evil, which made Evy tremble with vague alarms. She did not think it necessary to inform Mr. Hulet of the cavalier reception which Judith had given to his refusal to see her, nor did he put any question concerning her until the time arrived for attending the inquest.

“Then is not Judith coming with us?” inquired he.

“I believe not, uncle. She is not well, and does not feel equal to it.”

“I am sorry,” returned he, “though I can hardly be surprised. It is a pity, though, that you will have to go through this ordeal unsupported by one of your own sex.”

“I do not want one, uncle. It is enough that you are with me,” said Evy, simply.

His only reply was a silent pressure of her hand. The public-house was but a few hundred yards along the highway, and they went thither on foot, which, had they been aware of the crowd, they perhaps would not have done; but so soon as they appeared the people made a lane for their approach, up which, with quiet gravity, the old man walked with his companion. At the door was Captain Heyton, hat in hand, and in a little room that had been set apart for them were good Mrs. Hodkin Barmby and Mrs. Storks.

“We thought you would like to have old friends about you, darling,” whispered the former; and, indeed, notwithstanding what she had said to her uncle, it was a great comfort to Evy to find them there, more especially when he was summoned from her to attend the jury, who sat in an upper chamber. By reason of his manifest weakness he was here accommodated with a chair, and though one or two of the jurymen regarded him with some severity, great commiseration was shown for him by the majority of his interlocutors.

His evidence, which was in strict accordance with the facts, so far as we have at present been made acquainted with them, was given in quiet and collected tones, though he evinced deep emotion. The last time he had been in company with the deceased alive was in the drawing-room, from whence he had parted from her about midnight; he had, however, seen her afterwards from his window, walking with Judith Mercer, her adopted daughter, upon the cliff walk. He had been wakeful that night, and heard both his wife and the young lady in question retire to their respective rooms; but he had heard nothing more, no movement of any one about the house, until the morning, when at breakfast time he was informed that Mrs. Hulet was missing. This was in brief the substance of his testimony, though it of course went into detail.

By the coroner: “Was it the custom of yourself and your deceased wife, Mr. Hulet, to occupy separate sleeping apartments?”

“It was.”

“That is queer,” observed a juror.

"You were both invalids, I believe," continued the coroner, casting an indignant glance at the author of this interruption, "and I suppose being restless you interfered with each other's slumbers."

"It was partly from that reason, but also, I regret to say, because we were not upon very good terms with one another," answered Mr. Hulet, quietly.

The juror nodded, and looked about him with a triumphant air. Here was something important, which but for his supernatural sagacity would not have transpired.

"There was no especial disagreement between your wife and you, however, upon the evening in question, Mr. Hulet?" continued the coroner, who, jealous of interference with his authority, and of his own reputation for astuteness, resented this victory of private intelligence.

"Indeed, sir," answered Mr. Hulet with bowed head, "I am afraid there was. The quarrel indeed was about nothing, or what most persons would consider nothing, a family picture; but we both lost our tempers. Each was probably in the wrong, but to me, after what has happened since, it seems as though I alone had been to blame."

"Did you menace her in any way?" inquired the hostile juror.

"I must insist, sir," observed the coroner, angrily, "on having these inquiries put through the proper channel, that is, through me. If every one were to ask questions just as he pleases, this court would become a bear garden."

"Put that question, then," said the juror, who though so laudably solicitous to perform his novel duties was by no means certain about his rights; and the coroner put it accordingly.

"I never menaced my poor wife, thank Heaven, in all my life," answered Mr. Hulet, solemnly, "nor ever wished her harm. Though it is true I may have said that I wished we were separated."

"Ay, ay, that is very different from a menace," said the coroner, consolingly, who was himself a married man. "You have then no reason to suppose that from anger, melancholy, or any other cause, your deceased wife could have been induced to put an end to herself?"

"God forbid," answered Mr. Hulet. "I am quite certain from my knowledge of her character that no such idea ever entered into her mind. Had she chosen to do so she could have parted from me at any time."

"As in point of fact she did at an earlier

period of your married life, I believe?" continued the coroner, for their story so far was well known.

Mr. Hulet bowed assent. He could scarcely trust himself to speak about that far back time.

"Really, gentlemen," said the coroner, "no other question occurs to me with which we need trouble the witness, and this scene must necessarily be very painful to him. Has any juror——"

"Yes, I have," interrupted the irrepressible one, who had been burning for this opportunity of distinguishing himself. "The deceased had been warned, you tell us, Mr. Hulet, not to venture alone on the cliff walk, the wall of which we have examined, and are unanimously of opinion that it is too low for safety. How then do you account for her returning to it by starlight, for that is the supposition, and incurring what she must have known to be great danger?"

"I cannot account for it at all," said Mr. Hulet, simply.

"It is very easy to see that our friend is a bachelor," remarked the coroner, significantly.

At which the rest of the jury smiled, and the Irrepressible grew very red in the face, and cleared his throat as the sailor clears the decks for action.

"Permit me to remark, Mr. Coroner," exclaimed he, "that your remark is most indecent."

Here the rest of the jury tittered, and the Irrepressible grew redder and redder.

"It appears to me," he continued, "that the person who ought to be the judge, or at all events, the president of this court, is more inclined to be the advocate of the prisoner——"

"The what?" ejaculated the coroner, springing to his feet with indignation.

"I didn't mean it, upon my life and soul I didn't mean it," exclaimed the Irrepressible, humbly. "I meant the witness, of course, not the prisoner."

"You said 'the prisoner,' sir," remarked the coroner, solemnly. "You have just now most improperly applied the word 'indecent' to my conduct, but even such a term does not express your most uncalled-for and abominable——"

"But I didn't mean it, sir," moaned the unhappy juror, "the word slipped out."

"I will thank you not to interrupt me in the performance of my judicial functions," was the coroner's sharp reply. "The word slipped out, sir, as the cat slips out of the

bag, I fear, and shows us your animus in this case. It is most disgraceful to one in your position to have an animus, sir, and it will be my duty, in case it appears again, to forward an account of it to—hem—the proper authorities.”

The Irrepressible was crushed; visions culled from his early historical studies of a secretary of state catching him by the collar, and handing him up through the Traitor's Gate into the custody of the governor of the Tower, filled his guilty mind. For the future he resolved to retire into that obscurity from which he regretted he had ever emerged, and to coincide with any verdict the coroner might direct, even though it should be justifiable homicide. The coroner, on the other hand, smarting under an implication which he felt was not altogether undeserved, determined to hold the reins of inquiry with a more equal hand, and to show less tenderness for “family feelings” than he had hitherto evinced.

The widower's examination having been concluded, he was dismissed, and Evy summoned. She was a little fluttered by the horror and strangeness of the circumstances, as she well might be, but she told what she had to tell with quiet clearness, and answered even the questions that were put to her, concerning the disagreements between Mr. Hulet and the deceased, without any distressing sign of the anguish they cost her. It was an immense relief to her that Judith was not present, or, as she supposed, about to be so; she had no fear that anything would transpire to the disadvantage of her uncle except from that source. She believed him from the bottom of her heart to be wholly innocent of having driven his unhappy wife to her death, and moreover was well convinced that she had not sought it designedly. But for the dark insinuations of Judith, indeed, so terrible an idea as was suggested by these questions would never have entered her mind. On the other hand, she had no explanation of the unfortunate event to offer. It was highly improbable that Mrs. Hulet should have thought of venturing on the cliff-walk after midnight; but still she had been walking there with Judith until very late, and the night being sultry, and finding herself disinclined for sleep, it was just possible that the whim might have taken her to go thither again. At all events, that solution of the mystery, however unsatisfactory, was the best that she could give. She could not say that to her knowledge Mrs. Hulet had ever walked in her sleep,

though she would have given much to have been able to do so. The poor lady had not been addicted to pedestrian exercise even when she was awake. To the question, was egress from the cottage to the garden easy at so late an hour? she had answered yes. The shutters of the drawing-room were rarely fastened, and on warm nights, such as the one in question, the window itself was sometimes left open.

“After all,” said the coroner, when her examination was concluded, without much elucidation of the matter in hand, and the jury were rubbing their chins, and looking more puzzled than ever, “we have not yet seen what I may call the principal witness, gentlemen. This young lady, I am sure, has given every information that lies in her power, but she was not the last person who was in the poor lady's company. I will now call Miss Judith Mercer.”

Hearing this, just as she was about to leave the room, Evy, moved by some impulse she could not explain, turned round and said, “I am afraid, sir, Miss Mercer will not be here to-day; at least, I left her very far from well in her own room.”

“I am sorry for that, Miss Carthew; but it is absolutely necessary—what do you say, gentlemen? Yes, absolutely necessary that we should have her evidence before us. She must be sent for, if you please, unless you can produce a medical certificate; and even then we must go to her. In the meanwhile, gentlemen, we can fill up the time by an examination of the servants—Mrs. Hulet's maid, and so on.”

Evy bowed and left the room with a firm step, but her heart sank within her. A presentiment of evil in connexion with Judith's evidence had oppressed her from the first, and now, it seemed, after a delusive hope that the blow had been averted—which only made it the more stunning—this was about to be realised. To her great relief, however, Mr. Hulet did not appear to share her fears. “Let Judith be sent for at once,” said he, quietly, “if it be necessary;” which accordingly was done. And while they waited for her he sat with his hand in Evy's, softly patting it, and calling her a brave girl. “Next to myself, my darling, I know you have suffered worse than any of us during this sad time—a time, too, that was to have been so bright and joyous for you” (alluding, of course, to the drawing near of her marriage-day). “Well, well, for you, thank Heaven, there is sunshine in store yet.”

“And for you, uncle, too, I trust; with

me—with us;” and she looked lovingly towards Jack, by whom she had been unselfishly consigned to Mr. Hulet, for the day, to comfort him, but who could not help gazing greedily at her from afar.

The old man shook his head with a grave smile, but not a despairing one. If he did not see a restful future for himself in the home that these young people should choose, it was only, perhaps, because at such a time he thought it wrong to look for it. He certainly looked better, calmer, more himself, than she could have hoped to see him. Presently the messenger that had been despatched to the cottage, came back with a note for Mr. Hulet, addressed in Judith's hand.

“What can this mean?” said he, in an agitated voice, and with a little flush on his pale cheek. “She says she will not come unless she sees me first.”

Then Evy called to mind Judith's strange words that morning, “I am sorry for your uncle's sake, not mine;” and what, thought she, could that question of his have been which she was now prepared to answer, and which she said was of such importance to him? She felt sick at heart with fear.

“Judith is not well, uncle, and seems much put out to-day; do not be vexed with her, nor anger her if it can be helped. If she says she will not come unless she sees you, I am afraid she will keep her word.”

“Very good, then I will go to her,” said Mr. Hulet, meekly taking up his hat. His submission touched her, for it seemed to Evy to be owing not to any fear of Judith, nor to the suspicion of any malice on her part, but simply that he was resolved from henceforth to have no disagreement nor ill-feeling with any one.

“Shall I come with you, uncle?” asked Evy, doubtfully; she could not decide whether it would be better for her to do so, or not; she wished to be by her uncle's side in case Judith should attack him, and on the other hand any cruel word that might be spoken to him would necessarily be made more painful by her presence.

“No, no, my darling,” answered Mr. Hulet; “do you stay here with your good friends; I shall be back with Judith in a few minutes.”

But the few minutes extended to half an hour, and even more, before Judith made her appearance, and to Evy's great surprise she came alone.

“Is not my uncle with you?” inquired Evy, with some anxiety. “He said he should bring you back.”

“Yes; but he is not quite well; the heat of this room, he said, was a little too much for him; nay,” continued Judith, earnestly laying her hand on Evy's arm as the latter rose to hurry home, “he anticipated your desire to come to him, and bade me tell you not to do so; he particularly wishes to be left to himself for a little.”

Evy looked up inquiringly in Judith's face, for the first time suspecting her of having told a deliberate falsehood; but she could read nothing there to corroborate such a suspicion. It still wore that unpleasant expression of triumph, however, which she had noticed in it once before that day, and something, she scarce knew what, prompted her to make appeal to her woman's heart at a moment which she felt to be a crisis.

“The servants have all been examined, and the jury are waiting for you, dear Judith,” whispered she hurriedly. “From some expressions you dropped yesterday, I fear you have suffered your mind to form an uncharitable judgment upon my poor uncle in this sad matter. Of course, I do not wish to interfere with the testimony which you are about to give, so far as facts are concerned; but I do beseech you not to give them an unwarrantable colour that may darken his declining days. If you will not spare him for his own sake, let anything I have ever done for you, or striven to do, plead for him, for mine——”

“Miss Judith Mercer,” exclaimed the officer of the court, putting his head in at the door, “I am bidden to say the coroner is waiting for you.”

“I am ready,” cried Judith, rising from her chair at once. “Evy Carthew,” whispered she in her grave tones, “I came here to do my duty; if I fail in it, or do less than it, remember it will be, as you say, for your sake and not for his.”

The next moment she was gone.

Evy listened to her light footfall as it fell on the uncarpeted stairs without, with mingled emotions. If she had persuaded Judith to refrain from any malevolent suggestions respecting Mrs. Hulet's death, she had done well; but if, on the other hand, Judith had had no intention of making them, had not she herself by her interference seemed to admit that the suspicion of suicide was by no means so monstrous and untenable as she had affirmed?

“What is the matter with Miss Mercer, I wonder?” observed Mrs. Hodlin Barmby to Mrs. Storks, it must be confessed with no very great sympathy of tone.

"I don't know, I'm sure," returned that lady; "but to judge by her looks as she left us to give evidence, I should say she would like to get a verdict of Wilful Murder against us all."

"All but one," whispered Mrs. Barmby significantly.

"Yes, that is very true," answered the other in the same low tone. "This sad affair is in my opinion the more to be regretted since it postpones Evy's marriage, and exposes that young fellow to Judith's machinations."

"Nay, but the captain is true as steel," said Mrs. Barmby, regarding him with a well-pleased smile, as he leant over Evy's chair, and whispered comfort in her ear.

"Yes, but these men are so very, very weak," replied the widow, pityingly. "At all events, I shall be glad when those two are married."

OLD FIGHTING SHIPS.

THE ARETHUSA AND THE ENDYMION.

THE "gallant Arethusa," of Prince Hoare's hearty old sea-song, had in its time its fill of fighting. It was with the brave Sir John Borlase Warren, the bellicose M.A. and M.P., on the 23rd of April, 1794, when five of our ships—the Arethusa, Sir Edward Pellew; the Flora, Commodore Warren, K.B.; the Melampus, Wells; La Nymphé, Murray; and La Concorde, Sir Richard Strachan, overhauled five French frigates off Guernsey. Sir Edward Pellew (afterwards the famous Lord Exmouth) had distinguished himself in the year before by the capture of that strong French frigate, the Cleopatra, the first French vessel taken since the war began, and for this he had been knighted.

At daybreak on April 23, the five French frigates were seen standing out from the land, and gradually forming line of battle on the larboard tack. Sir John—a real fighting commodore, who meant mischief, and had not as a boy run away to sea to do nothing—at once formed his own force on the starboard, and the French and English vessels crossed each other on opposite tacks. "The mounseers" at once began a distant and feeble fire, which was quite harmless, and then put about in rather a curish way. The conscripts, and fishermen, and merchant captains of the new French revolutionary navy evidently did not like the look of us, though their weight of metal was as fourteen to our twelve, and, moreover, as a

rule, they had larger and swifter vessels of the old school. But the old officers, nearly all Royalists, had been nearly all shaved by the "national razor," or had fled over the Austrian frontier. There was no De Grace there, no Jean Bart to stand by the guns, tough and fiery as themselves.

Luckily for us, the wind just then turned over to the English side, and enabled Warren's ships to weather the enemy and drive them, sorely against their will, to close action. The French, now, unable to retreat, turned as rats at bay on the terriers, determined at least to get one good bite before they were shaken to death. With their backs to eternity, they fought well for three hours, when two of them struck to the Arethusa and the Flora, while the Melampus, La Nymphé, and Concorde pursued the broken covey, the Melampus fortunately snapping hold of one wounded bird; but to the rest terror lent wings. The three Frenchmen taken were the Pomone, L'Engageante, and la Babet. L'Engageante fell to the guns of the gallant Arethusa. La Pomone proved one of the finest frigates we had ever bagged, and Sir John Warren, glancing over her graceful lines with great satisfaction, instantly had her fitted up for himself, and as it proved, she sailed—to use Captain Hunter's expression—"inimitably well." For this tough little fight, Sir John Warren, Pellew, and Strachan, gained great eclat at the Admiralty; and the victory balanced our loss of the Castor (Captain Trowbridge), some days before, with fourteen sail of convoy bound from Guernsey to Newfoundland.

In 1796, France refusing to abandon the Islands of Ceylon and Trinidad, and the Cape of Good Hope, the war began to rage again with increased fury. We had now a vast force at sea, and the Channel was white with our sails. Sir John Warren's squadron beat about the French coast like a smart pack of beagles, searching for Republican vessels in every port and creek, and the sans culottes scattered like crows before our red and blue flag from Ems to Trieste. Off Ushant, Borlase Warren, in June, 1796, captured a French frigate, and eight vessels of her convoy, and soon after drove a whole convoy on the barren sands of Olonne. In September of this same year the nimble Arethusa, under Captain Woolley, a true fighting Captain, captured, after a sharp tussle, La Gaieté, a fine French corvette of twenty guns and one hundred and eighty men.

In 1806, Bonaparte began to show signs of wishing to wrest St. Domingo from the free blacks, and to conquer some of England's West Indian colonies. Our reprisals were soon made, for we were rough and ready in those days, and did not wrangle over odd halfpence in the Admiralty, where a million a year of stores were then said to be embezzled or wasted. Mackenzie of the Wolf sloop of war, on the Jamaica station, captured two French privateers, *Ross*, of the *Pique*, snapped up two brigs and a Spanish armed schooner. It was at this juncture that the gallant *Arethusa* also found an opening to glory. Captain Charles Brisbane, of the *Arethusa*, having under his orders the *Amazon*, of forty-four guns, on August 23, 1806, made a dash at the *Pomona*, laden with specie from Vera Cruz; a strong Spanish frigate lying close to the formidable guns of the celebrated Moro Castle at Havannah. The Spaniards' ship was surrounded by twelve gunboats, each carrying a big twenty-four-pounder, and one hundred swarthy men. In spite of lee shore, the gunboats, and the fort's sixteen thirty-six-pounders, Brisbane resolved to go in at the enemy. An English sailor's mind about fighting is soon made up. He instantly passed a bower cable through the *Arethusa's* stern-post, and at ten a.m. anchored her close alongside the *Pomona*, in one foot more water than his ship drew; the *Amazon* (Captain Lydiard), being steady and reliable on his larboard bow. The real fun lasted only about thirty-five minutes, when the *Pomona* pulled down her sallow colours. Three of the gunboats blew up in despair, six were sunk, and three floundered on shore among the breakers. The enraged Spaniards, not relishing this, now began to grow serious, and fired red-hot shot at the *Arethusa*; but our nimble fellows soon put out the fire; and just then there was a tremendous explosion in the castle from some lubberly neglect or other, and the firing ceased. The *Pomona* was then quietly conducted to Port Royal. After all, brave men escape best in fighting, from being always on the aggressive. The *Arethusa* had only two men killed with all this fuss. It is true, there were thirty-two wounded; but the *Amazon* had not a soul even grazed. The Spaniards of the *Pomona*, however, lost twenty men and thirty-two wounded, and the gun-boats suffered terribly. Some money of the King of Spain had just been landed

from the *Pomona* by the Governor of Havanna, who had only just left under the cover of the Moro guns ten minutes before Captain Brisbane opened fire.

The next year saw the *Arethusa* harvest more laurels. She helped to take the island of Curaçoa from the Dutch, a feat universally allowed to be one of the most daring naval exploits of the whole French war. The island, famous for its oily liqueur, which makes so ready an alliance with the coffee of Arabia, is situated about forty miles from the coast of Venezuela, and is remarkable for its strongly defensive position. Captain Brisbane, of the *Arethusa*, who had been sent from Jamaica by Rear-Admiral Dacre to watch the island, which was the haunt of smugglers, found that the jovial and indolent Dutch had a merry habit of drinking the old year out and the new year in, and thereupon planned a *coup de main* on January 1, 1807. He got stealthily close off the harbour's mouth the night before, and collected his boats ready to dart on the Fort of Amsterdam. The difficulties were, however, almost insuperable, and never had a brave man more open-mouthed lions in his path. The harbour's mouth, jagged with rocks, is narrow, and requires the nicest pilotage. One spoke of the wheel too much either way, and there you were—your vessel a broken glass. The wind blows almost constantly S.E., and before hauling into the harbour you must brace your yards sharp up on the starboard tack, ready to come to the wind in the flash of a pistol. Fort Amsterdam we know mounted sixty cannons in two tiers. On the larboard hand was another nasty fort, and ahead of our ships, on a steep hill, rose Fort Republique, the fire of which could have sunk a frigate in twenty minutes.

Coolly calculating his chance, and sure of success, Brisbane pushed off with the *Arethusa*, the *Anson*, and two other vessels, kept at the east end of the island till New Year's Eve, when he made straight for the harbour mouth. Once through its jaws, he braced his yards, formed his line of battle, and in close order silently passed the whole line of sleeping batteries. At six a.m. the jib boom of the *Arethusa* was riding over the wall of the Government House fort, the Dutch governor dreaming at the moment, and innocently snoring away the precious hour. Our ships were close to the *Hetslaer*, a Dutch frigate of thirty-six guns, the *Surinam* of twenty-two, two large armed schooners, and a chain of

forts on the nearest heights. We were, however, far too prompt for the Dutch. The fort on the hill fired only five shots; the frigate, corvette, and schooner were all carried on the first rush by our cutlasses. Fort Amsterdam was at once stormed, and the Governor taken prisoner. The Commandant of Fort Republique, which was still dangerous, was taken by our boats as he lumbered across the harbour to resume command, which too much schiedam and a good night's rest had interrupted.

By ten a.m. an island, sixty miles long, with a numerous population, strong fortifications, and a squadron of ships, was taken by twelve hundred resolute Englishmen, with a loss of only three men, and fourteen wounded. Captain Brisbane was knighted for this brave and dashing affair, and was soon after made governor of the island of St. Vincent.

It was the fame this fighting vessel won, that led to the clever song writer immortalising the ship in the following well-known spirited song :

"Twas with the Spring fleet she went out,
The English Channel to cruise about,
When four French sail, in show so stout,
Bore down on the Arethusa.
The famed Belle Poule straight ahead did lie,
The Arethusa seemed to fly;
Not a sheet or a tack,
Or a brace did she slack,
Tho' the Frenchman laughed, and thought it stuff;
But they knew not the handful of men how tough,
On board of the Arethusa.

On deck five hundred men did dance,
The stoutest they could find in France;
We with two hundred did advance,
On board of the Arethusa.
Our captain hail'd the Frenchmen, Ho!
The Frenchmen they cried out, Hallo!
Bear down, d'ye see,
To our admiral's lee;
No, no, says the Frenchman, that can't be.
Then I must lay you along with me,
Says the sassy Arethusa.

The fight was off the Frenchmen's land,
We forced them back upon their strand,
For we fought till not a stick would stand,
Of the gallant Arethusa.
And now we've driven the foe ashore,
Never to fight with Britons more,
Let each fill a glass
To his favourite lass;
A health to our captain and officers true,
And all that belong to the jovial crew,
On board of the Arethusa.

The engagement between the *Endymion* and the *President*, in 1814, was one of the most gallant things that happened during the American war. The *Endymion*, was a fine forty-gun frigate, which had been sent out in company with the *Majestic* (Captain Hayes), fifty-six guns, and the *Pomone*, a thirty-eight-gun frigate (Captain Lumley),

to stop an American expedition of three frigates and two brigs destined to ravage our coast line in the East Indies. With his small squadron Captain Hayes, the commander, succeeded in blockading New York and preventing exit or entrance.

On her way from Halifax to join her brave companions, the *Endymion* had been unlucky. On the 8th of October, 1814, off the Roads of Nantucket, she had cast her eye on a malign looking rakish American privateer — Prince de Neufchatel, an eighteen-gun brig with eighteen mischievous guns, and a swarm of smart men for her crew. Captain Hope's launch, sent to board her, met with a warm resistance, and Yankee musket, pike, and grape shot finished off twenty-seven seamen and marines, and wounded thirty-five more. Lieutenant Hawkins, the officer in command of the launch, the second lieutenant, and two petty officers, also received their death wounds.

On the 13th January, 1815, Captain Hayes was joined off Sandy Hook by the *Tenedos* frigate (thirty-eight guns), Captain Hyde Parker. That same evening a violent snow-storm blew the British ships off the coast, and, taking advantage of the terrier's absence, Commodore Decatur instantly slipped away from Staten Island with his little flock of five ships, and set sail for the Indies. But terriers are cunning as rats, and Hayes, suspecting this move, had already stood for the northward and eastward, and fifteen leagues from Sandy Hook came straight across Decatur and his little following. The clever American commodore, to distract his pursuers, had divided his chickens, and was now in the *President*, accompanied by the *Macedonia* brig, the rest having orders to gather under his wings, as soon as possible, at the island of Tristan d'Acunha. The *Majestic*, *Endymion*, *Pomone*, and *Tenedos* instantly took way after the American fugitives. The *Majestic* and the *Endymion* were in the first flight, for, to tell the truth, the *Tenedos* lagged, and the *Pomone* was sent to look after her. They were all steering now about east by north, with the wind at north-west by north. At half past six a.m. on the 15th, the *Majestic* tried the distance by three shots, which did no good, and were answered with contemptuous silence. Towards noon, the wind free, the *Endymion* began to overhaul her quick antagonist. At a quarter past one the *President* began to fling away everything that impeded flight; started her water, cut away her

anchors, threw overboard provisions, spare spars, and boats, and kept her sails, from the royals downwards, perpetually wet, to keep all the wind she could get. At two p.m. she opened a dropping fire with her stern guns, which, half an hour later, the *Endymion* returned smartly with her bow chasers. Almost immediately afterwards a well-aimed shot drilled through the head of the *Endymion's* larboard lower studding-sail, the foot of the main-sail, and the quarter-deck, and lodged in the main-deck without doing any other harm. It was getting hotter towards five p.m. The *President* luffed occasionally, to bring her stern guns to bear, and was evidently much galled, whereas the greater part of the *American* shot arched clear over the *Endymion*. At a little before six o'clock, after twenty minutes' half point-blank shot on her adversary's quarter, the *President*, rather tired of the game, brailed up her spanker and bore away south, like a swallow, to bring her antagonist on her beam, and try to escape to leeward. The *Endymion*, vexed as a greyhound is when a hare doubles, instantly, to meet her craft, put her helm hard a-weather, and the two frigates then shot into action in two parallel lines. It was no use running now, as the *American* soon found. Soon after the execution of this manœuvre the game opened by the *President's* riflemen peppering at us from her tops, which the *Endymion's* marines returned with great readiness, the *English* frigate hauling up lovingly towards her antagonist without losing the bearing of her broadside. It was a close hug now; for the two ships were not half musket-shot apart: the *Endymion* was already considerably cut in her sails and rigging; the *President* already hulled badly, and her fire much slackened. At a quarter to seven the *American* hauled up, to try and shirk the *English* fire and encourage their Yankees. The *Endymion* gave her friend two raking and terrible broadsides, then hauled up also, and placed herself steady as a bull-dog on the *President's* starboard quarter, not to be shaken off. By-and-by the *President* made a lucky hit and shot away the *Endymion's* boat from her larboard quarter, and also her lower and maintop-gallant studding-sails. Two vessels that do not want to run away do not, however, greatly require their sails in battle. For about a quarter of an hour the *President*, at last crippled with defeat, paralysed with failure, and dumb-

founded with the thunder of incessant broadsides, did not answer a shot to our incessant storm of fire. Presently her men rallied, blazed away again, and shot away her adversary's maintop-mast studding-sail and mainbrace, and, a few minutes afterwards, hauled suddenly to the wind, as if to try the remaining strength of the *Endymion's* masts.

Captain Hope, having no fear about his timber, cut about and notched as it was, instantly trimmed sails, and hauling up, gave almost a final raking fire, which the crippled and disabled *President* could only return with one feeble stern gun. Ten minutes after the *American* vessel drove further away, firing only at desponding and angry intervals, and very soon ceased to fire altogether, and showed a light. Presuming that the light meant striking, the *Endymion* in generous compassion ceased also, and began to bend new sails, the *President's* terrible bar or chain shot having cut her to strips, one shot alone having knocked twelve or fourteen cloths out of her foresail.

The light on board the *President*, however, had only been a *ruse de guerre*. She had long since let fly all canvas, and slipped on doggedly eastward. At a quarter past eleven the *Pomone* gained a position on her larboard quarter, and luffing up, gave her two broadsides. On this the *President* luffed up still sharper, hauled down her light and shouted, "We have surrendered." The *Endymion* having lost her own boats, the *Tenedos* and *Pomone* sent theirs and took possession of the stubborn *American*. This was at half past eleven. In the meantime the *Endymion*—having in the wonderfully brief space of fifty-six minutes, and with few men, repaired her running rigging, bent new courses, maintop-sail, jib, fore-topmast stay-sail, and spanker—came up, and joined in the rejoicing.

The *Endymion* had been well pounded in this long victorious fight; her sails had all gone, her masts were all injured, and the fore-topmast, especially, tottered to its fall. Out of her three hundred and ten men and twenty-seven boys she had lost ten seamen and one marine, and twelve seamen and two marines were wounded. The *President's* high firing had cut away half the rigging and all the sails of the *Endymion*; good disabling tactics when you are sure of your bird, but not so good when the bird gives you in exchange tremendous blows between wind and water. The *Endymion*, wishing for a solid and imme-

diate result, went practically in for the mere destruction of the enemy, and succeeded. The President was a mere mass of firewood, and though floated to Spithead, was never afterwards used at sea. Her starboard side was riddled from end to end, particularly near the quarter. Almost every port sail and port timber, both on the main and quarter deck, had been smashed up. Three shot had entered the porthole and one passed clean through the after magazine. Several shot had entered between wind and water, and some had cut the lower knees and timber. A great many steadily aimed balls had passed right through the ship, between the main and quarter decks and in the waist, and, well bored with shot holes, the President naturally had six feet of water in her hold. Five or six of her guns were broken or silenced. Out of her four hundred and sixty-five men and six boys the President had three lieutenants and thirty-two petty officers and seamen killed, and sixty-six men wounded—total, thirty-five killed and seventy wounded. There were many British deserters among the crew, but as peace was soon after concluded they were not hung.

On her return home the President nearly foundered, and was only saved by the prize captain adopting an American invention—the “umbrella,” with two hawsers on end of it, which had the instant effect of causing the ship to face the sea.

At Bermuda the inhabitants presented Captain Hope with a piece of plate, and his officers with a goblet, which was to pass to any future ship that should bear “the gallant name of Endymion.” He also received a gold medal from the Admiralty (for, to tell the sober truth, our victories over the Americans at sea were by no means frequent, for the Yankees had already proved true chips of the old block), and he was afterwards nominated a C.B. He was advanced to flag rank in 1846. He had before this single fight distinguished himself in the *Topaze* and *Saisette*, in destroying a French convoy, near Rosas, and in capturing many French privateers.

VOWS.

BEHOLDING the body of the ill-starred Arthur, Shakespeare's Salisbury throws off his allegiance to King John, and kneeling before the ruin of sweet life, breathes to his breathless excellence—

The incense of a vow, a holy vow,
Never to taste the pleasures of the world,
Never to be infected with delight,
Nor conversant with ease and idleness,
Till I have set a glory to this head,
By giving it the worship of revenge!

Compared with the common run of knightly vows, Salisbury's was a righteous one enough. A knight was scarcely more than half a knight until he had solemnly sworn to do some doughty deed, and very little provocation sufficed the very muscular Christians of chivalric times as an excuse for a vow; only to be kept by fleshing their swords in other peoples' bodies, displaying their valour at other folks' expense, and picking quarrels without any occasion. Galeazzo, of Mantua, doubtless thought himself the pink of knightly perfection when he paid Queen Joan of Naples, for condescending to open a ball with him, by kneeling at her feet and binding himself to wander through the world, until he had subdued two valiant warriors, to be dealt with as her majesty listed. True to promise, Galeazzo appeared at Naples, after twelve months' absence, and presented two captives of rank to Queen Joan, who, like a good woman, set them at liberty without the payment of ransom.

Sir Henry Lee, of Quarendon, set himself a longer-lasting task when, at a tournament, held upon the 17th of November, 1559, in celebration of the first anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession, he vowed that upon every recurrence of the auspicious day, he would—unless prevented by accident, infirmity, or age—appear in the tilt-yard to maintain the beauty, worth, and dignity of his royal mistress against all denying comers. Elizabeth, ever ready to honour those who honoured her, accepted the enthusiastic knight as her champion; and a Honourable Society of Knights Tilters was formed to insure the holding of a grand tourney every 17th of November. After keeping his martial tryst for thirty-one successive years, Sir Henry, in 1590, being then sixty years old, resigned his office of queen's knight in favour of the Earl of Cumberland. When Queen Bess had taken her seat in the gallery, the Knights Tilters rode slowly round the tilt-yard to the sound of sweet music, ushering in the sacred temple of Vesta, represented by a white silk pavilion, enshrining an altar, covered with cloth-of-gold, and illumined with wax candles in rich candlesticks. From the pavilion stepped forth three pretty vestal virgins, tendering princely presents for her

majesty's gracious acceptance, and the royal choir sang Sir Henry's farewell :—

My golden locks Time bath to silver turned,
(Oh Time too swift, and swiftness never ceasing),
My youth 'gainst age, and age at youth have spurned,
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing.
Beauty, strength, and youth, flowers fading bene,
Duty, faith, and love are roots, and ever green.

My helmet now shall make a hive for bees,
And lovers' songs shall turn to holy psalms :
A man-at-arms must now sit on his knees,
And feed on prayers, that are old age's alms.
And so, from court to cottage, I depart,
My saint is sure of my unspotted heart.

And when I sadly sit in homely cell,
I'll teach my swains this carol for a song :
Blest be the hearts that think my sovereign well,
Cursed be the souls that think to do her wrong.
Goddess, vouchsafe this aged man his right,
To be your headman, now, that was your knight.

Doffing his armour, the old champion knelt before the queen, beseeching her to acknowledge the earl as her knight. His boon granted, Sir Henry armed his successor and sat him on his horse, arraying himself in a civil suit of black velvet, and donning a country cap, in token he had done with court and camp, and so brought a long and loyal service to a peaceful end.

Montaigne writes, "The Portuguese say that in a certain place of their conquest of the Indies, they met with soldiers who had damned themselves with horrible execrations either to cause themselves to be slain or to remain victorious, and had their heads and beards shaved in token of this vow." The essayist thought Fortune should not second such vanity. Had a countryman of his been of the same wise way of thinking, he would have escaped much humiliation. It was easy for General Ducrot to vow to return to Paris victorious or dead, but it was not so easy to justify the bravado, unworthy of a true soldier, who does his best without making any fuss about it. Victory is not to be won with an oath, and Death does not often deign to strike those who seek him. Let a man vow as he may, he cannot command fate, and if defeat leaves him unharmed he must live to be laughed at as a perjurer in his own despite; unless he adds crime to folly, like the Japanese who hanged himself lately, because, some thirteen years ago, he vowed to Buddha that he would die if he had not made himself famous by the time he had reached thirty. Victory and death was the stronger vow of the hero of the old Scotch ballad, who, rather than disappoint his sire's expectations, went forth to fight his sworn brother. Græme fought and conquered. With his dying breath Berrick entreated his slayer to fly, but the victor cried :—

"O I have slain thee, Willie Berrick,
If this be true thou tellest to me;
But I made a vow ere I came frae hame,
That aye the next man I wad be!"

He has pitched his sword on a moodie hill,
And he has leaped twenty lang feet and three;
And on his ain sword's point he lap,
And dead upon the ground fell he.

Christie Græme kept his vow better than the Spanish marshal, who swore over the corpse of the murdered Prim to save the dynasty for which his friend and colleague died.

It is hard to believe in the possibility of a briber respecting the individual he seeks to bribe, or feeling grateful for assistance obtained at a price; and surely, if it be wrong to bribe a sinner it cannot be right to bribe a saint. Yet many have tried to do so. Byron was not indulging in the license of his craft when he depicted his shipwrecked men vowing candles to their saints as the price of rescue. Does not Erasmus, describing a crew in the like sore strait, say, "Did no one think of Christopher? I heard one, and could not help smiling, who, with a shout lest he should not be heard, promised to Christopher, who dwells in the great church at Paris, a wax image as great as himself. He repeated this more than once, bellowing as loud as he could, when the man who was next to him, touched him with his finger, saying, 'You could not pay that, even if you set all your goods to sale.' Then the other, in a voice now low enough that Christopher might not hear him, whispered, 'Be still, you fool! Do you fancy I am speaking in earnest? If I once touch the shore, I shall not give him a tallow candle!'" The notion that Providence is open to a bargain is by no means an exploded one. Vienna owes its church of St. Charles to a vow made by the Emperor Charles the Sixth during an epidemic. Notre Dame became richer by a golden lamp in payment of an empress's vow. Everybody knows how Roger Tichborne vowed to build a church if he married his cousin within a certain time; impelled thereto, apparently, by the success attending a similar promise made by Sir Edward Doughty when his child lay hopelessly ill. In 1867, a handsome Spanish lady, attired in the garb of a pilgrim of the olden time, appeared in the streets of Toulon. She was on her way home to Madrid, having footed it from that city to Rome in fulfilment of a vow made when she fancied herself at death's door. In the like extremity an Italian princess vowed to undertake a journey to the Holy

Sepulchre, no very arduous undertaking nowadays to anyone. If dames of high degree can obtain renewed life on such easy terms, there should be plenty of centenarians among the court beauties of the nineteenth century. Queen Isabella of Spain thought to buy Heaven's intervention on behalf of a sick daughter, by promising to visit the tomb of Barcelona's patron saint. Saints being unknown in New Bedford, the good wife of a whaling captain insured his safety at sea, by vowing to go through the town upon her knees when her husband came home again; and in 1871 the New Bedfordites were scandalised or edified, as the case might be, by the sight of a decent woman crawling along the streets upon her knees, attended by a couple of sympathising matrons, ready to raise her upon her feet whenever she desired to rest.

The fulfilment of an odd vow is thus related in a letter from Belgrade in 1867: "A curious and somewhat ludicrous incident occurred here the other day. A body of well-known Servians, all members of the extreme patriotic party, marched through the streets with long beards down to their knees, escorted by a number of barbers, razors in hand, and in this way entered the fortress, when the barbers proceeded at once to strip these bearded pards of their hirsute adornments, and send them out clean shaved. The fact is, that, at the bombardment of Belgrade in 1862, these Servians vowed never to let a razor touch their faces until they could shave in the fortress itself, on the day on which the Turkish troops abandoned it, and they completed their vow in the manner I have described." Brantome tells of a lover remaining dumb for two years in obedience to the command of his mistress, weary of his garrulous gallantry. The knight was silent for the sake of love—Miss Brewer, of Portland, in America, was silent for the want of it. Disappointed in her young days, she vowed never to speak another word, and religiously, or rather irreligiously, kept her vow for thirty-two years, until she went where all is silence. A native of Samarang, named Sadar, adopted the same method of showing his grief for the loss of his young wife soon after marriage, swearing never to speak to man, woman, or child again; and although he lived forty-four years afterwards, neither man, woman, or child ever heard the sound of his voice. This self-inflicted penance for misfortune made a saint of him in the eyes of the people, and shopkeepers allowed

him to help himself gratuitously from their stores. Their generosity, however, was not unprofitable, for as soon as Sadar was seen to leave a shop full-handed, the Mohammedans thronged in to buy, thinking thereby to insure themselves good luck.

Mr. Pepys held, like Boswell, that it was good for men of irregular inclinations to bind themselves not to indulge in their particular vanities. Judged by the entries in his Diary, the experiment answered but poorly in his own case. On the 20th of October, 1662, he took his wife to the theatre, and ten days afterwards wrote himself down as happy a man as existed, the whole world seeming to smile upon him; a pleasant condition of things he attributed to having kept his vow against wine drinking and play-going—which he had done, by our reckoning, for the space of ten days. In less than three weeks' time, however, we find the worthy secretary going home by moonshine from the cockpit and its Scornful Lady. Early in the following year he owns to drinking his majesty's health at Chirurgeons' Hall, out of a cup with hanging bells, which each man rang when he had drained the contents. This relapse was seemingly followed by a renewal of his resolution, for dining with the lord mayor and aldermen, Pepys found the excellent venison disagree with him, because he dared not wash it down with wine. A few days later he ventured to indulge in hippocras, cheating himself with a very faint hope that imbibing a mixed drink was no violation of his vow, just as he flattered himself he was committing no breach of his oath against playgoing when he went to the theatre at a friend's expense. He had not even that poor comfort when he sneaked to the play immediately the houses opened at the cessation of the Great Plague, and sat with his cloak shrouding his face, in mighty fear lest any one should recognise him. At length, weary of being the shuttlecock of conscience and inclination, Pepys let the latter have its way; went to the theatre three days running, kissed pretty Nelly behind the scenes, enjoyed his wassail bowl at Christmas, quaffed the king's own metheglin at Whitehall, drank much good liquor in the cellars at Audley End, qualified himself to appraise the buttery beer of Magdalen College, kept his coach waiting on a fine moonshine morning, while he tossed down a draught of burnt wine at the door of the Rose Tavern, and enjoyed the good things of life as became a sociable-hearted gentleman. In his very

last entry in his diary he records making merry with his wife and friends at the World's End, by the Park.

There is a good story of a jovial waiter whom some kind friends sought to frighten into taking a vow of sobriety. They told him a shocking tale of one who drank not wisely, but too well, and was killed by blowing out a candle, the flame having ignited the alcoholic fumes of his breath! He listened, believed, and was duly horrified. Calling for a Bible, he then and there kissed the book, and solemnly swore that, never again, so long as he lived, would he—try to blow out a candle. The waiter was a wise man. He knew himself, and limited his vow accordingly. There was no likelihood of his affording any one the opportunity of moralising upon his end, as the author of the Maid of Sker moralises upon the untimely death of one who ruined his constitution by the use of water. "If any unfortunate man is harassed with such want of self-respect, and utter distrust of Providence, as well as unpleasantness of behaviour towards all worthy neighbours, and black ingratitude to his lip, as to make a vow for ever never to drink any good stuff again, that man must be pitied largely; but let no one speak of him harshly, because he must soon be dead!" Poor Evan Black's vow proved too much for him, because he left himself no loophole for escape. Shrewder far was the Pittsburg man who swore never to touch another drop as long as he had a hair on his head, and the very same evening had his head shaved, and got drunk with the proud consciousness of having faithfully kept his vow. He might have paired off with Peter Pindar's pea-boiling pilgrim, or with the Portuguese dame who pledged herself to go barefooted to a certain shrine; in vain her friends assured her the fatigue would kill her; she was resolute. She had made the vow and would keep it. And keep it she did. She went stockless to the shrine—in a sedan-chair. Colonel Edgeworth, who served under William the Third, was an inveterate gamester; one night having lost all his money, he went to his wife and asked her to lend her diamond earrings. She took them from her ears without demur, and he returned to the card-table. The stake proved a lucky one, and brought the colonel all his losings back again. In gratitude to his wife, he solemnly vowed never to touch cards or dice again, but a few days afterwards was observed drawing

straws from a rick, and betting heavily upon which should prove the longest.

Wisely wrote old Fuller, "I dislike many vows that men make, as of reading just so much, praying so often every day, of confining themselves in the matter of meat, drinks, sleep, and recreation. Many things may be well done which are ill-vowed. Such particular vows men must be very sparing how they make. First, because they savour somewhat of will-worship. Secondly, small glory accrues to God thereby. Thirdly, the dignity of vows is disgraced by descending to too trivial particulars. Fourthly, Satan hath ground given him to throw at us with a more steady aim. Lastly, such vows, instead of being cords to tie us faster to God, prove knots to entangle our conscience; hard to be kept, but, oh, how heavy when broken."

IN HOLDERNESS.

THE wind blew over the barley, the wind blew over the wheat,

Where the scarlet poppy toss'd her head, with the bindweed at her feet;

The wind blew over the great blue sea, in the golden August weather,

Till the tossing corn and the tossing waves show'd shadow and gleam together.

The wind blew over the barley, the wind blew over the oats,

The lark sprang up to the sunny sky, and shook his ringing notes,

Over the wealth of the smiling land, the sweep of the glittering sea.

"Which is the fairest?" he sang, as he soared o'er the beautiful rivalry.

And with a fuller voice than the wind, a deeper tone than the bird,

Came the answer from the solemn sea, that Nature, pausing, heard,

"The corn will be garner'd, the lark will be hush'd, at the frown of the wintry weather,

The sun will fly from the snow-piled sky, but I go on for ever!"

HAIRDRESSING.

THE planets have been weighed and measured by astronomers. A similar appreciation is often applied to smaller and sub-lunary matters. Men, their professions, and even their trades, do not escape having relative values assigned to them. A tailor has been calculated, by base and ignorant groundlings, to constitute only the ninth part of a man; but no nation, I think, has yet, in its ignorance, reduced hairdressers to any vulgar fraction of humanity. They are too important; exercise too much influence; and are too superior to ordinary artisans for that—and no one can throw "cabbage" in their teeth. Nobody would

ever think of treating either Figaro or Louis the Eleventh's Oliver as nobodies.

We may look down upon a tailor with impunity. We can do without him, or nearly so. What signify clothes, when a man is young and well-made? Every costume, every fit, is inevitably becoming to a good-looking fellow. Fellows who are not good looking can always defy the weather with ready-made suits. But shave one side of your handsome man's face and leave the other half bearded like the pard; crop his head like a convict, or give him a Chinese pigtail; cultivate his capillary decoration after the mode of the *Semnopithecus comatus* monkey—and you will see. The clerical tonsure (which some scoffer has called the ecclesiastical ringworm), would make Antinous ridiculous. The Apollo Belvedere would be simply absurd, if fitted with a Sir Peter Lely peruke.

As to women's tailors—mantua-makers, when there were mantuas—who first sprang up in Italy, they derive their importance and self-sufficiency mainly from the weakness of the sex, who humble their sweet selves before them, to secure the favour of their artistic aid, forgetting that in the eyes of their truest admirers, beauty unadorned—even chignonless—is adorned the most.

We are almost inclined to pity tailors; for they have had to bear the burden of numberless jokes, and have been made the scape-goats of others' foibles and faults—witness the once popular scene in the circus, Billy Button, or the Tailor's Ride to Brentford, which has made our elder readers shake their sides, without their suspecting its satirical drift. The authors and actors of the original lampon did not dare, for their lives, to direct it with a legible address. Who would imagine that this bit of rude fun, so highly in vogue at the beginning of the present century, was an imported outburst of popular contempt spat out against bloodthirsty Robespierre; against the cruel, green-complexioned coward who, when his turn came at last, had not the nerve to point a pistol straight to save himself from the guillotine?

The facts are as follows: the Parisian equestrians of the time got up an interlude called *Les Meuniers*, or the Millers. The whole joke consisted in the mishaps of a clumsy and cowardly tailor who wanted to learn to ride, but who could never manage it. To those in the secret the allusion was clear.

When Robespierre, in order to prepare an apotheosis for himself, had decreed a fête to the Supreme Being, he was anxious

to figure with proper dignity in this solemnity of his own contrivance. Unfortunately, the Arras advocate did not possess the slightest equestrian talent. "What signifies that?" he said to himself. "With a little time, money, and address, I shall manage well enough!" He forgot one necessary item—courage. No great amount is wanted, but still just a very little, to face and bstride a good-natured quadruped; and that small penny-weight of courage Robespierre could not summon. In vain he went to take riding lessons, and to assume, at so much the hour, the dignity requisite for his future dictatorship. In vain they selected the mildest of hackneys, who would have steadily carried a paralytic old dame. All was to no purpose; Robespierre was afraid. Twenty times they tried to seat him on horseback, but the hero never dared to put his feet in the stirrups. He was obliged to give it up. Consequently, as the memoirs relate, at the Fête of the Supreme Being he appeared on foot, holding, by way of ballast, and to give him a little countenance, a large nosegay in his hand.

The anecdote went the round of Paris, but whispered very low and without a smile. Not a theatre dared risk the slightest allusion to it. The Cirque alone had the boldness to parody the adventure; it is true also that the Cirque alone, with its stud, had the means of making the caricature complete. It has since been played, for years and years, before a public unconscious of its covert meaning. The poltroon rider always wore a costume very similar to that Robespierre must have worn. They would have liked to give him his own proper name; but it would have been too audacious, and they did not venture. They went no further than the accordance of the first syllable. The tailor, who was the hero of the patriotic farce, was called in the programme Rognolet.

Hairdressing, to return to our subject proper, marked the advent and the advance of civilisation. In the age of stone, there were no curling-irons. The grandest feat a prehistoric barber could perform would be to shave his patient with a razor of flint. In the civilisation of what we call antiquity the hair was made an object of art, not only by hairdressers, but by real artists. In many of the bronze busts to be seen at Rome and Naples, the beards even are most elaborately arranged and curled to a perfection which must have

cost considerable labour. In ancient statues, composed of various materials, the hair receives an equal share of attention.

In some antique busts the drapery is of coloured marble, put together in such a manner that the veins shall represent the stripes or pattern of the cloth. In some the whole face is made of transparent alabaster, and in several at Rome the hair is of bronze. The remains of paint and gilding may frequently be traced on antique busts. It is doubtful whether this be what we call good taste; but it would be interesting to see some spirited plaster cast really well treated after the ancient fashion. There are statues in which the flesh is white marble and the drapery black, and which produce an effect by no means inelegant. In the museum of the Capitol are (or were) busts representing persons wearing wigs. The wig is made movable, to take off at will; so that the bust might, at different times, be dressed in different marble head-dresses. One of these, representing Julia Pia, the second wife of Septimus Severus, has a wig of white marble. Another, Lucilla, the wife of Lucius Verus, has a black marble wig.

Many of our trades derive their name from the articles they work or deal in. A saddler fabricates saddles and other horse-gear; a blacksmith fashions black metal or iron; a whitesmith, white metal or tin; a goldsmith forges nothing less than gold, unless he expends his title as gold and silversmith. A jeweller tells you plainly what he deals in. The barber's name does not come from the English beard he shaves, but from the Latin "barba," the Roman beard, doubtless through the French "barbier." Our beard is Saxon. A Roman barber was simply a "tonsor" or clipper; which does not say much for the razors of antiquity. We might be tempted to guess, from the Latin etymology, that "Barbarians" are unshaven peoples, savages with beards; but unfortunately "barbaros" is Greek, meaning everybody who was not Greek, and having for its root either the Arabic "bar," desert, or a Chaldean term, signifying "without,"—"outsiders," in short, exactly as the Chinese call all the rest of the world "outer barbarians," and as the French considered them, not long ago.

The beard has never been a matter of indifference, but has even given rise to religious wars: about as reasonable as those of Swift's Big-endians and Little-endians. The Tartars persecuted the Persians as infidels, because they refused to conform

their moustaches to the Tartar ritual. There existed at least a plausible reason for Alexander's commanding the Macedonians to shave, namely, lest their enemies should clutch them by the beard, and so cut their throats, as you carve a leg of mutton holding it by the frizzled-papered knuckle. It was an acknowledgment of the sailors' maxim that "one handhold is worth two footholds." Less clear are Peter of Russia's motives for his pitiless onslaught on Muscovite beards. If he had any, he was much too great a man to tell them. He would have been happy had all Russia possessed but one beard, so that he might have cut it off at a single stroke. But so little willing were his loving subjects to yield their beards at word of command, that he had to employ gangs of officials to catch them, hold them down, and shear them, as the shepherd shears sheep. What became of the ravished beards, is not recorded; we have never heard that they formed new constellations, like Berenice's or Belinda's locks. Had the clipping been deferred till the present epoch, money might have been made of it as material for chignons.

Pliny states that the Romans did not begin to shave till the year of Rome 454, when Publius Ticinus brought over a cargo of barbers from Sicily. He adds that Scipio Africanus first set the fashion of being shaved every day. But, according to the same authority, after the age of forty-nine, every man was expected to wear his beard long. Young men underwent their first snipping at the age of twenty-one, and visits of ceremony were paid on that important occasion. This first chin-crop was devoutly inclosed in a small gold or silver box, and then presented as a votive offering to some divinity, mostly Jupiter Capitolinus. The first fourteen Emperors of Rome were shorn, down to Adrian, who revived the beard to hide certain blemishes on the imperial skin. Beards held their own till Constantine, whose mother, Helena, became famous as the "inventress" (in the classical sense), or finder, of the True Cross.

Those who have visited the galleries of the Vatican must have observed, with admiration, that beard-dressing, in those days, was indeed an art. Saint Chrysostom records that the kings of Persia had their beards woven and braided with golden thread—showy, but as inconsistent with personal neatness as silken shirts worn to rags without ever changing them; which perennial walking in silk attire made some-

body say that the Persians, although such assiduous bathers, are never clean except when they are in the water. The early French kings festooned and buttoned up their beards with gold.

Apropos to the braiding and weaving of beards is a story told by Boursault, who, at an epoch when newspaper gossip was scarce, wrote a weekly gazette, in verse, for the amusement of the French court, and notably of the king. He happened to be dining at the Duc de Guise's table in the course of a week in which no news had turned up, and complained that he did not know how to fill up his paper. The Duke suggested that it might amuse the court to hear of an adventure which had happened at the very gates of his hotel, at the house of an embroidress much in vogue, and who was then occupied in embroidering a Saint Francis for the Capuchin monks of the Marais. One day their sacristan went there to see how the work was getting on. Through some cause or other he fell fast asleep, with his head resting on the frame at which the young woman was busy. Now the part she was doing was the chin of the saint; so she took advantage of the presence of real hair, and artistically attached the reverend father's beard to the face of the saintly effigy. On awaking, the monk was surprised and indignant at finding his venerable appendage caught in a snare; and there was a long discussion between him and the artist which should keep the beard, he or she.

This story was the gem of that week's gazette. The king, who was young, laughed heartily at it, and saw nothing to give offence. Maria-Thérèse, who was piety itself, also laughed, without being scandalised; but her confessor, a Spanish Cordelier, did not understand a joke. Urged on by the Capuchins, who cried aloud for vengeance at the insult to their sacristan's beard, he excited the queen's religious scruples, and compelled her to require of the king an exemplary punishment. His majesty tried to treat the matter lightly; but a woman and a confessor combined were too strong for him. Boursault very narrowly escaped having to take lodgings in the Bastille; his pension of two thousand livres was suppressed, and the continuation of his gazette forbidden. Subsequently, however, he obtained a privilege for a similar gazette, under the title of *La Muse Enjouée*, The Merry Muse, which he wrote every month for the Dauphin's amusement.

But any account of beards and beard-

dressers would be defective without some allusion to the Capuchins. So famous were their beards that, to this very day, a favourite winter salad (chicory leaves blanched in a peculiar way, Barbe de Capucin, or Capuchin's Beard) bears their honoured name. Of all monkish beards, the Capuchins' was the most remarkable. They combed it out coquettishly, pomaded it complacently, and, when rainy weather threatened, carefully inclosed it in a parchment bag. A few monks might wish to suppress this conspicuous glory of their order, because it betrayed their personality at times when they wished to remain incognito. If we are to believe anecdotes that have been circulated in quite an irreverent spirit, more than one modern Dalilah has exercised her guilty scissors on the beard of a too-confiding Capuchin. When the poor victim has returned to his convent in a state more pitiable than that of Samson, the guardian father (a cunning old fox, who had escaped from not a few traps in his time), not requiring anybody to tell him on whose knees the shorn one had fallen asleep, after a good beating, locked him up in a dungeon until he had repaired his fault by a fresh growth of hair.

A charitable countess, residing at her country seat near Naples (the approximate date is 1761), brought up two orphans born in a hospital close by. Carlo, a handsome, good-tempered fellow, had been promoted to the rank of cook; Rosetta, sharp and extremely pretty, was the very thing for lady's maid. Of course they mutually fell in love. But Carlo was not the only person attracted by Rosetta's charms. A young signor, in the habit of visiting the countess, finding his money offers rejected, had her carried off by four masked brigands. She disappeared without leaving a trace. In this part of the story, at least, there is nothing improbable, as Englishmen living at the present day can attest by their own experience.

Whereupon Carlo left the countess and wandered about the country like a crazy creature, in search of his love. He invoked her presence, but all in vain.

Eurydice still trembled on his tongue,

Eurydice the woods,

Eurydice the floods,

Eurydice the rocks and hollow mountains rung.

One day, weary of his life, he saw a Capuchin convent—no rarity thereabouts. He knocked. His skill in the culinary art opened to him the doors of the sanctuary.

Carlo was a first-rate cook. Superior talents are sure to make their way. His fame soon reached the metropolis, and the father provincial of the Grand Convent at Naples insisted on securing so valuable an acquisition. Brother Charles (so the novice was called in religion) was mild, obliging, and fonder of cleanliness than the rest of his companions. A tinge of melancholy, owing to thoughts of Rosetta, rendered his countenance still more interesting; his light and silky budding beard detracted nothing from the softness of his features; add to this, "the gift of the gab," a great facility of speech acquired in the countess's ante-chambers, and you will not wonder that he was speedily raised to one of the highest Capuchin offices—they being Mendicant Friars—namely, collector, solicitor, or, in plain English, beggar. Now Capuchin collectors have been known to maintain, out of their receipts, without the superior's permission or knowledge, large little families of children in whom they took quite a paternal interest. But whatever was given to Carlo for the love of God—whether brown bread or cakes, treacle or apricot jam, perfumed muscat or half-sour wine—that he carried to the community, without taking anything by way of commission.

One day, in the streets of Naples, while begging his way from house to house, he entered a magnificent palazzo, walked up its broad staircase, traversed five or six apartments (for mendicant friars make no ceremony of entering wherever they please), without meeting anybody. He was about to walk back again as rich as he came, when he caught sight of a little door. Tapping slightly, he gently turned the key. The door opened. With downcast eyes, and hands hidden in his ample sleeves, which served occasionally as pockets, he humbly stated the poverty of his convent. A beautiful lady, reclining on a luxurious sofa, returned an affable and gracious reply.

"That voice!" exclaimed Carlo. He raised his eyes. "What! you! You! Rosetta! Here!" So saying, he fell in a swoon. Seven or eight tall lackeys (the precise number is unimportant) answered their mistress's call, and soon brought the weak-nerved friar to his senses. Left alone with his former sweetheart, he necessarily overwhelmed her with questions.

"I am no longer Rosetta," she answered. "My name now is Flavia. If I loved you less, I should not avow my errors; and even now, I cannot forgive myself for

having been unfaithful to you, although I could not help it."

We reduce her confession to its concluding fact—indeed, the only one with which we have any concern—namely, that she was now rich, and disengaged. The friar absolved her with a kiss. That kiss was fraught with serious consequences.

To insure the completeness of the absolution, the kiss was repeated several times. For Flavia, it had only one drawback; she did not like the Capuchin's beard. She even prepared to cut it off; but Carlo informed her that such an imprudence might cost him dear. Upon which (as women will have their own way) she gave him a phial full of a potent liquid, with which she entreated him to rub his chin. If his beard fell off, she said, he might attribute it to illness or a weakly constitution. Brother Charles obeyed, and soon became beardless. But the crafty old monks, suspecting some trick, while the smooth-faced mendicant was going his rounds, or rather paying his court to Flavia for the good of the convent, searched his room and found the phial concealed in his mattress. On returning, he had to submit to "discipline," that is flogging, and was then transferred to a quiet dungeon, where they did not keep him long. In recompense for past, and in hopes of future service, he was reinstated in his double office of mendicant and cook.

His first application was made at Flavia's residence, so says the chronicle, and there is no reason to doubt its correctness. The fresh-grown beard did not prevent the kiss of welcome. But when he explained the reason of his absence, and showed her the marks of the cat-o'-nine-tails, her rage got the better of her discretion.

"I dare say!" she stormed, "you'll stop in that den, where they pay service with stripes, and where you can't do as you please, even with your own beard! Carlo, I am rich. We'll be happy together; we'll get married somewhere. I won't have you go back to that filthy convent! Yes, I will; you shall go back—just for once. I insist upon your bringing me to-morrow all the beards of all those horrid Capuchins. I will quilt them into a mattress, as our first piece of furniture for setting up house-keeping. Unless you oblige me in that, I will have nothing more to say to you."

With this bit of her mind she whisked out of the room, leaving poor Carlo thunderstruck.

Although by no means a courageous person, Flavia's last words put him on his

mettle. Besides, he really had no reason to be overpleased with his fellow monks. He therefore made up his mind at once, and set about procuring an opiate to mix with his tyrants' soup, a pair of shears to snip their beards, and a capacious sack to put them in.

The clock struck midnight, the hour of dark deeds. Carlo, with the shears in one hand and the sack in the other, stole through the cells and the dormitories, halting an instant at every bed, and swelling his sack at every halt. At last he reached the superior's chamber. There he hesitated. Should he lay a sacrilegious hand on that venerable beard? No, he could not. He felt a pang of remorse; an involuntary fit of trembling seized him. He hurried away, and, worst of all, let fall the big sack which impeded his flight.

He soon took refuge in Flavia's arms, who highly relished the delights of vengeance, although regretting the contents of the sack, which she had destined for so useful a purpose. Her protégé did not share her satisfaction. He was too well acquainted with the fathers not to know that they would not let the trick go unrequited.

Next morning the Capuchins held a chapter of an unusually stormy character. What was to be done? Some proposed the closing of the convent doors, and a life of utter seclusion, until kind Nature had restored to their chin its ravished ornament. Those days of mourning, passed in obscurity, were to be effaced for ever from their annals. Others advised (and the advice prevailed) the adoption of false beards. Appearances would thus be saved, there would be no scandal, and they would escape the gibes of worldly scoffers. On one point they were perfectly agreed—to make the guilty wretch remember it, if Heaven delivered him into their hands.

Signor Carlo, already metamorphosed into a handsome cavalier, might have escaped scot-free but for another of his fair one's caprices. Learning that the Capuchins were to officiate at their church next Sunday, just as if nothing had happened, she insisted on Carlo's taking her there, in order to enjoy the figure they made. Great was her surprise at beholding in the pulpit a monk with a most magnificent beard, which was suspended from his solid ears, but, to avoid detection, with only a single thread. As the preacher proceeded his eloquence warmed, so much so that in the midst of an apostrophe the thread, not of his discourse, but of his

beard, broke, and down it fell in the midst of the congregation, who were very near shouting "A miracle!" Flavia burst into a fit of laughter. The fathers who went to reprimand her for her impropriety, recognising Carlo, in spite of his change of dress, immediately seized him, and hurried him away.

Flavia made no attempt to soften the monks by tears and entreaties. She knew too well the severity of convent justice, and that sentence is straightway followed by execution. Even if his life were spared, she could not tell what they might do to him. Every moment was precious; she hurried off to a duke of her acquaintance, and, by means not recorded, obtained his assistance. Next morning, at the head of a company of archers, she went straight to the convent to claim her lover.

The Capuchins assured her, with the utmost plausibility, that the culprit had been transferred to another monastery. She knew better, and was not to be so put off, but insisted on searching the house with the soldiers. At last she perceived, at the further end of the garden, a big stone, which seemed to cover a grave. It was there that poor Carlo, tried, and found guilty of the double crime of apostacy and capuchinal *lèse-majesté*, had been deposited, in conventual phrase, "in pace." He was already half-suffocated. Beside him a few pounds of bread, a jug of water, and two or three wax tapers, indicated the measure of his existence, and some bones which lay in one corner of the vault gave him a fore-taste of the fate that awaited him. This spectacle caused such a ferment amongst the population that, for once, the authorities forgot their predilection for monks. The convent was demolished, and the Capuchins dispersed.

The lovers, to be out of the way of monkish vengeance, realised their property, and went and took up their abode in Paris, where, in due time, they had a numerous family, none of whom embraced a monastic life.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BORROW'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER LIII. OWEN'S TERRACE.

AT last, from a letter of Tony's, I gathered news of Rachel Monck. She was living for the while, it appeared, in Owen's Terrace, Clerkenwell, with old Vickery and his sister. "My poor uncle,

as you are no doubt aware, left his affairs in a very confused state," wrote Tony. "I fear his creditors will be much dissatisfied. It was judged as well to get Rachel out of their way at any rate. The poor child has gone through worry and distress more than enough. She will have peace and quiet at the Vickery's. I believe him to be thoroughly trustworthy and faithful; he has been always most devoted to Rachel. The house is really Miss Vickery's, who lets lodgings—a sharp, shrewd old maid, but kind-hearted, I think, and most respectable. Rachel has known her for years. Altogether her going there seemed to be the best plan that could be devised. I thought you knew of all this. If you are ever up Clerkenwell way it would be a charity to call and see Rachel. Owen's Terrace is very near to Sadler's Wells. I should really like to know how she is. What are you going to do, yourself? I fear you have not been very justly treated in the matter of your articles. But think kindly of poor Rachel. I'll not add more now. Somehow writing wearies me more than it used to."

There was no need for his enjoining me to think kindly of Rachel. Forthwith I hastened to Owen's Terrace, a row of very small old-fashioned houses, with red-brick faces, burnished door knockers, and broad white window-sashes; so diminutive and dapper looking altogether that they seemed to have issued from a toy-shop. The New River flowed in front of them, not, as now-a-days, bricked over and hid, like a sewer, but open to the sky, fresh and clear as a country stream. Hopeful anglers sat upon its banks casting their lines into its waters. There were then green lanes and meadows, dairy farms and market gardens, within a short distance of Owen's Terrace. The inhabitants boasted of the pure fresh air they breathed. They were on high ground, they alleged; on a level, indeed, to be particular, with the top of the ball and cross of St. Paul's. They regarded pitifully those condemned to dwell in less lofty regions.

A bright brass plate inscribed "Vickery" denoted the house I sought, and the lady who opened the door I knew at once could be no other than Miss Vickery. She had the hard aquiline features, and the sharp cat-like questioning eyes of her brother. She was short and spare, and her grey hair was festooned after the fashion of window curtains upon her lined forehead. There was a certain stiff spruceness about her attire. She wore a shrilly-rustling black

silk dress, a towering starched cap, profusely ribboned, mittens upon her hands, and a gold watch swinging at her girdle, which was so tightly fastened that I judged her to be decidedly proud of the slimmness of her waist. Her manner was somewhat tart.

"If it's the lodgings," she said at once, "it's no use. Captain Brocklebank has given notice; but he's not going. He's changed his mind. He'll change it once too often one of these days."

Captain Brocklebank, I subsequently learnt, tenanted Miss Vickery's first floor, and was an elderly gentleman retired from the mercantile marine service. His temper was uncertain, and he was much given to fault finding. He had dwelt in Owen's Terrace many years, but had always expressed a fixed resolution to quit it immediately. With this view he invariably kept his luggage packed up and ready for departure. Still he did not depart. It was a frequent complaint of Miss Vickery's that there was an enduring unpleasantness, and that form of disagreement, commonly known as "words," between Captain Brocklebank and herself. But this bitterness of their relations was perhaps mutually beneficial, and had a tonic effect upon their constitutions. The captain continued to be the lady's lodger, and each was in such wise supplied with the stimulus of a grievance.

I explained my mission: I desired to see Miss Monck; and I tendered my card.

"I beg your pardon; I thought it was the lodgings. I've often threatened to let them over his head, and he'll find the thing done some day. He and his notices, indeed! I'm sick of it. You're Mr. Nightingale? I know the name." She eyed me suspiciously, looking wonderfully like her brother the while. "Step in, please. You'd better see Mr. Vickery, I think. He's in at present, as it happens, doing a bit of gardening. I'll fetch him if you'll wait a minute."

Presently Vickery appeared, wearing a straw hat. He was evidently surprised to see me, but he bowed politely, in an old-fashioned way, and ushered me into a tiny back parlour.

"I was not prepared for the honour of this visit, Mr. Nightingale. Miss Rachel is well, I thank you—as well perhaps as we could venture to hope," he said, in reply to my enquiries. "Ah, you have heard from Mr. Wray? Precisely. But there was no real intention to keep you

in the dark, Mr. Nightingale, as to our movements. You found the house in Golden Square closed and empty? Yes, you would. It will remain closed for the present, probably. Miss Rachel does us the honour to remain with us for a little. We thought the change might be beneficial. It was my sister's suggestion, and I quite agreed with her. Ours is but a humble abode, as you see, but any change seemed advantageous under all the circumstances of the case. And Miss Rachel, you are aware, had but few friends whom she could consult. Not but what I'm sure I may consider you as a friend of the family, Mr. Nightingale. That has always been Miss Rachel's opinion."

I assured him of my earnest desire to be of such service as I possibly could to Miss Monck, lamenting my limited power to aid her.

"It has been, it still is, an anxious time for her, of course. She feels her bereavement very deeply I need not say. But her health improves, I think. Want of rest was really killing her, Mr. Nightingale. She was a most devoted daughter. It is a comfort to her now, no doubt, to think of that. But I need not pursue the subject. You have called at the instance of Mr. Wray, I think you said? I apprehend, however, that I am not to regard you as representing Mr. Wray, in relation to any claim he may have upon the estate of the late Mr. Monck? No, that could hardly be, of course."

He watched me closely as he said this. I understood the object of his enquiry. I could not doubt that poor Tony's small fortune was involved in the ruin of his guardian and trustee, Mr. Monck.

"I possess little information on the subject," I said. "But I am very sure that my friend Mr. Wray will urge no claims of the kind you mention, to the embarrassment of his cousin, Miss Monck."

I fancied that his face brightened and that he breathed more freely.

"It's a sad business," he said, with a change in his manner. "I feel that I may speak to you confidentially, Mr. Nightingale. Mr. Monck's affairs are not in a satisfactory state. I think I told you that he left no will, and that I could not advise Miss Rachel to administer. It is most important that she should be spared further trouble and anxiety of whatever kind. There are many debts and liabilities. How many I am not yet prepared to say. On the other hand, there are large sums—for costs in

Chancery and on other accounts—due to the estate. I am most anxious to save something, if I can, out of the wreck for Miss Rachel. As a small creditor—for some arrears of salary merely—I think of administering to the estate myself. But this is in strict confidence between us, Mr. Nightingale. I shall do nothing hastily. I must proceed very cautiously. Trouble, of course, I shall not spare, nor hard work. For that, of course, I am prepared. I may fail, but, at least, I shall make the effort, solely and simply, you will please understand that, Mr. Nightingale—solely and simply in the hope of benefiting Miss Rachel. I have not spoken to her on the subject, and I do not intend to do so at present. Still I find it a comfort, although I own that it should not be so to a man of my practical habits, to make mention of the matter to some one—to you, Mr. Nightingale."

He paused for a moment, for his voice was quivering, and his eyes were filling with tears. He refreshed himself with a pinch of snuff, and presently resumed.

"I don't want to have my motives misunderstood, that's all. Somehow, I've come to regard Miss Rachel's interests as a sort of sacred trust in my hands. I've no legal warrant for it, of course. It's an old man's crotchet, perhaps—a foolish crotchet, some may say. But I think it does us good to have such crotchets, Mr. Nightingale. I know I feel the better, the stronger, even the younger for it. I'd give my life, if need were, to serve Miss Rachel. So, I'm going to fight this battle for her; for it will be a battle. I shall have trouble in bringing the creditors to terms. I shall compel them to accept a very small composition. But it will be that or nothing. I shall not administer until I see my way quite clearly in that respect. One of them, you think, might step in to administer in my stead? No, they dare not. They're afraid of the expense; they know the liabilities are very considerable. Besides, you see, I have the advantage of them; I've practical experience of things of this kind, and no one knows so much of Mr. Monck's affairs as I do. I'm prepared to fight every inch of the ground. And I've everything to win and nothing to lose. I'm a poor man, as you know, Mr. Nightingale, when all's said. Not that they'll find me yielding or easier to deal with on that account. And—and I shall die happy if I can save something out of the wreck for Miss Rachel."

I was touched by the old man's

chivalric devotion to the interests of his employer's daughter. I felt that I had hitherto done him much injustice. I was remorseful on the subject of certain caricatures I had at odd times perpetrated of him. He was but a lawyer's clerk advanced in years, of eccentric aspect and quaint ways; strangely dressed, and taking snuff copiously out of a tin box. Yet, nevertheless, he was capable of heroism. His fidelity was supreme—he was fully possessed with the spirit of self-sacrifice. I began to be almost jealous of his love for Rachel. Surely, it could not transcend my own? He seemed to read my thoughts.

"It is not only the young who can love, Mr. Nightingale. How it came about I can't tell you; but I've got to look upon Miss Rachel as my own child—if it isn't a liberty to say so. I love her as a father might—more, if possible. A father looks for a return of his affection, for respect, and dutiful obedience, help and sympathy, in his old age. I ask for nothing but the privilege of loving and serving her."

I found myself wringing old Vickery's hand with a cordial regard for him I had not, five minutes before, believed possible.

"But for yourself, Vickery," I said.

"Don't fear on my account, Mr. Nightingale. I shall not starve—there is no danger on that score. I'm well known in the profession. I've already had some very advantageous offers. Messrs. Foskett, Bishop, and Erle, a most respectable firm in Lincoln's Inn Fields, will want a managing clerk after next term; I've no doubt that I can obtain the situation."

He seemed thankful to find himself once more upon unsentimental ground, as it were. He was a little regretful, I think, that he had been betrayed into confessions that he had by no means contemplated. With many other men, if not ashamed of being moved by generous feelings, he was at any rate anxious that the fact should not be generally known. He enlarged upon his practical knowledge of the law, upon his intimate acquaintance with the offices in Chancery Lane, and presently, had returned to the subject of his plans, as the administrator of the late Mr. Monck's estate.

"And you see the matter is of some importance to you, Mr. Nightingale. You may be spared a reference to the court. As Mr. Monck's administrator I shall be in a position to transfer your articles of clerkship to some other solicitor, who may

be selected by you, or by your friends, with that object."

I begged him not to trouble himself on that head, and announced that I had decided to abandon my legal studies.

"Dear me, have you, indeed? It seems a pity, too. Your handwriting was rapidly improving; and, really, if I may say so, you might have become a credit to the profession. And though you may not think so—for your experience of it has been a little unfortunate, I'll allow—it's a lucrative profession, Mr. Nightingale. Looked at in the right way it's attractive, interesting, exciting, and profitable. Well, well, you are the best judge, of course, of your own inclinations. And what might you propose to do, may I ask, Mr. Nightingale? Write for the stage? I wouldn't on any account say a word against the play you were so kind as to read to us—*The Daughter of the Doge*, it was called, wasn't it?—indeed I thought much of it very admirable; but, as a profession, do you think writing for the stage would be satisfactory to you, would be quite the thing, Mr. Nightingale?"

This allusion to my unfortunate tragedy seemed to me uncalled for, to say the least of it. I viewed that work as dead and buried; it had never been much more than still-born. To me, its parent, it was yet a tender subject, however. I could not, unmoved, bear much reference to it.

I explained simply, perhaps rather stiffly, that I was now living with my kinsman, Sir George Nightingale, serjeant-painter to the King, and was employed as an assistant in his studio.

"Sir George Nightingale!" Vickery repeated.

"Yes. The gentleman upon whom I once served a writ, you may remember."

"Precisely. I know Sir George in a way. He was not always so famous as he is now. I happen to know something of his early history. But perhaps you don't care to hear anything on the subject. He's your kinsman, as you say, and it is not for me to disparage him in any way."

CHAPTER LIV. YOUNG GEORGE.

I CERTAINLY did not wish to hear Sir George disparaged: and yet I was curious to know what special information Vickery possessed concerning him.

"No doubt," I said, "he rose from a position of some obscurity. That is usually the case with great painters. They achieve eminence by their own

exertions; not merely because they have been at the trouble of being born." This borrowing from Beaumarchais was lost upon Vickery.

He hesitated. He was willing that Sir George should be lowered in my esteem. Had I not deserted the law for him, and was it not a fair reprisal therefore to decry him? But yet the old man's dislike to needless disclosure was very strong; reticence had become a confirmed habit with him. He was probably blaming himself already in that he had been so exceptionally outspoken on the subject of Rachel Monck; and his plans for her welfare.

"It's little enough I have to tell, Mr. Nightingale," he said at length. "I shouldn't have used the word disparage. I don't really mean that. I only referred to Sir George's early days, when he was, of course, unknown, comparatively speaking. He was little more than a lad when I first saw him. It was at Bath. I was a young man myself then, and I had some relations settled there, whom I visited when I could. His father—old Mr. Nightingale"—it was very strange to hear of an *old* Mr. Nightingale—"was settled in Bath as an artist, but only in a humble way. He gave lessons and took likenesses. He lodged in the Vineyards—you know Bath, perhaps? Well, that was where he lodged. I remember there were specimens of his drawings displayed in the window. They were to be seen also at the print-shop in Milsom-street, with a statement of the terms upon which he gave instruction—so much a lesson. I forget how much—but it was thought to be very moderate. Still old Mr. Nightingale did not thrive—could not find much employment. He was understood to be very poor. But I daresay I'm only telling you what, as one of the family, you already know very well."

"Indeed not." And I explained that I was unaware even of Sir George's existence, until some time after my arrival in London. I reminded Vickery again of my service of the writ. That was surely conclusive that I knew nothing of Sir George. At home I had never heard his name mentioned. I judged these Bath Nightingales to be only distantly related to my family.

"No, you didn't know him when you served the writ upon him, Mr. Nightingale, I remember. Although, if you had known him, it could have made no differ-

ence. We only followed the instructions of our clients in proceeding against him. It was simply a matter of business. And if I knew that he was your relative—I don't say that I did not know, mind—it was not a subject for me to be talking about. It was no affair of mine. I was only Mr. Monck's clerk."

He paused for a few moments. He was watching me closely, as though to discover in my face some expression of distrust of him. As he proceeded, his manner grew more hesitating. He seemed to find a difficulty in selecting and arranging his words. But he did not cease to observe me narrowly.

"Young George Nightingale, he was very young then, was a handsome boy—at least, that was the general opinion—with fine eyes, regular features, and long dark hair hanging down to his shoulders. He was so smart and clever, and precocious, that he was thought to be quite a youthful prodigy. The ladies admired him very much. He was a sort of general pet and favourite. Drawings of his were exhibited, portraits even, which he had accomplished when he was quite a child—only ten years old or so. It was predicted, even then, that he would live to be a great and famous man. His father had trained and taught him, and it was said, though it was, of course, denied, that old Mr. Nightingale helped a good deal in his son's drawings—touched them up and improved them. I'm no judge of such things myself, so I won't offer an opinion. But, if the father helped the son, it is certain that the son helped the father, and brought him into notice. The old man's been dead and gone, I need hardly tell you, this many a long day. But people of fashion flocked to his painting-room. All the Bath gentry took notice of young George. Folks were quite proud to think that the clever boy had been born in their city. They patronised him, and had their portraits taken by him. Mere sketchy things—crayon drawings, I think they call them. And they paid well for them, too. Of course, this was to the old man's advantage; but it was enough to turn the boy's head—he was made so much of, and pampered and flattered, and patronised by the great."

"Well, and what followed?"

"I was not in Bath long after that. But so much I know of my own knowledge. Not that I pretend for a moment that I was on equal terms with old Mr.

Nightingale and his clever son. I knew them by sight but not to speak to them. I come of very humble folks myself—I'm not ashamed of it. I had an uncle in Bath in those days, a tradesman in a small way of business; and my sister was apprenticed there to the millinery business. She gave it up afterwards, when she came in for a little bit of money, and settled here in London. But I had news of Bath long after I left it. Its gossip and talk reached me in various ways. And I heard a good deal of handsome George Nightingale and his goings on, the fine company he kept, and the extravagance he permitted himself; he had learnt it of his grand friends, no doubt. But then they were rich, and could afford to be extravagant. He had only his calling to depend upon. He had to work for his living; they hadn't. That made a great difference, you see. Still, he was bent upon being a gentleman; his good looks were not to be denied; and for dress he was what's called the pink of fashion, for all he was only the son of a poor drawing-master. There is excuse to be made for him, no doubt. He was very young, and he'd been so spoilt by flattery. He's a handsome man, now—at least, that is the general opinion, I believe; but, at the time I'm speaking of, he was certainly very attractive-looking; I don't know that I ever saw a handsomer young fellow. Well, he got into debt and other troubles; and then something occurred which made him quite the talk of Bath. There was great scandal about it. Hush!"

Vickery's story was interrupted. Rachel Monck had entered the room.

She looked very sad and wan in her black, crape-trimmed dress. Yet her eyes were bright, and, as she moved towards me, proffering her small, soft hand, something of a kindly smile quivered like a dancing ray of pale sunshine about the delicate lines of her lips.

"You are very good to come," she said, simply. "I have often thought of you and your great kindness to me and to those I love. I only just heard that you were here. I was busy, upstairs, writing."

I noticed that she wore upon her wrist, as of old, the black cover to protect the sleeve of her dress.

"It is Miss Rachel's pleasure to do copying work still," said Vickery, with an air of apology. "I have begged her to rest for a while; but she is wilful, and she must be obeyed."

"I must do something," she said. "I

cannot be idle. And I am so used to writing, I like it, if only because it prevents me from thinking too much. I have so many sad thoughts. Besides it is my only gift. I am not clever as other girls are. I can play but a very little, and during my dear one's long illness I had no heart to touch the piano. I cannot draw, and have never learnt fancy work. I am more used to the pen than the needle. Besides, I have to earn money—a duty to fulfil. I may not be a burthen to my friends. So Vickery obtains work for me from the law stationer's, brings home the papers for me to copy, and is most careful to spare me trouble. I could not write just at first; my hand trembled so, and the tears would come into my eyes. But I get on better now; my writing is firm and strong again, and I mean to work hard to make up for lost time."

"Not too hard, and not at night, Miss Rachel. You promised me that," said Vickery.

"It shall be as you wish, old friend," and she gave him her hand. He retained it for a moment in his, while he contemplated her with a tender affection and respect, which invested his quaint harsh features with an air almost of nobility. Then he smiled, nodded cheerily to her, and quitted the room.

"You have heard from my cousin, Mr. Nightingale?"

"Yes. I learnt your address from him."

"It was very good of you to come," she repeated, scarcely knowing what she said, I think. "He writes to you often?"

"Not very often, and but briefly." She seemed almost gratified at this.

"I have not heard from him very lately. He is unwell, I fear, and no doubt writing is irksome to him; it always was. He spoke of coming to London, soon?"

"Not in his last letter."

"It is better that he should stay where he is," she said, with a sigh. "He is well cared for there, and happy, he tells me. I longed for him to be here, when—when my great affliction came upon me." Her voice failed her, and tears filled her eyes; but, with a quick movement of her hand, she brushed them away. "I seemed so lonely, so completely desolate. It would have been such a comfort to have had him beside me, to have felt his hand in mine. But all happened for the best. Strength came to me. I was braver than I thought. God is very merciful—and I bore my

burthen; how, I scarcely know; at least, I did not sink under it, as at one time I feared I should; as, indeed, I almost hoped I should. It was as well poor Tony was away. He's not strong, and he has a most tender heart. The anguish of that terrible time—I wince and shiver as I think of it, even, now—would have tried him cruelly. He wrote me the kindest, sweetest, tenderest letter—poor dear good boy! You don't know how it eased my aching heart, how I cried over the letter, until it was wet with my tears. I read it over and over again—I know it all by heart, every word—my kind Tony!" She waited for a few moments, covering her face with her hands. "It may seem strange," she resumed, presently, "that I should speak like this to you, Mr. Nightingale, almost a stranger to us. But no—you're not that—you're his friend and mine. A kinder, truer friend, could not be, and you will bear with and pity and forgive my tears and my weakness. If you only knew how he speaks of you—and of your mother! He fills his letters with telling me of her exceeding kindness to him. I long, of course, to have news of himself. But to know that he is loved and happy is very much to me. And your mother seems to regard him almost as though he were her own son. I sometimes think that he is for the while filling your place. Poor boy! No wonder he is touched by her goodness to him. He has never known before what a mother's affection is like. I wish I could find words to tell how grateful I feel to her. I long to join him in thanking her for all her kindness. Is she like you, Mr. Nightingale? I have never seen her face—perhaps may never see it—though I trust that may not be so; yet I seem to have known her for long years. You will come again?"

Of course I would come again.

"And you will bring me news of him, if you receive any? I am most anxious about him, and," she added, rather sadly, "it is natural, perhaps, that he should write more freely to you than to me. Is he better, stronger than he was, do you think?"

"He spoke of improved health when last he wrote."

"You are not hiding anything from me? Don't do that. I can endure. I have been taught to be patient under suffering.

Perhaps that inclines me always to expect bad news. I cannot be hopeful. But you will see me again when you have again heard from him? I may rely upon that? Poor Tony: he is so careless of himself always. But your mother (Heaven reward her!) will care for him in spite of himself. I've comfort in thinking that. Good bye, Mr. Nightingale. Thank you again and again for all your great kindness to him and to me. I shall never forget it. I'm sorry now I did not see you before; I did not mean to hide away from you. My coming here was very suddenly determined on. But, in my trouble and despair, I could not trust myself to see any one. My heart was too full; my grief too great. Even kind words wounded me more than I could bear, and kind eyes were full of pain to me. But do not doubt my gratitude. I shall count you always among the truest and best of my friends, though, indeed, my friends are but very, very few."

So I left her, more than ever loving her, more than ever impressed and held by her pallid wistful beauty, by the purity and goodness of her nature, by her suffering and self-sacrifice.

With my love for Rachel there mingled a respect and reverence that purified and subtilised it. She was to me more than a woman; she was as a saint also. And if I might not love her with the hope of winning her love in return, at least I might pay her homage and adore her unceasingly.

Meantime she knew nothing of—did not even suspect—my love. Her heart was given absolutely to her cousin—my friend. I was oppressed with fear lest she should discover my secret. For what would follow? She might do me injustice, suspecting that I demanded payment of any poor services I had rendered her. My motives might be misconstrued; I might earn her distrust, even her scorn.

No; it was better, far better, that she should not know. Only it was hard, very hard, to keep constant watch over myself and hide the truth from her. My heart so longed to find relief in words; I feared it would betray me in spite of myself.

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THE AUTHOR OF "LOST HIS MASSINGBERD," "A PERFECT TREASURY," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXIV. AFTER THE VERDICT.

WHILE Jack and Evy were still whispering together—not because what they spoke were words of love, but because the gravity and sadness of the occasion made all voices low—the officer of the court reappeared, and once more summoned the latter. "The coroner and jury wish to see you again, miss." Evy turned deadly pale; was she then about to be confronted with Judith, and to be compelled to listen to some exaggerated and malicious statements, which she would have to deny point blank, respecting her unhappy uncle?

"They won't keep you over a minute, bless you," added the official good-naturedly, who set down her change of colour merely to the natural repugnance of the young lady to repeat an ordeal which she had flattered herself was concluded; "they never do when a party is recalled."

A little comforted by this assurance, Evy ascended to the jury-room, where she found Judith standing by the long table, so beautiful, calm, and collected, that the recollection involuntarily occurred to her of a picture she had once beheld of Charlotte Corday before her judges. She did not so much as turn her head, or glance towards Evy as she entered.

"We have troubled you to reappear before us, Miss Carthew," said the coroner, "to reconcile what appears to be a slight discrepancy between your evidence and that of this other young lady. You told us that, after you had retired to your room, you heard the voices of your uncle and the deceased in altercation; now please to tell us what you heard after that."

"I heard my uncle go to his room, and afterwards—when their walk in the garden was ended—my aunt and Miss Mercer also retired."

"Just so; and nothing more?"

"No," said she; then colouring very much in spite of herself she added, "or rather, perhaps, I should say I did fancy I heard my uncle leave his room, though that turned out to be but fancy, for upon asking him at breakfast time whether it had been so, he assured me I was mistaken."

"The fancy was at all events shared by this young lady," observed the coroner, drily. "I can easily imagine you deemed it of no consequence, but in an inquiry of this kind there should be nothing, however apparently unimportant, left untold."

This was apparently all that was wanted of poor Evy, and she once more sought the wretched room, where Jack and those two faithful ladies still remained, without whose presence she would, indeed, have felt forlorn. The presentiment of coming evil was growing more distinct, yet darker, with every moment.

"You are looking very ill, dear Evy," said Mrs. Barmby, tenderly; "this dreadful day has been too much for you; let Captain Heyton escort you home, and Mrs. Storks and I will wait for Judith."

But Evy shook her head. She would herself wait for Judith; and above all she would wait lest she should be wanted again in the jury-room. The fear of what might come of those deliberations above stairs had assumed such proportions that she had made up her mind, should circumstances seem to demand it, to speak out, and let the jury know that if in herself they had had a witness anxious to extenuate—though the omission of her late and supplemental piece of evidence had, indeed, been purely

accidental—they had in Judith Mercer one at least as prone to malice and exaggeration, and a personal enemy of her unhappy uncle. However, she was not again sent for, and presently Judith came down with a grave and quiet face.

"They have kept you a long time, Miss Mercer," said Jack, with sympathy. He had a general notion "that all the women," with the exception of Evy, "were rather hard upon that girl," and was the more gracious to her accordingly. "I am afraid, by your looks, that they have been bothering you."

"You are very kind to concern yourself on my poor account, Captain Heyton," returned Judith, with a smile which somehow contrived to express, not only gratitude, but the sense that nobody but himself had any interest in her. "I have really, however, nothing to complain of. Being no relation to poor Mrs. Hulet, but merely, as it were, a dependent, the jury were naturally not so careful to spare my feelings as in the case of members of the family. It was rather trying——"

"There can be no sort of doubt about the verdict, of course?" observed Mrs. Storks, cutting Judith short. She had "no patience with that designing girl," nor the faintest belief in the genuineness of her humility.

"Indeed, madam, I trust not," replied Judith. "I have, at all events, done my very best to contradict the foolish and mischievous gossip that has been so long afloat concerning the terms upon which Mr. Hulet lived with his late wife, and the effects of which can alone cause us apprehension."

This was a keen stroke; for Mrs. General Storks had herself a somewhat unruly tongue, and, having ridiculed Mr. Hulet's reunion with his "Sophia," had afterwards pointed to the result with a natural triumph.

Whether there was a doubt about what the verdict might be or not, the interest felt in it was sufficient to keep the whole party in their present uncomfortable quarters until it should be divulged, which, however, happened within half an hour. So soon as there was a movement implying departure above stairs, the captain went up, and brought back the news.

The verdict was one of Accidental Death, accompanied by a "rider" to the effect that, in the opinion of the jury, the wall of the cliff walk, over which the unfortunate lady was supposed to have fallen, was dangerously low. A great weight seemed to be

lifted off Evy's mind when she heard this result of their deliberations, which she was most anxious at once to communicate to Mr. Hulet. She had little doubt that it was to the suspense and worry consequent on so distressing an inquiry that the indisposition of which Judith had spoken was due, and now she would be the physician to heal him with this news. She took a hurried leave of her good friends from Lucullus Mansion, and then started with Jack and Judith for the cottage. To the latter she felt that she owed some reparation for the suspicions in which she had indulged concerning her, and yet, somehow, she shrank from making any advances towards her in the way of friendship. Judith, on the contrary, was even more patronisingly affectionate in her tone than usual, and called the captain's attention to the noble manner in which "their dear Evy" had "borne up" throughout that trying day. Evy did not feel herself equal to conversation upon any topic, so that Judith had it all to herself, and during their short walk contrived to be humble, sympathetic, helpful, and patronising by turns. Her beauty, whose blemish, if it had one, lay in a certain lack of refinement, seemed to have become mellowed and toned down, as it were, by the distress she had herself endured, until it was well nigh perfection. The contrast between her and Evy, who hung her head, and looked a little wan and pale, was that of a rose to a lily.

Arrived at home, Evy left her companions in the drawing-room, and, not finding Mr. Hulet in the study, went up to his own room. To her first knock at the door there was no reply; to her second, a voice, so dejected, so hopeless, as it seemed, of all good tidings, answered it, that she scarcely recognised it for her uncle's.

"Who is there?" asked he.

"It is I, uncle; Evy. I have something to tell you."

She purposely made her tone as cheerful as she could, that he might guess her errand. Then, in the hush of that death-stricken house, she could hear him sigh, and wearily rise, and come across the room to unlock the door.

"I hope I am not wrong to disturb you, dear uncle," faltered she, amazed and pained to see how changed his face had grown from what it had been but a few hours before; for then, though it had been sad and grave enough, it was calm and steadfast—the countenance of one who had made up his mind for sorrow—but now

it was wild and haggard, and despairing, beyond the power of words to paint.

"Come in, Evy; sit down," said he, in a hollow voice, himself sinking as he spoke into a chair. Then, hiding his mouth, which she had noticed was working in the strangest manner, with his hand, he gazed out on the sparkling sea.

"I came to say that the verdict has been given, uncle."

"Aye, aye," said he, in such an abstracted tone that she could scarce believe he heard her. "Very true. The verdict."

"Good Heavens!" thought she, "has he been driven mad by misery that he should be so unmoved on such a topic! What subject can possibly engross his mind to the exclusion of this one?"

"Dear uncle," cried she, falling on her knees before him, "what is the matter—I mean, besides what I know of? There is something. I feel sure."

"No," replied he, starting, and looking at her with an anxious face. "There is nothing else. Is there not enough in to-day's work to make one sad and thoughtful?"

"Indeed there is, dear uncle, but I had hoped that Heaven had given you strength to bear it better. The trial is passing, dear. This wretchedness cannot endure for ever."

Mr. Hulet shuddered, and shook his head.

"For ever, for ever," he murmured.

"Nay, nay, dear uncle; it seems so to-day, but it will not seem so to-morrow, or, at least," she added, hastily, suddenly remembering that the funeral was fixed for the next day, "in a little time. To-day is the worst day, and the worst is over. The verdict, I came to tell you, is Accidental Death."

"Accidental Death," echoed he, slowly. "Yes, I thought that was what it would be."

Her words of comfort, as she had expected them to be, had fallen on almost heedless ears. Her uncle had doubtless expected such a verdict, but still it might easily have been an open one, such as Found Drowned, which would have given occasion for unpleasant gossip, or, at all events, would not have put a decisive end to the affair. It was certainly a matter for comfort and satisfaction, if not for content, and yet he had shown none. To Evy, this indifference, so uncharacteristic of her sensitive and unsanguine relative, seemed a very bad sign. She would rather have seen him showing weakness in the other direction, shedding tears of grateful joy. Had this been the case she would not have informed him of the "rider" that the jury had appended to

their decision, but as it was she resolved to do so.

"The verdict was not only what I have said, uncle; it had an addition to it."

"Indeed," answered he, with some appearance of interest. "What was it?"

"Well, the jury expressed their opinion that the cliff walk was a dangerous spot, and that the wall requires heightening."

Now there was nothing, as Evy was well aware, that Mr. Hulet's nature resented so much as other people's interference with his affairs. A week ago he would certainly have gone into something very like a passion had any alteration in his premises been suggested to him, especially one which, as this did, implied a want of judgment or prudence on his own part. If he had any "kick" in him left at all, he would, thought she, have manifested it on the present occasion. On the other hand, if he had really thought that the jury were justified in their representation—if he deemed his wife had come to harm through any negligence of his—it was only natural that he should display emotion of another kind. As it was he displayed none whatever.

"Aye, the wall is low," was all he said. Then added, after a little pause, and with a stealthy side glance at Evy, "The next tenant will have to see to that."

"You have made up your mind to leave the cottage, then, dear uncle?"

"Yes, child, yes. We must do that." His voice was pitiful and tender, as though she really were a child whom he thus addressed, and his eyes were suddenly filled with tears.

"Yes, we must leave this," he continued; "don't ask me about it yet—not to-day, nor to-morrow, Evy."

"Indeed, uncle, I will not do so; the subject must needs be a very painful one. But don't shut yourself up here alone, dear uncle, and refuse what comfort we can give you. Jack wants to see you, just to shake your hand, you know; we all feel so thankful, for your sake, that to-day's sad business is over."

"Jack," said the old man, in a hoarse whisper; "is Jack—I mean is Captain Heyton here?"

"Yes, uncle, he is below in the drawing-room with Judith."

"Then go, darling," exclaimed Mr. Hulet, with eager fervour. "Go down, Evy, go down."

"Nay, but he can wait, and I can wait," said Evy, softly; "my first duty is here, uncle, by your side." Digitized by Google

"Don't say that, Evy, oh don't say that," faltered the old man. "It is too much," and covering his face with his hands, he suddenly burst into tears.

Evy waited for the paroxysm to abate, then stealing her arm round his bowed head, and kissing him fondly, she strove to comfort him.

"You are unnerved and shaken, dear uncle——"

"Broken, broken," he sobbed out, "a broken man."

"Nay, you must not say that; and besides, you have two loving props to lean on, dear. You must let them do their office, uncle—which will be a pleasure and a duty to both—and to begin at once, you must not remain up here alone with your sorrow; or else you must let Jack come up——"

"Jack, Jack," cried the old man, putting his hand to his forehead, "what was that you said about Jack just now?"

"He is waiting below with Judith to see you——"

"Then, I tell you, go down," interrupted the old man, in hushed but vehement tones. "I cannot see him, nor talk to you any more just now. I am not equal to it; but go you down."

He raised her from the ground, for she was still kneeling, and with more strength than she could have believed him capable of exerting, hurried her towards the door. The excitement and apprehension in his face were most alarming.

"You will not lock yourself in again, uncle," pleaded she.

"Yes, yes; I must, I must, in case she comes."

"Who comes," asked Evy, not without a terrible suspicion that her uncle's brain had given way, and that he imagined himself haunted by his dead wife.

"Why Judith, of course, child. Hush." Here his voice sank to a terrified whisper. "Beware of her, and do not leave them together. Go down, go down."

And with those warning words he pushed her from the room, and locked the door behind her.

CHAPTER XXV. RUIN.

EVY did not at once descend into the drawing-room, notwithstanding her uncle's earnest recommendation to her so to do. On the contrary, it had the effect of sending her to her own chamber, to think for a little, in private, over the new misfortune that seemed to have fallen upon the ill-fated household. For was it possible

that such words as those, "Go down; do not leave them together," uttered, as they were, too, in such a tone of serious and eager warning, could have emanated from a sane mind? On review, indeed, of the old man's conduct in other respects during their late interview, they were hardly explicable on any other ground than temporary insanity. The marvellous change that had been wrought in his appearance and manner since he had left her but a few hours back at the inn; his indifference to the tidings she had brought him; the strange reply he had made to the official suggestion that the cliff wall should be raised, "the next tenant will see to that," and above all the anxious look which accompanied it, sidelong, tentative, wary, just such a one, in fact, as she would have imagined to belong to one whose reason had become unsettled. Even his occasional bursts of tenderness had alarmed her, from their suddenness and vehemence. Still, upon the whole, she resolved to confide her suspicions to no one; they might be erroneous; or it may have been only that the excitement of the last two days had been too much for him, and when the sad ceremony of the morrow was over, and things had settled down into their usual course, his mind would regain its equilibrium. Having come to this determination, she sought the drawing-room, at the open window of which Judith and Captain Heyton were sitting, just as she had left them. To see the light come into her lover's eyes as they met hers, and how he rose to greet her, was to set at naught the wild warning she had just received, so far at least as Jack was concerned; nor was there the least trace of confusion in Judith's face, to corroborate the idea of such treachery as had been suggested.

"How did you find poor Mr. Hulet, Evy?" inquired she, with sympathy.

"Very far from well," returned Evy, gravely. "What you said of his indisposition to see anybody was only too true. He does not feel equal even to see you, dear Jack."

"I dare say not, poor fellow," returned the captain, pitifully. "He feels all knocked to pieces, I dare say. It is better he should be alone, no doubt, and perhaps under the circumstances I ought not to have come to the house myself, eh, Miss Judith?"

For though, as a matter of fact, the captain's heart was too good to ever lead him far wrong in matters of propriety, he had no confidence in himself as to his know-

ledge of "what was the correct thing to do," and often applied for advice on the subject to people far less qualified than himself to give it.

"Oh, I think Evy may well be your excuse for that," answered Judith, with a smile.

"Ah, you are very good to say so, but I see how the matter stands," answered the poor captain, turning very red and confused. "Well, I won't come to-morrow then, if you think it better not—though I shall be at the—hum—melancholy seminary—I mean ceremony, at the cemetery of course—and the next day, Evy, when it is all over" (and here he brightened up amazingly), "I suppose I may come and spend a good long day with you?"

"Of course you may, dear," said Evy, who, for her part, saw no reason why he should keep aloof on the morrow, and felt by no means pleased with Judith for having suggested it. "And then I hope poor uncle will be more like himself, and able to see you."

So they two parted, not in the drawing-room before a third person, we may be sure, but in Mr. Hulet's deserted study, which was convenient for that purpose. They were not to meet again, you see (except by a grave-side, which scarcely counts), for forty hours, and the consequence was, that the executioner of King Charles the First was the unmoved witness of a very tender scene.

The next day came and went, like most days that are looked forward to either with great pleasure or apprehension, in a less abnormal fashion than had been expected. Death is too dread a king to have his awe intensified by sombre ceremony and observance; and the day of poor Mrs. Hulet's burial passed off much as such days do. There was a feeling of oppression rather than of sadness, a resentful endurance of the pomp and show which custom has imposed, and finally, a sense of relief to which all would have blushed to have given utterance. Mr. Hulet, Evy, and Judith, were of course the chief mourners, but many a one came to the cemetery to show respect for the departed, or sympathy with those she had left behind her. The widower exhibited no passionate emotion, but the traces of the deepest grief were so visible in his features, that it did not require much charity to conclude that the fountain of his tears had been wept dry. Not one word did he speak, either coming to or returning from the ceremony, nor, it was

noticed, did he after its performance so much as acknowledge the presence of the few acquaintances who would have been glad to press his hand, but stood with Evy's arm held tightly within his own, and his eyes cast down upon the ground.

"If you would only let me sit with you, dear uncle," pleaded Evy, tenderly, when they had got home, and he was wearily ascending the stairs to his own chamber, "instead of shutting yourself up all alone, I will promise not to speak one word."

Mr. Hulet stopped, and peering over the banisters as though to make sure that no one was within hearing, answered, "If you wish it, come, dear; I have something to say to you that may as well be said to-day as to-morrow."

Evy accordingly got her work, and presently followed him to his own room, where she found him sitting by the open window with his eyes fixed on the sea, and rapt in thought as on the previous day. Since he neither moved nor spoke, Evy addressed him.

"You said you had something to say to me, dear uncle."

"Yes, love, yes, I am thinking over it," sighed he, "thinking how I shall break sad news to a tender heart."

"Nay, uncle, if you have any new trouble, tell me at once, and let me help you to bear it," answered she. "Whatever it is it cannot be so bad as what you have endured already."

"It is trouble of another kind, my darling, but of its kind the worst that can be. Evy"—here he turned his wan face full upon her—"I am ruined!"

"Ruined!" The shock was a terrible one to her; she could not answer, like a heroine of romance, "What does that matter, the loss of a little money, when we have each other's affection?" She was not a selfish girl, and her first thought was for her uncle, ill and failing, deprived of all the comforts which were necessities to him, and leading a miserable old age; but her next, and it flashed upon her within the same second, was this, "If he is ruined, I can be no wife for Jack," and at that idea her brave heart grew chill.

"It is impossible," gasped she.

"My darling, it is true."

"But how, dear uncle? Have you lost your money in speculations?"

"Yes, yes, that is it; speculations."

"This astounds me," observed Evy, slowly. She was not thinking of the speculations, but of the wreck of her

loving hopes that had been within such a little of being realised.

"Yes, Evy, you would not have thought me to be one to speculate; but, unhappily, I did so. I got the news by the afternoon's post yesterday; that was what prostrated me so." Here he hid his face and groaned. "If I had ruined myself only, I could bear it, child, but to think that what I had meant for you, and counted with such pleasure upon giving you, is all gone, too, and through my own weakness."

"Don't think of me, dear uncle; we shall get on together somehow, we two"—she nearly broke down at this, for she meant "we two alone"—"and as for weakness, everybody is weak at times. If you have lost all, it is but money, not self-respect—"

"Yes, that is gone too," interrupted the old man, in despairing tones. "All is gone; all, all!"

There was silence for a little, during which poor Evy strove to piece these fragments, which it seemed were all she was likely to extract from her uncle in the way of explanation, into some sort of consistent whole. That he had lost a great part of his fortune she could not doubt, but she still hoped that he had exaggerated the calamity as he had exaggerated his own blameworthiness in it; for though he might have been weak, she refused to believe that he had done anything to forfeit "self-respect." When a rich man calls himself ruined that does not, she reflected, generally imply that he is reduced to abject or even distressing poverty. If he could only be got to go into particulars, some plan might perhaps be thought of.

"Well, dearest uncle, we must look our difficulties in the face," observed she, cheerfully, "and perhaps some of them may not then appear so formidable."

"No, no," returned he, with a shudder. "Don't ask me to do that. I dare not think upon them; only be sure that what I have told you is the truth. You see before you—unless a heart of stone can be melted—a penniless—Hush, what is that without?"

"Nothing, dear," answered Evy, looking out. "It is only some one opening the drawing-room window."

Mr. Hulet placed his finger to his lips, which had suddenly grown quite white.

"All this which I have told you is a dead secret," whispered he, "remember that."

"Nay, but if you are so poor, people will soon find it out for themselves, dear

uncle; though surely Judith, who has been so enriched by my aunt's death, will not think of retaining that large sum you gave to her at my request when we first came hither."

"My dear Evy, you judge others by yourself," returned he, with a strange smile; "Judith is not one to give up anything, nor shall I ask her to do so. I dare say I shall get on well enough; my only anxiety, indeed, is on your account. If I could only see you married—"

There were footsteps on the gravel beneath, and some one coughed. Mr. Hulet motioned with impatience to Evy that she should shut the window; and then, as though overcome even by that exertion, fell back in his chair, and closed his eyes.

"Dearest uncle," said Evy, in quiet but steady tones, "if you have not looked our changed circumstances in the face I have. If we are so poor as you have stated, it is impossible that I should marry Captain Heyton. He has given up enough for me as it is, and—"

"Nay, but that proves his love, Evy," interrupted the old man, rousing himself with an effort, and speaking very eagerly.

"Yes; but it would not prove mine, uncle, if I suffered him to make further sacrifices. He would make them, for he does love me, but—" Here she burst into tears. "May Heaven have pity on this poor old man," was her involuntary thought, "though it has none on me—No, uncle," she went on more firmly, "Captain Heyton will be reconciled to Lord Dirleton, and find a bride more fitting, and I trust, more worthy, than myself. God bless him; God bless him."

"You shall not give him up, Evy; you shall not," exclaimed Mr. Hulet, in a shrill and quavering voice, "I don't care what happens—"

Here came a knock at the door, and Judith's voice was heard inquiring, "Is Evy here, Mr. Hulet?"

"Don't let her in," he whispered, in terrified accents; "don't let her in."

"Yes, I am here, Judith. What is it?" answered Evy, softly.

"It is so beautiful on the cliff walk that I came to ask you to come out for a few minutes."

"I cannot come just now," was Evy's cold rejoinder; "I am talking on important matters with my uncle."

There was no answer; and presently they heard Judith's footsteps retire from the door and go down-stairs.

"I am sure, uncle," said Evy, slowly, picking up the thread of talk that had been dropped during this interruption, "that if you were not blinded by your affection for me you would see this matter in the same light as myself. I ought not only to release Captain Heyton from his engagement—for his noble nature might make him decline to accept the quittance—but to refuse to fulfil it."

"Don't ask me," moaned the old man, covering his face with his hands. "Don't ask me, Evy. Did I not answer that awhile ago?"

"You did, uncle; but you have had time to think since then, and have come to a wiser conclusion. I will leave you now a little, though not for long; I think a breath of fresh air would do me good."

She needed fresh air, indeed, yet looked as though neither it nor any other remedy could have done good. With a white face and trembling limbs she rose, and moved towards her companion; she could not see how he looked, but she could guess. "Don't weep, don't weep, dear uncle," said she, stooping down and stroking his bowed grey head, "this is a hard trial for both of us, but others have borne the like before us. You have been my guardian, my benefactor; a loving father to me for these many years. The time has come for me to show myself mindful of it. We two will walk the world alone together, and you shall lean on me."

She had drawn herself up to her full height by this time, and her face had a strength and purpose in it which had never been seen in it before.

"What," said she to herself, as with a steady step she left the room, "shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" But the bitterness of the evil was yet to come, and in her heart she knew it.

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

X. MONASTIC CHARITY.

AMONG the London boarding-houses that still remain for my investigation is the cheapest of all: the Refuge for the Destitute, or House of Charity, where you may board and lodge for a limited period without paying anything at all. But, somehow, this class of dwelling, which should exist by hundreds in vast London, for a time eluded my grasp. Refuges for

boys or girls I found by the score, Houses for Fallen Women by the dozen; but none at first, save one, for wretched people of both sexes who had temporarily fallen down on the stony road of life. I enquired in Scotland Yard, where I was met with impenetrable civility, at police stations where wooden-headed constables rudely turned me out, surprised, probably, at anybody wanting to know anything, or, perchance, suffering from "Move on" upon the brain. But no information could I gather upon the subject, until, driven at last to my wits' end, I resolved to carry out the daring project of presenting myself disguised at the portals of an establishment to which I am a subscriber, armed with a letter of recommendation from a no less important personage than myself. To this end I borrowed an effective suit from an eminent comedian who is in the habit of assuming low-life characters upon the stage; filled in a form of application; primed my memory with a well-digested and plausible tale, and knocked at the door of the "Refuge for Distressed Persons in London" as the city time-pieces were chiming seven o'clock p.m. Admitted by a burly porter, whose figure suggested to my mind crunching of bones in the event of insubordination, I was requested to sit in the hall while the letter was presented to the Governor, and had time to remark the cleanliness of the wide stone stairs, the orderly aspect of things, the stillness only broken by closing of doors and skirts rustling to and fro, before a lady in black came slowly from above, and standing opposite to me, scrutinised me narrowly. A tall lady she was, thin and pale, with flashing dark eyes and shining bands of hair, half concealed under a close white cap and black veil. This was Sister Agatha, matron of the institution, which is of a high-church order.

"So you are the person," she said, softly. "You are in distress and wish to come in to-night? What is your profession? Photographer, you say? That's a class of business that flourishes just now. You'll be certain to get on if at all clever at it, provided you do not lose heart. Haven't got a change of linen? That's bad; but, perhaps the Governor will waive the rule in the present case."

And away she swept to reappear presently with the news that I might consider myself entered, and that, as I seemed respectable, I need not pass the ordeal of the

bath. The burly porter conducted me accordingly through a long corridor, and pointing down a passage, told me to "go in there and make myself comfortable." "In there" I found a large room painted yellow—lighted in the daytime by a skylight, at night by two jets of gas—a bare floor scrupulously scrubbed; two deal tables, covered with books; benches along the walls; a few sacred prints hung about; and twelve men lolling on the forms, or reading, or walking up and down with hands behind them, or playing games of draughts. One old gentleman, ensconced in a corner on a windsor chair, with a bandanna over his face, was snoring lustily; another, spectacles on nose, and mouth pursed up till it looked like a sea anemone, was carefully manipulating with needle and thread a rent in his pantaloons. The space above the mantleboard literally blossomed under an eruption of notices of all sizes. Orders for the porters. Orders for the sisters. Orders for the inmates. Rules and regulations without end. Breakfast rules. Dinner rules. Tea rules. Work rules. Play rules. The inmates were evidently tied up hand and foot, and made to pay for their accommodation with a dole of slavery, eating the bitter bread of grinding servitude, drinking diluted manacles and gyves. "All smoking, swearing, and other irregularity strictly prohibited." "There is a place for everything. Every inmate shall put back, exactly where he found it, any article of which he may make use." "No inmate shall stand before the fireplace, for the fire is made to rejoice the eyes of all." There was also a long code of hours, and duties, and bell-rings. The bell, indeed, was very hard worked, being always on the clang for the announcement of something or other. Every inmate to get out of bed at half-past five, to meditate seriously until church time, seven a.m. Breakfast at eight. After breakfast each inmate to do his share of house work, which being reported as complete by the porter, the inmates were then to be allowed, unless anything special were taking place, to go out in search of employment. Dinner at half-past one. Evening service at five, from which, woe be to the inmate who was absent. Tea at six. Supper at eight. Prayers at nine. All gas to be extinguished at ten. Such is the divided day of inmates of the "Refuge for Distressed Persons," a house which has for its object the providing of a healthy and respectable abiding place

for all—male or female, Catholic or Protestant—who are temporarily out of work, and possess a change of clothes; giving them time to look round and pull themselves together, in the event of sudden dismissal from hospital, or by a choleric master; also holding out help to destitute strangers thrown upon the town, as well as to wandering girls of unblemished reputation, and children whom their parents are unable to support. An admirable institution, equally excellent in intention and in carrying-out, if a trifle exacting in its goodness, stern and forbidding in its protection. And that stern edict, "No smoking, &c." To some old men a pipe is more than bread and cheese. Why then thus arbitrarily deprive them of so innocent a solace? The result of the system is that, though extremely grateful for timely assistance, the luckless inmates seem withering in an iron grasp, pressed down under the harsh blight of prison rule, wrapped up in a robe of lead like Dante's hypocrites, sad and unutterably depressed under the ever-crushing consciousness of guilt—for they are guilty of the one crime the world never forgives, but pursues to the death with unrelenting hate, the terrible crime of poverty.

Presently the busy bell clanged, a door was opened, and the burly porter marshalled us all into a large refectory, where at one table we sat, each before a mug of beer and a thick hunch of bread and cheese, presided over by the porter, who devoured cold meat and mustard before our greedy eyes, while through an opposite door a similar set of melancholy objects wandered in, females, headed by a sister, and occupied a companion table at the other end. "No inmates shall be allowed to talk during meal-times." The sister read a long grace and we all fell to, bolting the excellent but grim food, till it well nigh choked us, lapping up the funeral beer, and then placing our plates and mugs tidily on a side table. "The men have done supper" announced the burly porter to the chilly sister. Then came another long grace, and we were marshalled out again, more low in our minds than ever, bitterly conscious that, heavy as iron, somewhere in our insides, lay the bread that was the stony gift of charity, at all events; and it is well, possibly, that such was the case—the dead-alive impression thereby induced would stimulate us to greater exertion after employment on the morrow, that we might partake of

this ghostly nourishment as little as might be. Quite overcome by a sense of our position, we sat about on forms, gazing gloomily at one another, while awaiting the hour of prayers. The old gentleman roused from slumber under his bandanna for supper, now snarled at us all, and showed his toothless gums. He had been porter at a club, and was now looking out for another place. "Don't look so cross," somebody said to him. "You look like a wild beast."

"Beast, am I?" he echoed. "No, I'm tame enough, I am. This is the place to tame a man. I should like to bang my head against the wall. In very desperation, I should like to sing a ribald song."

"For shame! for shame!" cried another.

"Don't be ungrateful. Isn't everybody kindness itself here? Don't you know that those sisters are real ladies born and bred, much too good to wait upon such swine as you?"

"Yes, much too good," growled the other. "A deal too good for me, bless 'em. Their black clothes and silent ways haunt me in my sleep like ghosts. I wish someone would hit me on the head, or knock me down, or do something lively," and the grumpy old fellow subsided into his corner again, and slumbered peacefully.

"Clang, clang!" went the bell, again that inexorable door opened, and again the burly porter drove us in, two and two, this time to prayers. The opposite door swung wide, the scared women trooped in, also two and two, and Sister Agatha, handing us each a book, intoned the evening service. It was a strange weird sight, that dusky chamber, its ecclesiastical rafters fading into gloom, an immense clock on the neutral wall, ruthlessly tick-ticking out the minutes with a vicious snap, as if it took delight in trumpeting out the time, through which these hapless waifs and strays were enduring charity. And what sad rows on either side the long table, at the head of which tall gaunt Sister Agatha was droning the words of peace and love! Her love was there; she proved it by the voluntary dedication of her life; but what a very uncomfortable love it was! —hard, cold, uncompromising, crystallized with a frozen film of duty.

It was in truth a strange assemblage of buffeted fragments, drifted bleeding to this haven from the world without, that I looked upon as Sister Agatha's voice rang monotonously in my ears. Wrecks broken

away from the anchor of hope, many of whom had long since ceased trying to enjoy the world, being content now could they but manage to endure it. Strangely mingled with these were fresh young buds, with the sunlight all before them, temporarily nipped, before they had had time to bloom. Next to me, there was a cabin boy, a fine young fellow, whose natural glee even this cold atmosphere could scarcely deaden; next him, a page boy out of place, whose father and mother had been the workhouse. Next to him, again, was a tall fellow with red hair and beard, great shoulders, and wide expanse of chest. Surely, he should be ashamed of himself, at the zenith of his life, to have dropped here, an able-bodied man, if ever there was one —but no, when he moved his unsteady gait betrayed the fact that he had been paralysed, and that, despite his powerful build, he was of use in the world no more. Once a soldier, he had been suddenly struck down on a bed of sickness, from which he rose disabled, to seek a scanty livelihood as best he might.

But while I was yet curiously surveying my strange companions, Sister Agatha closed her book, bowed an icy bow, and swept away, leaving us to be driven off once more by the burly porter, this time through the sitting-room into a long dormitory, where rows of beds on either side were divided one from another by a wooden screen, open at one end. Halfway down its length, the room possessed a bow, which was decorated with a strip of carpet, a bed, a chest of drawers, and little table. Here the burly porter was to sleep, a stalwart shepherd in the middle of his battered flock. Two or three faded mouldy old men sat on the ends of their beds, meditating gloomily, conversing in undertones round the edges of their several partitions. Mildewed butlers, all of them, whose increasing years rendered it daily a task of greater difficulty to obtain a situation.

"That ever I should come to this," sighed one. "I who have lived in the best houses, have 'moved to cheese' daily in the most superior establishments. Why, time was, when I would have thrown up a place if there was no carpet in my bedroom, and here I am now in a common dormitory, sleeping side by side with the Lord knows who!"

"What, haven't you been successful,

sir?" enquired his neighbour, sympathetically. "Ah well, it is uncommon hard for us old boys to get along in this rampageous world. Ah well! masters are a thoughtless ungrateful lot. Servants had just as well get quietly into their graves, as get old. Nobody has any sympathy for 'em. I had laid by a little store of money for my declining years, and an exploding bank burst it up, and every time I calls on a gentleman, he says to me, he says, 'as sure as fate, 'You're not up to your work,' and yet I'm willing enough, Heaven knows!"

"Yes, there are too many people in the world, I think," says some one, half-muffled in bed-clothes; "the creation of man goes on so fast at this time that I don't know what will happen to the next generation. There's not a class or calling but what's quite overstocked just now. People with large families ought to be made to drown half, like kittens."

And with this benevolent remark, this gentleman turned on his side and soon snored lustily.

"Where's the new comer, eh?" called out the burly porter, rattling his keys to bespeak attention. "Oh! there you are. Here's your bed, number eleven. I am sorry there are not clean sheets on it; but Sister Agatha went to bed before I'd time to mention it. Never mind; it was a very clean young man as slept in it last night. Now, my fine fellows, are you all ready? Out with the gas, then." And, suiting the action to the word, he rattled away, leaving us in darkness.

But now a singular phenomenon took place. With the light the leaden envelope seemed also to have departed. The men conversed quite freely now in their natural voices, unsubdued by charity, using language, too, scarcely in accordance with the rule and regulation anent "smoking, swearing," &c. Nearly all were asleep before the porter came to rest, setting about his arrangements with methodical gravity, unaware that I was watching him from under my closed hands. And wonderful evolutions they were. Robed in a long nightshirt, he sat up in bed, like a Don Quixote, put on his spectacles, tied a voluminous red handkerchief about his brows, another round his neck, and, having placed a glass of water ready to his hand, and near it a half-mumbled biscuit, proceeded to swallow two pills, studying the Daily Telegraph afterwards, perhaps to help take away the taste. But even his arrange-

ments came to an end at last, and, having placed a lighted bull's-eye by his side, he, too, joined the nasal chorus. Totally unable to sleep, I lay for hour after hour listening to the varied styles of breathing, wondering at the strange lives—each with its chronicle of disappointments—gathered together in that long dormitory, until daylight gradually paled the lurid spot from the dark lantern, and a loud alarm caused me to sit up with a start. As no one took any notice, however, I waited quietly, until presently another louder one ran down, upon which the porter unswathed himself of silken decorations, and, rapping the wall, shouted out—

"Now then, get up, will you?"

We all obeyed, and I casually inquired of my neighbour the meaning of the double alarm.

"Oh!" he replied, "the first one was to prepare us to get up at once as soon as we should hear the second, as there isn't much time given, and woe be to him who shall be late for church."

"Church?" I asked. "Prayers you mean, I suppose, in the refectory?"

"Not a bit of it. There's a chapel across the yard, with full musical service at seven o'clock. Tumble up, or you'll be late."

Ten minutes later, according to rules and regulations, we were all shaking out our pillows and making our beds, temporarily furbishing our faces and sweeping the several apartments with brooms, the cabin-boy being told off on special duty to annihilate sundry spider's castles, built high up, by means of a turk's head broom.

Seven o'clock. Clang, clang! went the bell. We hastily rolled down our sleeves, hurried on our coats, and were driven forth across the yard in single file by the burly porter, who hurried our movements by shaking his keys. A bleak, cold open yard, sternly gravelled and paved; the risen sun veiled in heavy mist; a chilly dampness in the air. Surely, we were criminals being conducted with measured tread by turnkeys to a coming trial, shortly to stand disgraced in the cruel dock, to hear the just sentence on our crimes? No; we were only very poor and helpless, and were about to be ushered into God's house, to thank him humbly for the mercies showered on us by the agents of His will on earth.

A very pretty chapel it was, certainly, rich in tiles, and painted glass, and high-church ornamentation. The sisters were already in their places in the choir, the

suppliced choristers behind them; simultaneously with ourselves the female troop flocked in to a nook the other side of the altar. The great Governor himself entered the reading desk, and went through the service. In spite of the severity of their code, it was a beautiful sight to look upon, this band of men and women, many of gentle birth, voluntarily set apart for the relief of their unfortunate brethren—neat and tidy in all the arrangements for their behoof, gorgeous in the surroundings through which they would lead them to their Maker. And it was beautiful to hear the old cracked voices mingling with the young ones in a hymn of thankfulness, all sense of degradation, or feeling of resentment at what seemed like tyranny, wiped out in the overflowing of grateful hearts. The last note of the organ ceased, the rumble of its bellows died away as the old wail told off for its service left the instrument, and we turned from the tessellated floor, flecked with saints' forms in painted sunlight, back across the wan prison yard to our daily tale of work. Breakfast first though. Mugs of tea, and bread and butter *ad libitum*, amid silence not even broken by the sound, usual to our ears, of clinking spoon and saucer.

"Sister, the men's breakfast's done."

Off we go again, each to be handed a broom, or mop, or pail, or scrubbing-brush, for the extra beautifying of the apparently spotless floor or tables. My occupation was to be the cleansing of the door-mats, a task which I rapidly accomplished, banging them together like dusty cymbals in the very centre of the prison yard. Shake them as I would, however, those obstinate squares of oakum would persist in giving forth particles of filth, and so, as I saw no advantage to be gained by the transfer of more than a given quantity of these particles to myself, I, too, speedily desisted, returning to the common room, considerably out of breath, and much begrimed, to meet the burly porter flourishing a pair of boots, exclaiming as he did so—

"Which of you men will volunteer to clean the Governor's boots? He's in a hurry—going out. It's my business, I know, but I'm very busy, and you might oblige me."

All were too much occupied to attend to him, hissing over their labour like stable grooms, and so, the burly one, catching sight of me, cried out—

"Here, you've done your work; just oblige me with these boots, and I'll give you some of my meat at tea; the blacking and brushes are in the cupboard yonder."

I took the boots and the brushes and the blacking, and felt much ashamed, in that I really did not know how to set to work on a task which is done daily in the streets under my very nose. However, I did my best; I rubbed and scrubbed, and scratched with an old table-knife, and finally turned out something not perhaps quite so evenly shiny as it should have been, but very thick all over with black compound, and really quite brilliant about the toes and knobby parts. Possibly the Governor was displeased, but I take this opportunity of assuring him that nobody ever cleaned his boots with so much pain and grief and toil before, with such a very unsatisfactory result. The burly one came back for them, thanking me good-naturedly, and placing as he did so on the table the advertisement sheets of the Times and Daily Telegraph.

And what a rush there was for those scraps, usually tossed aside! How old men craned anxiously over the curly heads of the cabin-boy and page, running down with gnarled finger the long lists of "wante'd," wherein everybody appears to be seeking what they never seem to get.

"Doorkeeper to an office in the city! That will do for me with my lumbago. Not much running about," cried one, triumphantly, dotting down name and address in a greasy pocket-book, as he has done every weary day for a fortnight past in vain.

"Butler wanted. Steady and respectable. That's me," said another, "to help in the garden though, I'm not up to that."

And presently the two sinks in a recess are besieged. There is a tremendous splashing of water and flapping of towels, as each one prepares to look his best in hopes of at length finding a master. Sister Agatha has taken down all our names, with strict injunctions under no pretence to be late for dinner; the burly one throws open the great door; we pant and dart through it with freedom exultingly, as though the sunbeams flickering on the stones had not struggled on their way from Heaven through a murky crape of smoke, as if the balmy breezes that seem so tenderly to kiss our cheeks were not foul with decayed offal and corrupt with seething cabbage refuse from the neighbouring gutter. What matter? Freedom

is freedom still, whether enjoyed on the open moor or in the overheated city slum.

O worthy Governor and excellent sisters, unselfish workers in an admirable cause, will ye not think of this?

Nothing can exceed the noble intentions of all concerned—the absolute kernel indeed of kindness fast prisoned in its icy shell—from Sister Agatha down to the burly porter. All were practically as considerate as could be. But will ye not temper your goodness with a little less austerly, that those who accept your alms may tender their warm thanks unalloyed, that the recipients of your bounty may depart from your gates, brimming with gratitude not untempered by a chastening shadow of regret?

JAUQUES.

Revolind. They say you are a melancholy fellow.

Jauques. I am so; I do love it better than laughing.
As You Like It.

What time, fair Autumn, musing, walk'd abroad;
She of the dreamy eye and bounteous breast,
And lip fruit-stain'd, and calm brow loosely tress'd,
Her paths leaf-litter'd, and her gran'ries stored

With grain new garner'd from the widow'd fields;
What time thin mist made vague the passing days,
And sound grew sleepy, through the woodland ways

He moved, deep pondering as one who yields
His soul up to that twilight land of ghosts

And endless echoes, which men call the Past.

"Ay, ay!" he sigh'd, how little while do last

The glad green lives of all the leafy hosts

That feed the forest solitudes with sound,

And make a summer song throughout the land!

Ay, ay! how soon their corpses strew the ground,

Till bare and leaf-lorn all the wood doth stand

To front chill Winter and his winds!

Ay, ay!

So friendships fall from us and so loves die,

And leave us naked to adversity!

"A foolish world! a world of little lives

That dance and lisp a season in the sun,

Then wither from their places, one by one;

A world where never joy or hope survives

Its youth, but it is bitten by a frost;

Where much is miss'd and more is wholly lost;

Where love is dwarf'd, and faith, untimely starved,

And death alone is liberal! How halved

With bitterness are all its sweets! how stain'd

With sin and suffering all it has attain'd!"

Thus mused he in the forest, dim and drear,

Marking the falt'ring of the waning year,

Till western skies were fleck'd with cloudy bars,

And night, broad-bosom'd mother of lone stars,

Stole o'er the fields, bereft of all their sheaves.

Yet still he linger'd amid ling'ring leaves.

MY FREDERICA.

THE eyes of my Frederica were as blue as the sky, or as the sash that bound her slim waist; her complexion was of lily purity; her lips were as rosebuds bursting into flower; her hair was the yellow-gold of flax, intertwined with floss silk. I call her my Frederica by a sort of poetical

license and in right of my love for her. She was, in truth, at this time, the Frederica of the Herr Professor Vandergocht, the sub-rector of the university, for she was his daughter; and afterwards she became the Frederica of another. Still I ventured to call her mine—absurd as it may seem. I even call her mine now.

I was christened Hans, which showed, perhaps, that my family did not expect great things of me; for Hans has, somehow, come to signify a foolish sort of fellow all the world over. "Hans is slow, but he is sure," my father was wont to say of me. Slow? very likely. But sure? How, and of what?

I did not distinguish myself as a student. I drank much beer and smoked many pipes, and, as mementoes of my Burschen life, I still carry about with me a scar on my cranium, which will stand forth exposed unpleasantly when I have grown bald, and an ugly seam across my left cheek, the result of a badly-stitched sabre cut. I did not fight duels because I liked fighting, but because I could not well avoid it. Frederica had let fall, now her kerchief, now her bouquet. In my haste to gather up and restore these treasures I brushed abruptly against a fellow student. By mischance I even trod upon his toes. His feet were tender; his language was violent. Combat and bloodshed became unavoidable. He escaped without a hurt. I was less fortunate. It was owned, however, that I had comported myself becomingly.

I met my Frederica only now and then at the *soirées* and receptions of the Herr Professor, her father.

Did she know of my love? Yes; if she could read my glances, though, I admit I have known eyes more expressive than my own, which are, indeed, of faint colour and feeble power, needing help from concave glasses. Yes; if she could penetrate my thoughts or divine my dreams. Otherwise she would be less informed upon the subject.

For I could not precipitate my love into words. My Frederica did not invite speech or indulge therein herself. She was too beautiful to have need of language; she was a poem in herself. It was sufficient to look upon her. To address her, or to hope to hear her, would have been outrageous presumption. So I held. I have heard her silence imputed to her as a fault. But of what sinful folly will not some be guilty? There are men who would have the Venus of Medicis fitted

with the apparatus of a German doll, and made, upon pressure in the ribs, to speak, "Pa-pa," "Ma-ma."

When I came to England I promised, to myself, that I would never forget Frederica. I planned to return some day and make her mine; meanwhile, I would grow rich. At present I was very ill supplied with money. My father could spare me none—his own wants were more than he could comfortably meet. He bestowed upon me his blessing, however—all he had to give. I received it gratefully, if not without a wish that it had been a more marketable commodity.

I had resolved to become a famous painter, or rather, I should say, a wealthy one. I knew that England, if she gives artists nothing else, gives them money, at any rate. Perhaps that is all they really require of her.

I found myself in London, the tenant of a garret, which served me for studio, sitting-room, bedchamber—all. I had made the acquaintance of a little group of fellow artists assembling at a cheap *café*—half Swiss, half German—in the Soho district. They were English, with a Frenchman among them, whose name was Alphonse, I think, or Adolphe; I am not sure which. But, when a Frenchman is not Alphonse, he is usually Adolphe.

They made me welcome, and were of service to me. One of them kindly introduced me to his pawnbroker, from whom I derived much useful assistance; though, the more I sought his aid, the more my wardrobe diminished. But that could not be helped. I had to live.

We talked, and played dominoes, and smoked—the Englishmen, cigars; the Frenchmen, cigarettes; I, my pipe with the china bowl, plated lid, and worsted tassels. They were kind to me, although they found me laughable, with my long hair, my spectacles, and my bad English. I did not mind. Indeed I did not understand them. Jokes as a rule are always thrown away upon me. As I have said, I am slow.

Of my art I soon discovered they did not think highly. I had brought with me from Germany a large unfinished picture. It was illustrative of a scene in the Minna Von Barnhelm of Lessing. I was informed to my chagrin that Lessing was almost unknown in England, and that my labour accordingly had been wasted.

I had been proud and hopeful of my picture, though I can admit now that it

was a crude and clumsy performance. My friends criticised it very freely—they grew derisive over it. I thought this hard, because the work had really cost me much. I have not a ready hand. I could never design with adroitness. For one stroke that is correct I execute six that are all wrong; so my canvas comes to have a muddled blundering look. I am myself shocked at its ugliness. Yet I usually—with obstinate toil and severe persistency—get things right at last.

My friends had quick eyes and dexterous hands—they sketched with surprising facility and vivid effect. Alphonse, as I will call him, was in this way especially gifted. He could design as deftly as he could twist up a cigarette, or twist the end of his moustache into pin-points. A few movements of his pencil and the thing was done. Much more than this I think he could not accomplish. He was true to his origin; he was of a nation of sketchers—great at beginnings, leaving completeness and achievement to others—the Germans let us say.

He grinned wickedly, scoffingly at my picture.

"My poor Hans," said an Englishman, kindly—he has grown famous since, I am glad to say, for he was a true artist, "this will not do. Turn Minna Von Barnhelm to the wall. That's my advice. Paint something smaller, simpler, or you will stand no chance with the dealers."

When we were alone, he proffered me help from his purse—though it was but poorly furnished, and he was, I knew, in debt. I would not borrow of him; but I thanked him till my voice failed me, and I could not see for my tears.

I had by this time quite a pack of pawn tickets. I was subsisting, like a moth, on my clothes. A coat lasted me a week, a waistcoat three days, and so on. But soon I should have nothing more to pledge, and then — ?

I was very miserable. I could see suspicion and mistrust on the face of my landlady, printed in deeper and plainer lines every day. She was afraid of losing her rent. She told me I must give up my garret, and find another home. Where? In the street—or the Thames?

I tried to live on as little as possible. I went out every day for an hour or so, that my landlady might think I was dining. I walked hither and thither, in retired streets, furtively devouring a penny loaf of bread—it was all I could afford. Then

I returned, affecting a light step, singing or whistling, with the air of one refreshed and in good spirits. But I was an indifferent actor. Was she duped, that landlady, I wonder? Perhaps. My stomach was not, I know. There was no deceiving that.

What comfort was left me? Only my pipe and my love for the Frederica. And presently my pipe had to go—round the corner. My love, not being negotiable, alone remained.

I tried to paint—something, anything, a sketch, a study, that would bring money to buy food with. My English friend set up an easel for me in his studio. He had models coming to him; surely I could do something with them? Here was a Mulatto, of superb contour, muscular, sinewy, nobly proportioned, a Hercules in bronze. Here a lovely English girl, a bouquet of bright colours, roses and lilies, violets and gold. Here a Spanish gipsy, with blue-black hair, flashing eyes, ivory teeth, and cheeks like russet apples, flushed with sunset.

It was in vain. My heavy heart weighed down my hand. It was duller, more awkward, and inert than ever. I could do nothing.

I retreated to my garret. I flung myself upon my trundle bed; not to sleep, but to torture myself with fears, memories, dreams, my head burning, my brain disordered.

Dusk came, and then night. The moon-rays flooded the room, to fade gradually into the yellow twilight of morning. Another day was dawning to find me more wretched and forlorn and destitute than ever. I could not rise. I lay upon my bed, dressed as I was, thinking—thinking—in a confused, fevered way; not of the future; I did not dare do that; but of the past and the miserable, most miserable present. And, now and then, the name of Frederica broke from my lips.

Suddenly there came the sound of some one moving in my studio. I started—I roused myself. It was bright morning. A figure stood upon the little throne fronting my easel.

Frederica!

She was clothed in fluent draperies of white; her flaxen hair streamed, a very mantle, over her shoulders; her blue eyes were turned heavenward; her slender alabaster hands were crossed upon her bosom. She was a saint—an angel! The Frederica of my dreams, my hopes, my love, was posing before me!

I flew to my palette and brushes and set to work. I sketched with a facility and rapidity I had never before and have never since accomplished. I toiled on like one inspired. I trembled with eagerness. I could hear my heart beat; fire seemed to be coursing through my veins. A picture was growing under my hands—a picture to be proud of. I dreaded each moment that the vision would vanish. But she remained—motionless as ever—with the same rapt air, divinely beautiful. She spoke no word; nor did I address her. I dreaded that speech might dissolve the spell. My blessed Frederica!

I had been thus engaged some hours; my task was nearly completed. For a moment I paused to breathe freely, and to close and rest my burning eyes. I was faint and sick with fatigue and excitement. Yes, and with hunger; I had not tasted food for twenty-four hours and more.

When I turned again to look at Frederica she had departed! All was over. It was a dream, perhaps; but I had produced a picture. My strength failed me, and I sank helplessly upon the floor of my studio.

Presently consciousness returned to me. I found my English friend and Alphonse beside me. They were inspecting my portrait of Frederica; for it was a portrait, although of that fact they had no suspicion.

"Come, cheer up, Hans," said the Englishman. "This will do. This is by no means bad, don't you know?"

"C'est magnifique," said Alphonse. "Voilà un artiste qui peint de *chic*!"

He was pale with envy, it seemed to me. The picture was far beyond anything he could execute. Of that I felt assured. And he was jealous. I disliked him; that's the plain truth. And he did not like me. It may be that we did not understand each other.

I lost sight of him soon afterwards. Many years elapsed before I heard what had become of him. He was shot in the late war, it appeared. He had taken arms for his native land, and perished in an affair of outposts near Thionville—not a regular battle, but a mere sketch of one. So far, he had been faithful to himself to the last. He never had to do with anything beyond sketches. He could complete nothing—not even his life. That was but a fragment—an outline never filled in. But I digress.

The Englishman sent out for beer and bread and meat. He said cheering words,

patting me on the back; he sat with me while I ate ravenously, like a wolf. I ceased to tremble; I grew warm and comfortable. Then he took away my painting. He returned later in the day, bringing me money for it. He had sold it advantageously to a dealer of his acquaintance. I was happy and hopeful once more. And, forthwith, I took my pipe out of pawn.

My luck had turned. Thenceforward I prospered—not too suddenly, or in an extraordinary measure, but after a gradual and modest fashion. I was content if I could but earn a subsistence; and this came to be more and more a matter of certainty with me. I was enabled to sell my pictures, upon terms that were moderate, but still sufficient. Only I could produce but few pictures; not that I lacked industry, for indeed I laboured incessantly; but my constitutional slowness could not be wholly overcome. In time there arose a certain steady demand for my works. I was not famous, but I was succeeding. I had even sold at last my illustration of the scene in Lessing's *Minna Von Barnhelm*; and for a considerable price.

All this had occupied some time, however. Years, indeed, had passed; for it is only very rarely that a name can be made in a day; and, then, it is never such a name as Hans. I had worked on steadily without quitting London; but I had removed from my garret-studio to more convenient and seemly premises. I was growing grey, and a look of age had come into my face. My figure was less erect than it had been, and was tending to ungracefulness of contour. All my waist-coats had been enlarged. I was, indeed, portly, from drinking much English beer, or from age and success, combined with constitutional inclinations.

I had not forgotten my Frederica. Certainly not. But no such vision of her as I have described had again visited me. It was in my dire need that she had come to me; but my time of need was over. Still, she was often in my thoughts. Often I resolved to return to Germany, seek her out, and entreat her to be mine. I will go, I said, when I have saved so much money; when I have completed this picture or that. Still I did not move. My natural slowness hindered me; and I postponed my departure from time to time. Yet I had fairly attained the end of my coming to England. I was generally recognised to be a successful painter in my peculiar and, perhaps, narrow path of art.

I was rich enough now both to love and to marry. Formerly I could only afford to love—an inexpensive pursuit as I had conducted it.

At length I was constrained to go; for news reached me from Germany of the serious illness of my father. The poor old man was dying, I was told. Alas! I arrived at his bedside only in time to close his eyes. Then I commenced my quest of the *Fraulein Frederica*.

It was with difficulty I could obtain any tidings of her. There was a new sub-rector at the university. The Herr Professor Vandergucht was no more. He was almost forgotten.

Presently came news; but what news! I was doomed to hear that my Frederica had become the wife of Herr Schnellen, of the firm of Eisendecken and Schnellen, merchants of Hamburg, trading largely in train oil, hides, and colonial produce.

I sought out Herr Schnellen, for I was determined that I would not quit Germany until I had seen once more my first and only love.

Herr Schnellen was an elderly gentleman, portly and bald, with very stiff collars; but his manners were gracious. I introduced myself to him, informing him that I had once enjoyed the acquaintance of his wife when she was the *Fraulein Frederica*, only daughter of the Herr Professor of my university.

"A long time ago, mein Herr," he said, with a laugh. "She was beautiful then."

"Wonderfully beautiful."

"One forgot her infirmity; at least, I did." And he sighed.

What infirmity? I did not dare to ask. Had Frederica a temper? Well, it was to be excused; she was the wife of Herr Schnellen.

He invited me to his house. He led me into a spacious apartment handsomely furnished.

My Frederica! It was difficult to recognize her in the rotund lady, rubicund, white-haired, short-of-neck, and redundantly supplied with chins, who sat huddled in an easy chair by the stove, with a crowd of chubby children of both sexes and various ages gathered about her. She was regaling them with "thick milk"—a mess of sour cream, sugared, and mixed with bread crumbs. Yes; it must be she, and no other. I suppressed my amazement as best I could, and advanced towards her, bowing with my utmost politeness, when there suddenly occurred an alarming noise in the street without, a

detonation—a violent explosion that shook the house to its very foundation.

“Ah! I had forgotten,” said Herr Schnellen. “We must open the windows, or we shall have every pane of glass broken. You have not heard the news?”

“What news?”

“Paris has fallen. They are firing the salute in celebration of the great event.”

Another roar from the guns.

“Come in,” said Frederica, quietly, as though in answer to some one lightly tapping at the door.

“She hears!” cried Herr Schnellen, with a gratified air. “You perceive that Frederica is not so deaf as people have said.”

“Deaf?”

“You have forgotten, mein Herr. Frederica was held to be almost stone deaf in her youth.”

No wonder that in addition to her other charms she had possessed that of silence—that her repose of manner had been so supreme—that she had shrunk from being troubled with speeches, of which she could not hear one word!

“It makes her very quiet,” said Herr Schnellen. “But that is not, in a wife, such a drawback as you may think.”

There was a slate before her, which was employed, it appeared, as a means of conversation. She was informed, by its means, concerning me. But it was clear that she did not entertain the slightest recollection of me. There were so many students under the Herr Professor her father, she explained. And so many of them were named Hans. And they were all young; whereas I—but this she did not add—was middle-aged, to say the least of it.

Little more than this passed at our interview.

I took my leave, depressed and disturbed as to the present, but not as to the past; that could not be. I did not love the wife of Herr Schnellen. I am a moral character. But still I loved the Frederica who, though lost, was yet contained in the stout form of that matronly lady Frau Schnellen, like a sovereign secreted in a loaf of bread, or like the needle in the bottle of hay of your English proverb. It was true that my Frederica could not now be parted from the envelope which so substantialised and magnified her. That was a misfortune I had to endure as best I could. Altogether, I bore it pretty well.

Mine was still the ethereal Frederica. Herr Schnellen’s the more material—I may

even say the very material—Frederica, from whom all ethereal properties had completely evaporated. Mine had been the spell; the disenchantment, possibly, Herr Schnellen’s.

She never knew of my love. I am not sure that she was ever thoroughly aware of my existence. But what did it matter? The genuineness of my passion was not thereby affected. The votary’s offerings may not be received; his adoration may be unrequited. Still, his sincerity remains unquestionable—it may even be the more sublime.

My love was a dream, almost a folly; but not entirely so, for, remember, it sustained me in an hour of sore trouble, it was attended with solid advantages. To it I owed such success as I have obtained; and moreover it coloured and influenced my life, weaving into its texture a thread of gold. It was romance—it was poetry, to my thinking; and have not these value, however seemingly fond and futile, vague of purpose, and vain of result?

I should have sought her sooner? It may be so. Perhaps things happened for the best. I still call her my Frederica, thinking of her ever as she was in my Burschen days—as she appeared in that vision in my studio, when she like an angel released me from despair and destitution, and led me back to life and well-being.

I returned to London to my art and to my pipe. Art, at any rate, is always faithful; and, perhaps, to one of my years, a pipe is the best of wives. It is silent as Frederica; but what comfort it exhales! how it bears with one! how it even encourages one’s dreamings, and hopes, and flights of fancy! How companionable! how enduring! how consoling! And it never disagrees with one; unless, of course, it is very much abused.

WEST RIDING SKETCHES.

A RUN THROUGH CRAVEN.

BETWEEN Woolborough,* with its hundreds of factories, and the quiet Craven villages and dales through which I must now ask the reader to accompany me, there is almost as great a contrast as between the stillness of the backwoods of America and the hurry and excitement of New York—as great a contrast as we are accustomed to imagine between

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Vol. XI, p. 54

medæval England and Victorian England; and yet both Woolborough and Craven are in the West Riding of Yorkshire. It is doubtful whether any district in this country has undergone so little change during the last two or three centuries; has felt in so small a degree the influences of that progress which we are so wont to boast about; as the higher dales of Craven. Indeed, spending a day or two in these limestone regions is like shutting oneself out from "the world" altogether, or being spirited back into the feudal period. If you want to forget that there is such a thing as a steam engine; if you want to elude any everyday presence that may have grown hateful to you; if you want to know what solitude really is, and to feel that there is still peace to be had, slip quietly away to Kettlewell, or Conistone, or Arnecliffe, without leaving your address behind you. Then, if you like, you will find rest and repose. You will find yourself face to face with the quaint humdrum life of two hundred years ago; in a country where the maypole and the stocks still administer to the pleasures and pains of the people; where the village pump and the village "pound" are existing institutions almost as much as they were in the days of Tom Jones and Squire Allworthy; where the genuine English squire still holds a sort of baronial sway and has the squire-al title always given to him; and where the parson has the full and comfortable spiritual control of the villagers in a far more complete sense than the dweller in a large town would ever suppose. Few persons who hurry on through the borderland of this place of retirement—through Keighley, Skipton, and Settle—to seek the better known pleasure haunts of Cumberland and Westmoreland, have any idea of the beautiful scenery and rural delights that are to be met with only a very few miles away. They see the towering heights of Whernside, Pennyghent, and Ingleborough, and say something complimentary as to the appearance and altitude of those Yorkshire mountains; but they seldom halt in their journey northward to explore the tract of country of which those hills are, as it were, the guardians.

The poet, the artist, the angler, the naturalist, and the geologist have, however, long been familiar with the district, and the pleasure seekers who follow in their wake are a yearly increasing race, though, as yet, they have not been suff-

ciently numerous to cause the innkeepers to charge holiday prices for lodging and entertainment. Wordsworth, in his *White Doe of Rylstone*, and *The Boy of Egremond*, has sung of the beauties of Craven, and embalmed some of its romantic history in the enduring music of his verse. Turner painted some of his grandest pictures from studies in the valley of the Wharfe; Landseer, too, loved to linger in the romantic loneliness of Craven; and Creswick's many scenes in the "north countree" are chiefly reminiscences of days spent by him amidst the streams, the winding roads, and rustic villages of this out-of-the-way corner of England. In the Aire, the Ribble, the Nidd, and especially the Wharfe and its tributary streams, the angler is generally assured of abundant sport; amongst the Craven caves, hollows, woods, and mountain sides, the naturalist can always meet with specimens that will fill him with delight; the geologist can there roam through pre-historic seas and gulfs, and chip limestone scar and millstone grit to his heart's content; and, for the antiquary, there are ruined castles, ancient halls, and haunted glens—in fact, there is not much change in the aspect of the district since the days when Dr. Whitaker wrote so quaintly and learnedly concerning it.

The favourite way of entering Craven is, perhaps, by Ilkley, a romantic village lying adjacent to Otley, on the hill-side between the Wharfe and Rombalds-moor. Herethere are some extensive hydropathic establishments—notably the one called Ben Rhyding—and in the summer and autumn months a large number of visitors make Ilkley their rallying point for excursions to Bolton woods, Malham cove, the Clapham and Settle caves, and the Yorkshire moors and mountains. Farnley Hall, near Otley, too, has almost come to be regarded as an English shrine, for the sake of the grand Turner gallery that is to be found there, and because of the fact that it was at this old hall that the great artist often sojourned during his visits to the valley of the Wharfe. It is not by this picturesque route, however, that I propose to penetrate into the interior of Craven at present; I prefer, rather, to leave the beaten track, and, instead of lingering amongst the more frequented and more accessible haunts, to dive into the remoter dales and wander at will—

"Amid the rocks and winding scars."

We will, therefore, enter this Craven

solitude from the Airedale side, turning away from the railway at Skipton. Here we are fortunate enough to catch the conveyance which by a stretch of politeness is dignified with the name of a coach, although known to the inhabitants mostly as the "posst," by reason of its conveying Her Majesty's mails. Our driver is entrusted with numerous commissions before we start. A servant lass wants a parcel left at a farm-house for a certain Jacky, who, we may presume, is her lover. A stalwart Saxon-faced yeoman sends a brace of birds to his mother, who lives at Kilnsey. Then there is a ham to be left at "Owd Billy's," a bonnet-box to be left at some Hall, and hampers and baskets innumerable to be dropped at wayside inns. We proceed through the town at an extremely slow pace, calling at one or two hostleries to take up stray passengers, most of which stray passengers walk from the inns to the coach, smoking long clay pipes. On we go, past the ancient Norman castle of the Cliffords, to which race Fair Rosamond belonged; past the old church where repose the remains of the first and third Earls of Cumberland; and out upon the high road, which grows more and more lonely at every turn.

Although our driver does not appear inspired with much reverence for ancient associations, or much admiration for natural scenery, he is, withal, an observant man, with a well-stored memory and a practical mind. The biography of every person in the Craven dales seems at his fingers' end. He knows where every resident originally "cam' frae," and has something to say as to the position and prospects in life of the occupants of each of the different halls, farm-houses, and cottages that we pass. But human habitations grow few and far between as we proceed. Half-a-dozen houses form a village up in these dales, and it does not take much more than twice that number to make a town. And as for population, there seems to be none. So few were the persons that we met on the road, that the driver had time to tell the complete history of each one before we came up with another. The advent of a new resident in these regions causes a tremor of astonishment to run through the entire district; the new-comer is a summer's wonder. Unfortunately, the departures of residents are more numerous than the arrivals, the higher towns and villages being thinner in population now than they were a century

ago. We came across empty houses in most of the villages, and rents are merely nominal, ninepence a week for a roomy cottage being considered rather high. One landlord, whose acquaintance we made, owned a block of three substantially built stone houses (all empty), situated in a lovely spot, near the foot of one of the great hills, and on the banks of a romantic stream, and these three dwellings he offered to throw into one—to make a mansion of them, in fact—in consideration of a yearly rent of five pounds! As a further instance of the sparsity of population hereabouts, it may be mentioned that a short time ago, a tradesman with more spirit than foresight bethought himself to build a small cotton mill in one of the Craven towns; but when he opened it he found it impossible to get "hands" to work it. He might almost as well have tried to introduce the manufacture into the desert of Sahara, for in the end he had to pull the mill down, and leave the people to their ancient ways. Indeed, it is only a very few years since, that the district reached the stage coach period of civilisation, and the same interest appears to attach to the passage of the coach through these places now, as forty years ago, in more populous localities, was caused by the appearance of a railway-train. As we passed through each village, a crowd of about six persons would assemble to watch our arrival at and departure from the village inn, the coming and going of the "posst" being clearly the chief event of the day.

The scenery increases in beauty as we get further away from railway land; the fells and scars grow more numerous, the dales and gills spread out before us with greater clearness, and the outlines of the mountain tops become more distinctly defined. Soon after leaving Skipton we come upon a house known as the Nongoby, and are told that it derives its name from a custom which existed down to a period within living memory, that every newly-married couple passing that way had either to leave a shoe there or fourteen pence, which sum would hardly be deemed a fair equivalent perhaps at the present day. An ancient hall called Scale House, not long since restored, next comes under our notice; and then—

High on a point of rugged ground,
Among the wastes of Eyclstone fell,
we discern the ruins of Norton Tower,
whence Richard Norton "and his eight

good sons" went forth to join "The Rising of the North" in 1569, and the spot round which Wordsworth has thrown the halo of poetic romance in his *White Doe of Rylstone*. The village of Rylstone, or Rilston, as it is now called, is a picturesque little place, a very Auburn, eminently fitted for the scene of a pretty poetic legend. Cracoe comes next, then Linton (where there is a hospital, and where the high road passes through a stream which is at times impassable), and then Grassington, contracted by the natives into Gerston. Grassington is, as towns go in these northern fastnesses, a place of some size and importance. It has a population of about a thousand, and owns a Mechanics' Hall and four inns. There is also a fine old mansion here, which dates from a far back age, and it is on record that Edmund Kean, ere fame had got hold of him, once had the honour of acting in a barn at Grassington. From Grassington we push on to Kilnsey, but the sun has sunk to rest before we leave the comfortable fire-side of the inn at the former place, so that our passage through Grass Wood, which many people account superior in beauty to the historic woods of Bolton, is performed in the dark. But it is a clear night, the sky is one mass of stars, and the dusky firs and pines of the wood stand out in mysterious relief on each side of us. The scene, grandly beautiful as it is by day, looks wild and weird in the darkness, and the stories that are told of a horrible murder committed there during the last century, and of the murderer being hung on a gibbet from one of these same tree branches that we are looking at, do not conduce to rid us of the fears and forebodings that the wood seems to inspire. The wood has also been the scene of one or two romantic suicides, of which the dalesmen tell over their fires of a winter's night with as much interest as if they were speaking of events of yesterday. Indeed, if we give ear to tradition, which is almost as many-tongued as rumour, we cannot help picturing Craven as a district as specially given up to ghosts, goblins, witches, and other superstitious horrors as a Christmas number. It was in these dales that Eugene Aram—the real Aram, not Lord Lytton's—was born and passed his youth, and where he doubtless acquired that air of misanthropy and mystery which clung to him throughout his career.

Kilnsey is our next halting ground, and here we take our ease for a brief space at the

only inn in the village, the rendezvous of one of the chief angling clubs in the North of England. The bar parlour contains a couple of walking tourists, deep in the study of their guide books, and a gentleman waiting for a post horse to carry him a stage further; the tap room is tenanted with the unusually large company of seven persons—shepherds, miners, and farm-labourers—who are nearly all drinking gin, which is as common an article of consumption in these dales as in the London palaces devoted particularly to its sale. They have at command in Craven some of the finest ale in the country, but, presumably because it is produced amongst them, they leave it for strangers to appreciate, and will have nothing to do with it themselves. At this inn we hear the Craven dialect in all its purity, but as a certain anonymous writer has said in that dialect, "What a feaful girt gauvison man he be at frames to larn th' talk of another country afore he parfitly knaws his awn," I will not attempt to transfer this peculiar language to print. The Craven inns are exceedingly clean and homely, partaking partly of the character of farm houses. The business of public-house keeping in itself would be insufficient in these regions to yield a livelihood, so the landlord always unites the two occupations of innkeeper and farmer. Such large fires are kept in the inns that we are led to inquire if there has been some recent discovery of immense coal seams in the neighbourhood. "It's half Threshfield and half Skipton," says the landlady, pointing to the fire; and then ensues a long explanation as to the relative value of each. Skipton coal is coal that is fetched from the railway, and may have come from any of the great coal districts; Threshfield coal is obtained from a place of that name near Grassington, but its quality is not equal to the other, as the following anecdote will suffice to show.

"I remember," said one of the farmers, speaking in the dialect which I have already said I would not attempt to reproduce, "I remember once being at my sister Mary's, at Skipton, and she said to me, 'Well, our Sam and me, we've been wed seventeen years come next Nidderdale Bant, but never while now have we had anything in the house that we could keep.' 'Whatever can it be?' I said, for I knew only too well that they were none of a saving turn. 'Well,' she went on, 'there's two things that we can keep, and those

are, Threshfield coals and Irish bacon; the one we can't burn, and the other we can't eat.'"

My friend Grantios and myself walk on a few minutes in advance of the "posst," telling the driver we will await him at the Scar. Such villagers as are abroad carry lanterns in their hands; we, however, have to be content with the starlight. We soon arrive at the well-known Kilnsey Scar, a great frowning limestone crag, a hundred and seventy feet in height, and with an overhanging projection of forty feet. According to Professor Phillips, this crag, in the pre-historic period, was a promontory against which a pre-historic sea lashed and foamed. At present it is the principal feature in a landscape of unusual beauty, and, though there is no sea to wash against it, as of old, there is the pleasant river running almost at its foot. The Scar is so close to the high road that it almost seems, in the darkness, to hang over us as we stand looking up at its grim face! But that same distance which lends enchantment, also perpetuates deception, for although it seems the easiest thing in the world to throw a stone to the top of the Scar, it is not one in a hundred persons who can throw one to its base. Of course we tried, and equally, of course, we failed. The foot of the crag is strewn with thousands of stony evidences of similar failures. Before the "posst" overtakes us, there is another peculiarity about the Scar that we do not neglect to bring out, and that is its wonderful echo. I should not like to assert that it will match with Paddy Blake's famous echo, which, when asked, "How d'ye do?" replied, "Very well, thank you;" but the Kilnsey echo will fling you back a song, a threat, a jest, or a laugh, so readily and loudly, as to set your thoughts running towards the world of spirits, or, at all events, towards the world of mythology. My companion called the goddess forth with an operatic stave or two, while I, and a number of minor echoes, kept up a running chorus. I hardly know how people do to "make the welkin ring," but I half imagine that we accomplished that feat beneath Kilnsey Crag that night.

Presently our coach overtook us and we were taken on to Kettlewell, a quaint old town which nestles at the foot of Great Whernside. Here, at a comfortable inn, yclept "The Race Horses," we stayed for the night and next morning went through "the Slit," and over "The Top" to Arnecliffe,

where we halted for another day, enjoying a seclusion which perhaps would be unattainable elsewhere in England. What a pleasure it was to feel that we were sixteen miles beyond the reach of a railway! Here we were in the midst of wild, picturesque mountain scenery, amongst a hardy, cheerful people, who live in contentment in regions remote from steam engines and machinery, from newspapers and popular amusements.

The night that we stayed at Kettlewell was perhaps the most memorable of the year. A grand christening party was being held at one of the principal farm houses in the neighbourhood, and nearly all the town had been invited. A Penny Reading had also been announced, unfortunately, for the same night at the Mechanics' Institute. It was impossible that Kettlewell should find a sufficient number of people to make both entertainments a success the same night, although an audience of fifty would have sufficed to crowd the Mechanics' Institute, so it was at last decided to postpone the reading until another week.

So much for the amusements of the dalespeople. Their work is as unvaried. All the land in the higher dales is grazing land and a large portion of the population is employed in shepherding. The fields are altogether unploughable, the white limestone rock cropping out above the surface in every direction. Every hillside has its immense sheep pasture, and standing on some of the hills and looking down upon the long stretch of undulating scenery that lies below, the same craggy, wild aspect presents itself far and wide. There is hardly a tree to be seen for miles in some of the dales; the tall limestone walls, built in the rudest fashion, run zig-zagging up and down the hill sides, but there is nothing else to break the continuity of the landscape. One or two gentlemen proprietors have taken to planting trees—especially has this been done by Sir John Ramsden, at Buckden—and the effect has been in such cases to convert bare tracts of land into sylvan paradises.

The working population are farm labourers, shepherds, or lead miners, but of late years the lead mines have been less productive than formerly, and consequently many miners have migrated to other parts of the country. I must not omit to mention, however, that there is still another portion of the working community that deserves mention, and this portion is made

up of sheep dogs, who evince an amount of intelligence which almost puts them on a level with their masters.

Our advance upon Arnecliffe was made during a stiff gale which at times threatened to blow us back upon Kettlewell. Once we had begun our ascent of the hill which divides Arnecliffe from Kettlewell there was no shelter to be had from the elements, whatever their humour might be. There are many stories told of people being lost in crossing from one dale to the other. A summer or two ago, a party of gipsies, making for Pateley Bridge, attempted to cross in the night time. It was about eleven o'clock when the gipsies passed through Kettlewell, and not a person in the town was out of bed. The party, consisting of men, women, and children, passed through the quiet village and up the hill-side, but in the dark they were unable to find "the Slit," a sort of mountain pass through which the road goes. Groping about helplessly on the mountain side, running the risk of being precipitated from some rocky cliff every moment, they were seized with terror and began to call loudly for help. "Lost! Lost!" was the cry that rang through the sleeping village, and over the wide dale. Soon all the inhabitants of Kettlewell were astir, and the male population, with lanterns in their hands, turned out and rescued the affrighted gipsies from danger.

After sojourning for a while in the picturesque solitude of Arnecliffe, with its quaint church, its village green, its village pump, and its bonny river, we turned away towards the Malham Moors, and made our exit from Craven by way of Bolton Woods, Addingham and Ilkley.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LV. AN INVITATION.

I MISSED Tony greatly. He would have taken so much interest in my new labours — would have so cheered me with his sympathy. Perhaps I missed, too, the applause he was wont to lavish upon me. It was too flattering, it was undeserved, no doubt; still it gladdened and encouraged me. I had not the heart to find fault with it. It would have been like finding fault with him.

Mole was what is called "good company." But I could not esteem him quite as I did Tony. I felt much the lack of a

comrade of my own age and standing, whose views of life and the world were in accord with mine, even in their foolish hopefulness and young temerity. Romance and sentiment had still charms for me. I could scarcely speak upon such matters to Mole. Time and experience had made him too practical and prosaic. He had outlived ambition, probably. He was not troubled by anxieties as to the future; it held out to him no particular promise, and he did not care to contemplate it. There was something of the stroller still, perhaps, in his method of thought and existence, only that he no longer looked forward to possible triumphs to be achieved by-and-by. The cares of the day were sufficient for him. He had secured an engagement; that was enough. When it terminated it would be time enough to seek another. He was content meanwhile. He asked but for enough to eat and to drink—the latter especially. He was never despondent, except, perhaps, as to the condition of the modern stage, and that failure of his voice which had closed his career as an actor. But he knew how to impart a certain humorous flavour even to these subjects. I always found him entertaining and enlivening, kindly and considerate. He took great pains to instruct and improve me in the art of painting. Every day I worked with him in the upper studio, the "manufactory," as he called it. His skill was unquestionable. I often marvelled that he had not turned it to more profitable account. Surely he might, had he so chosen, have been something better than Sir George's journeyman. Had he been hindered by some inherent defect in his moral constitution, "some vicious mole of nature?" (I did not mean to pun upon his name.) It could not have been merely lack of opportunity. Or had he erred at starting by mischoice of his profession? But I was on dangerous ground. If I was now a painter, or trying to become one, had I not previously essayed farming and law?

It was a curious life I was leading. If I sometimes deemed it monotonous and confined, even somewhat dull, I consoled myself with reflecting that I was really acquiring a profession, serving an apprenticeship. In any case, I was Sir George's assistant but for a term, which I could conclude at any time. And my occupation had its pleasures. Even the replica of the Royal portrait I was engaged upon, though Mole viewed the task irreverently, was to me full of interest. I congratulated myself upon the

decision and correctness of my outline—upon the force and breadth of my execution. It was the largest canvas I had ever worked upon. I delighted in plying my brush with a drumming sound, as I spread and rubbed in colour over the tightly strained elastic surface. Every now and then I retreated some yards from my easel, to consider the effect of my performance, and I noted with gladness how gradually the kingly figure was emerging from hazy inanity, and, with every stroke of my pencil, assuming more and more of the hues and aspect of life.

"I really begin to feel myself a painter."

"Of signs, or of scenes? Which?" Mole asked laughingly.

"But only look at the noble folds and shadings of these velvet robes."

"Wait until you've been at work as I have upon a dozen or more of those portraits. You'll begin to find a very Republican feeling stealing over you."

Sir George, I was gratified to learn, had expressed his satisfaction with my labours.

I saw but little of him. He had been true to his promise that I should not be interfered with in any way, that I should enjoy perfect liberty in his house. My room had not proved the Haunted Chamber Mole had described it to be. My rest there was undisturbed by ghosts. I slept soundly, and, so far as I am aware, no apparition ever issued from the great corner cupboard. All was still enough; save for now and then the rumbling of coach wheels in the roadway, and, sometimes, very late at night, or in the early twilight of morning, the noise of the street door closing. Sir George had re-entered. He was usually absent after sunset; the hour of his return home was always uncertain.

He only worked intermittently at this time, often declining to see his sitters on the score of his health. Still he was never altogether idle. Sometimes he would mount to our studio, inspect our progress, and touch upon the canvases before us, always, as it seemed to me, to their advantage, although Mole generally disputed this. I thought his eye wonderfully correct. He detected errors and shortcomings very promptly. His manner was invariably polite. "I think you'll find that's rather out of drawing, Duke," he would say; or, "I fancy you might improve that heavy mass of shadow by breaking it up a little." He did not

so much give orders as offer suggestions. "Oblige me with your brush for a moment;" and with an adroit stroke or two he effected a real improvement. I was more than ever convinced that he was in truth a great portrait painter. In his composed way he seemed pleased, or perhaps I should rather say, amused with my evident admiration. "You only want practice, Duke. You'll do all this for yourself, some day, far better than I can do it." And as he spoke he patted me encouragingly on the shoulder.

He occupied himself, too, with sketching and planning works to be completed at some distant day—when he had time. He was haunted, I think, by a desire to win distinction in the future as an historical painter. He was employed at intervals upon a series of allegorical compositions to be executed on an imposing scale. But he was apparently hard to please. He was moved by impulses; then came weariness and dejection, and his hastily adopted projects were thrust aside and abandoned, as though the temperature of his enthusiasm had lowered, or some insurmountable difficulties had suddenly confronted him. There seemed about him a want of power to concentrate his energies. He was now languid almost to lethargy; a drowsiness oppressed him that would not be shaken off. And now he was strangely stirred, his eyes curiously bright, and every nerve tremulous with excitement. At times too, I am satisfied, he suffered acutely. The lines in his face deepened, and he looked very wan and worn. He would stop abruptly in speaking, with a painful wincing expression. But he uttered no complaint. He seemed anxious, indeed, to hide his suffering.

One day Probert brought me a message from him. He desired to see me in his studio.

"I'm sorry to trouble you, Duke, but I'm sketching and I want a line or two from nature. It's a fanciful subject. Perhaps you would not mind sitting to me for a few minutes. Clasp your hands—so. Yes, that will do. Lean forward a little. Look up. Your head turned a little to the left. Yes, that is just what I wanted. Lean forward a trifle more. Thank you."

He sat down at his easel and began sketching. Now glancing at me, now bending over the drawing board before him. I remained perfectly still. After a while the scratching sound of his crayon gradually ceased. I ventured to turn towards him. He was not drawing. His

head had sunk upon his breast. His gaze seemed fixed upon the ground at his feet. His hand hung down listlessly before him, still holding the crayon, however. Suddenly it slipped from his fingers. The noise of its fall roused him. He started and shivered. He was deadly pale.

"Are you ill, Sir George?" I enquired, hurrying to him. He was silent for some moments.

"Where am I?" he demanded at length. "You here, Duke? No, it's nothing. I'm not ill. I was led away by my thoughts, I forgot where I was; what I was doing. That happens to me sometimes."

His voice sounded weak and hollow. I felt alarmed about him.

"But indeed I fear you are really ill, Sir George. You need rest and change."

"That's easily said," and he laughed, strangely, I thought. He rose and moved towards the mantelpiece; leaning there, with his hand covering his eyes, he presently grew more composed.

"It was a feeling of faintness, that's all, Duke; I'm subject to it at times. It comes over me quite suddenly, and sets my hand trembling, as you see. Happily it doesn't last long, however. It's nothing really to be alarmed about. I'm quite myself again now. But don't speak of this to any one. I've not been very well, lately, as you know. A very little seems to upset me now. I shall be better soon. But I'll not trouble you any more now. It's plain I'm not in a working mood to-day. You must sit to me again some other time."

"If you could only rest for a while, Sir George, and breathe pure fresh country air. I'm bold to say it, perhaps; but if you would but come home with me—to the Down Farm."

"That can hardly be, Duke," he interposed coldly, I thought, and almost with an air of contempt.

"Forgive me." I felt that I had been presumptuous. I had forgotten how great a man he was.

"I have nothing to forgive. I have reason, indeed, to thank you; for you mean kindly I am sure. But are you quite certain you have authority to offer me the hospitality of this Down Farm—this home of yours, of which you seem, and rightly enough, no doubt, so fond and proud? Would your friends there—your relations, sanction and confirm your invitation, do you think?"

"Certainly, Sir George. They are your relations, too."

"That's true. But the fact has been so long overlooked—forgotten, almost by me, if not by them."

"No, not forgotten, or I should not be here. And they have not forgotten it, and will not. Besides, they would heartily welcome any one who had been so kind to me as you have been, Sir George. I'll answer for them."

"That's bravely said. I never dare answer for any one. But you're young, and I grow old; that makes a difference, no doubt. For what you call my kindness, please don't speak of it. It's been but a trifle at the best. I think I've told you so before. Never waste gratitude. The thing is too rare and precious. Rest and change are hardly for me. I have, as you know, many engagements—much to occupy me. I cannot quit town. And, in any case, the change you propose would not benefit me, I think."

"The Farm's but a humble place, I know, in a very retired part of the country; but the air of our downs is wonderfully pure and healthful. My mother and uncle might seem to you, perhaps, very homely, simple people; but they are most kind of heart, Sir George. They would be pleased to be of service to you; they would feel honoured by your presence in their house. You would be assured of perfect rest and quiet. No pains would be spared to forward the recovery of your health."

He had appeared to hesitate; at least he had spoken somewhat faintly. I had thus been emboldened to dwell anew upon the merits of my proposal. But he answered somewhat impatiently, beating his foot upon the floor, while his face flushed somewhat—a patch of colour glowing on either cheek.

"I thank you, but it cannot be, Duke. Your home is delightful to you, very likely; it should be so; though you were nothing loth to quit it. To me it might prove dull and dreary beyond expression. Perfect quiet would drive me mad, I think. I can bear my maladies—the remedy you propose would be unendurable. You're a young physician; you must study your patients a little more closely before you venture to prescribe for them. It cannot be, I say. Your Down Farm is not for me. Don't look hurt, Duke. I did not mean to offend you. My temper is less under command than it used to be—than it should be. My words were ill-chosen. I'm sorry that I spoke so sharply.

There was no need for it. Forgive me, Duke, and let me say again, I thank you."

I had felt somewhat offended, I own; but I was appeased in a moment. His conciliatory tone and his graceful kindly air were not to be resisted.

"By-the-bye I think I must make a sketch of you, a new sketch, Duke. I shall do nothing more with this I think—at any rate for the present. It must be laid aside with my other failures—they increase and multiply sadly as time passes, and age comes on me. But it's the same with us all; and this is but a poor thing. Your head, I have noticed, comes very well in certain lights. And you have, at times, a certain expression I should like, if I could, to secure. I really think I can do something rather better than ordinary with it. We'll see, however. You can give me a sitting to-morrow morning, let us say? It's a fancy of mine, but I'm sure you'll humour it. I won't keep you any longer now."

I sat to him for an hour or so on the following morning, and on some subsequent occasions. He said little, but he worked assiduously. He seemed not altogether satisfied with the result, however.

"My skill is failing me I do think," he observed. But after a pause he went on again with the drawing. It was in black and red crayons, an imitation, as Mole declared, of the manner of Bartolozzi.

"He's always imitating some one. Yes, it's something like; but flattered of course. Your nose hasn't such a delicate line as that, and your chin isn't nearly so refined. But the eyes are good. He always succeeds with his eyes. That's the real secret of his fame."

Mole studied the portrait for some time, frequently comparing it with the original.

"He ought to do it in oils; but he never will. A fancy of his he called it, you say? Yes, he's full of fancies. But I don't suppose he'll take it into his head to paint me—although, if he really wanted a striking subject, he might go further and fare worse. But I forgot—you're a relation of his. That explains it, perhaps. I'm not. I've no relations, in fact. Though, if I were to come into a fortune—which is not likely—I dare say I should find plenty who'd claim kindred of me, although they certainly wouldn't have their claim allowed."

"A letter for you, Duke," said Sir George one day.

For me? It was from Rosetta.

"Miss Darlington—she was here this morning—entrusted me with its delivery. It contains an invitation, I believe. You are an old friend of hers, it appears. You saved her life once—so she says; but that, perhaps, is only her theatrical way of talking."

He was smiling, and yet, I thought, he was watching me rather closely.

Rosetta, I knew, was a frequent visitor at the house in Harley-street, although I rarely saw her. Not that the picture of the Comic Muse was nearly completed. But Sir George had been making numerous sketches of the actress. She had sat to him repeatedly. He had portrayed her in fanciful costumes as St. Cecilia, Pandora, Iphigenia, Sensibility, Calypso, &c. These were but slight works for the most part; mere outlines in some instances. It was not clear that he ever intended to finish them.

"She is very charming; I have rarely seen a more beautiful head. And she is clever too, in her way. You will visit her of course, as she wishes it. Only remember, Duke, actresses are not quite angels. At least their wings usually fall from them as they quit the stage. They reserve poetry for the footlights. Don't throw away your heart—but you won't. Too many hearts have been placed at Miss Darlington's disposal already; more than she can possibly know what to do with. She is lively and amusing, and I'm always glad to see her. There's not a word to be said against her, I believe; except that an actress is an actress."

It was a badly written note; badly spelt. The signature "Rosetta" was certainly sprawling, with a smeared flourish beneath it. I was invited to tea on Sunday evening at six o'clock at the lodgings of Miss Darlington and Mrs. Bembridge in Gerrard-street, Soho.

The postscript ran, "Mind you come, my Duke!"

"You'll go? of course you'll go. I was sure of it." And Sir George moved away, smiling, yet rather tartly I thought.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 1874.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MARRINGBERD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXVI. JUDITH'S ADVICE.

EVY was passing hastily to her own room, intending there to let the pent-up grief have way, which she had restrained for her uncle's sake while in his presence, when Judith met her. "You were not coming out to me, I fear," said she, significantly.

"No, Judith, I was not; but if you have anything very particular to say I am at your service."

Her tears had dried in the presence of this woman, whom she had learnt within the last few days both to distrust and to dislike profoundly; hitherto, perhaps, and especially of late, she had also felt some fear of her, but now in her extreme wretchedness she had none.

"Your manner is not gracious, Evy," returned the other, regarding her with a searching look; "I hope you have not been set against me by anybody."

"If you mean by my uncle, no, Judith; we have not even been talking about you. And, in any case, I do not believe the ill that is said of people, until they convince me of its truth by their own behaviour."

"That is quite right and charitable, dear; and it is a pity the world does not act on the same principles. It is only too ready to believe things—when they do not redound to our credit."

"You speak, Judith, as if you were referring to something particular."

"Well, to say truth, I am. When I asked you to walk with me just now, it was but the excuse for getting an opportunity to speak with you on a matter of great importance which was pressing upon me."

not admit of delay. May I come into your room, so as to make sure we shall not be interrupted?"

Evy bowed assent, and led the way to her own chamber; it was scarcely possible indeed to refuse Judith such a request without coming to an open rupture with her; and yet, as she crossed the threshold, the thought of the ruin that had befallen her uncle, and the wreck of her own hopes, recurred to her with such force and vividness, that she felt that any talk, upon what must needs be by comparison trivial matters, would be insupportable to her.

"Do not think me uncivil, Judith, if I beg of you to let any communication you may have to make me be as brief, as possible. I have heard bad news, and I feel that I can scarcely give my attention to anything else."

"Bad news!" answered Judith, gravely. "Mr. Hulet has told you then, has he. Poor girl, poor girl!"

An hour ago, Evy would have resented the tone of patronising pity in which her companion spoke, and indeed she winced under it now; but her astonishment at learning that Judith knew of her uncle's misfortune, as her words certainly seemed to imply, overcame all other feelings.

"Yes, he has told me," said Evy, "but he did not say he had told you."

"I can easily believe that," sighed Judith, with a quiet smile.

"Yes, Evy, I know all about it. Your uncle is no longer a rich man. Fortunately, however, it will be in my power to prevent him from being a very poor one."

"And you will do that?" cried Evy, eagerly. "Oh, Judith, forgive me, for in my heart I have done you wrong. I thought you cold and hard, and so did—"

"And your uncle, you were about to say, thought so too?" continued Judith, keenly. "Well, well, I don't blame him. It is only natural that a man overwhelmed by misfortune and obloquy should give way to bitter thoughts."

"Obloquy, Judith? That means censure, disgrace—I don't know what you mean. Who has dared to impute bad faith—anything worse than having faith in those unworthy of it—to my uncle?"

"I see," said Judith, slowly. "He has not told you, or only told you half."

"I shall return, then, and ask him to tell me all; these odious inuendoes shall be exposed, refuted," cried Evy, rising from her chair; but notwithstanding her bold words, the recollection of her uncle's phrase, "Self-respect is gone, too; all, all is gone," made her sick at heart.

Judith shrugged her shoulders. "You will do as you please, of course, Evy; but such a course will only distress Mr. Hulet, and cause a breach between himself and me. He will naturally be angry with me for having hinted to you what he thought it wise, knowing your impulsive character, to keep from your knowledge. He was right, it seems, and I was wrong."

Judith's coolness no longer irritated Evy, but appalled her. She was wiser, stronger than herself in every way, and since Mr. Hulet had confessed all to her, he must have judged her—whatever ill opinion he had of her in other respects—at least worthy of his confidence. Judith had the power to serve her uncle, which urged Evy not to offend her; and, above all, she had shown a desire to do so, which had touched her heart.

"Do not be so cold and contemptuous to me, Judith," cried the poor girl, "but if you feel any kindness for me, any tender recollection of the past, be pitiful. I am more wretched than words can tell or you can guess."

"Poor child, poor child," murmured Judith, this time, as it seemed, with a genuine touch of feeling. "I wish it was in my power to afford you comfort; but as it is, I can do little for you, beyond giving advice—and even that, perhaps, you will distrust and therefore decline."

"Why should I distrust it, Judith?" asked Evy, simply. "I cannot suppose you would willingly deceive me, being your friend, and in such sad straits; you are wiser than I, and better versed in the world's ways, why then should I decline it?"

"Because you have misread my character, Evy, all along," answered Judith, slowly. "I have had to work my way up the ladder of life, holding fast by each step that I have gained, and without leisure for resting and admiring the prospect such as you have enjoyed. It is true that I have reached a higher round than I had one time any hopes of doing, but I am only just beginning to know what it is to be safe and at my ease. That sort of bringing up, you know, makes a man—and much more a woman—cautious, unsympathetic, and perhaps even, as you have just hinted, cynical. I am not gushing, like you, dear, I confess it. I have never been able to afford to gush; but I hope I have my feelings, like other folks. Then, again, I am not blinded by false sentiment; or if you will have it so, by sentiment of any kind. I see people, that look to you like saints, without their halo; or, perhaps, since I was a person of no consequence, the saints did not in my presence give themselves the trouble to wear them. I saw in the late Mrs. Hulet, for instance—indeed she never considered it worth while to hide it from me—a selfish hypochondriac, irritating, tiresome, full of the most sensitive feelings as regarded herself, but perfectly pachydermatous when those of others were concerned—a woman utterly heartless—"

"Pardon me," interrupted Evy, firmly: "you are mistaken there. She was not heartless. I do not assert it merely from my own experience, though she was always most kind, most thoughtful for me; but, Captain Heyton"—here her voice trembled a little—"will, I am sure, if you ask him, corroborate that fact."

"Yes; you see," continued, Judith coolly. "every one speaks as he finds, or seems to find. My spectacles, as I have told you, did not happen to be rose-tinted. In my eyes, Mrs. Hulet was a heartless, insolent woman."

"Oh, Judith, Judith, remember, she was buried this very day."

"There you are again, my dear Evy, with your sentiment. You would have me speak like an epitaph, rather than hear the truth, and have your feelings shocked. I cannot forget (though I assure you it has been forgiven) the irritation, nay, the disgust, which you exhibited when I ventured to affirm that this very person was unhappy in her lifetime, and might possibly have even sought her death. There, you see, you will not even listen to me. And yet you will have to listen, Evy; if not to

me, to others, who will assert this very thing."

"They will do so, then, in the teeth of the truth, which yesterday's verdict has established," said Evy, as calmly as she could.

"The verdict, yes; but that can't prevent the world saying what it pleases, what it suspects, which brings me round to the very subject on which, for your own sake, Evy, I wished to speak to you, if you will but have the courage, and the honesty, to listen to me."

"I will listen to you, Judith, but I do not promise to believe you."

"Well, that is honest, at all events; and, as it happens, I don't want you to believe me, but only to understand your uncle's position, as it is likely to affect your own. You will not deny, I suppose, that some very unpleasant reflections were made during Mrs. Hulet's lifetime upon the cat-and-dog life (as some people called it) which she and her husband led together; so long as they were both alive, the fault was attributed to both: 'it was six of one and half a dozen of the other,' the gossips said, but now that one is dead the survivor comes in for all the reprobation. This would perhaps have happened in any case, but the unexpectedness and mystery of Mrs. Hulet's death have been such as to give malice a very grievous handle. I say nothing of my own opinions, please to observe, Evy; I am merely describing (and they are, after all, but natural) the ideas that I know are passing through the minds of others concerning the matter, and which are certain to find expression."

"They have been expressed already, Judith, in the verdict."

"There you are quite wrong. The verdict having, as it were, favoured your uncle, public opinion will be all the less inclined to spare him."

"Favoured?" observed Evy. "That is a very unpleasant term."

"But it is a true one. Neither coroner nor jury would place themselves in an invidious position if they could help it. If they had any justifiable means of escaping from it, even in an undoubted criminal case, they are always prone, you know, to give the prisoner 'the benefit of the doubt.' There was here, of course, neither crime nor prisoner; but, Evy, if I had given such evidence as I could have given"—and here Judith's voice sank low, though every word was clear and incisive—"if I had expressed the opinions I had expressed to you, and

which I was asked to give, those men would have had no such loophole. They must needs have returned an open verdict, 'Found Drowned,' or some such phrase, which would have left this matter unsettled, even legally, and liable to be reopened at any time. That, at least, Evy, has been averted. Your uncle need apprehend no further trouble from the law; and if he asks, as perhaps he is now asking himself, to what good fortune he is indebted for this result, I reply that he is indebted to you. Mind, I may have been wrong throughout. Mrs. Hulet may have had no more idea of committing suicide than you or I, or if she did commit it, it may have had nought to do with her husband's conduct; but such was my honest opinion, and but for your sake, and for the words you spoke to me as I entered that jury-room, I should have done my duty, and expressed it. As it is, when you read my evidence in the newspaper, you will willingly allow that I have permitted truth (or what I considered to be such) to weigh but little against the claims of friendship."

"Indeed," said Evy, slowly, "I suppose I ought to be thankful to you so far, though if you had expressed what seems to have been your conviction, you would have done my uncle a very grievous wrong."

"Well, we will not discuss that, Evy, especially since the solid results of the affair are in your favour. But what I wish to make you understand is, that others will not give up this point, and that your uncle knows it. It is true that he has suffered great losses, but he does not impose upon me when he states that it is on their account he is so suddenly about to leave this neighbourhood. He is well aware that it will presently be made very unpleasant for him, even if it does not become too hot to hold him; and I am much mistaken if what I am now about to say to you has not already passed through his own mind. For him it would be difficult to express it, and for me it is not easy, since it concerns you, my dear Evy, in the tenderest relations of your life. Nobody who knows Captain Heyton—"

"Judith," interrupted Evy, with dignity, "I cannot permit this. I cannot guess, indeed, what you are about to say, but if your advice to me has anything to do with my relations with Captain Heyton, I must beg of you not to give it. I may not be the best judge, but I should certainly be

the only one upon such a matter. Even my uncle——”

“Ah, he has been speaking to you on the subject then,” cried Judith, triumphantly. “Well, you won’t let me speak on it; but at all events let my entreaties be added to his. I can guess what he has told you or has wished to tell; and he is right. The consequences of delay just now—the giving way to conventional propriety in postponing your marriage in consequence of what has happened here—may be fatal to you.”

“You are speaking in enigmas, Judith; I don’t know what you mean.”

“Nay, it is clear enough; Captain Heyton is too faithful, too honourable to give you up merely because you have become poor; he may himself disregard the scandalous rumours that are sure to circulate concerning your uncle; but as these grow and grow, just as the circles in the water when a stone is dropped in it, they will presently reach the ears of Lord Dirleton. This will set his lordship more against his nephew’s union with yourself than ever, and may induce him to withdraw even that sum for which he has, as it were, commuted his inheritance. What your uncle would have you do then, and I, and all your well-wishers, is to lose no time in making the captain your own——”

“Forbear,” cried Evy, passionately; “I will hear no more, Judith. It is perhaps through that bringing up of yours, to whose charge you have laid other peculiarities of your character which to my mind are not pleasing, that you offer advice, so strange, so coarse, so——”

“Don’t spare me, dear,” observed Judith, coolly, perceiving that her companion was hesitating as to whether she should use even some stronger word to express her feelings, “if it is any relief to you to speak out; I spoke out myself, because I felt that this matter was one of the last importance to you; that there was no time for false delicacy——”

“Nor for delicacy of any kind, one would think,” broke in Evy, indignantly. “It may be that you mean me well, and I am content to believe it; but I must beg of you to drop this subject, and to be silent upon it for the future.”

Once more Judith shrugged her plump shoulders, but this time keeping her eyes fixed on the carpet, as though in some embarrassment.

“I very much regret I have annoyed you, Evy; since you bid me be silent, I of

course obey you, though I think had I used the grace of manner that you possess yourself, and expressed my views upon this matter less bluntly, I should have escaped giving you offence. Believe me, once for all, I intended none. Don’t you think a stroll in the garden would do you good, dear? Well, well, perhaps you are right. When one has got to think out a matter of importance, one’s own room is the best place after all. But you look dreadfully fagged and worried, so I shall tell Jane to bring you up a cup of tea.”

A cup of tea! Most feminine complaints, it is true, are greatly mitigated by that sovereign remedy; but Evy’s case was beyond it. A cup of poison would have been more welcome to her. Indeed, so far as herself was concerned, she would in that supreme hour of hopelessness and humiliation have hailed death gladly. The sunshine of existence was over for ever; the darkness was closing in around her young life without a hope of dawn. She had known before that she must give up her lover; the terrible stigma attaching to her uncle, of which Judith had spoken, made no difference as to that; but in the former case she had felt some supporting sense of sacrifice of self, of loving duty towards him; and that was gone now. Only the bare wretched fact remained. How she envied her poor aunt (whom she had so pitied awhile ago), removed from this world of shame and trouble! One thing only gave her strength—the recollection of the grey-haired broken man she had left in yonder room, with none to lean on except her. To him, she would henceforth dedicate herself as many a girl of another faith whose love-dream has been shattered, dedicates herself to Heaven. It was a no less sacred calling, and indeed, in the true sense, it was the same. Happiness in her future was not to be expected, but peace might still be found. Yes, for now she would “suffer and be strong,” and help her uncle to live down whatever ill-report might soil the tongues of men concerning him. But her heart was sad and sore, indeed, within her, and all its chambers that had been furnished forth to entertain the guest that maidens sigh for, were emptied and made desolate.

ELBOW-ROOM.

HUMANITY, and indeed life, in all its higher organisms, has great need of elbow-room. Cryptogamons may huddle together in a darkling existence, but the giant oak

tree craves both space and sunshine. Rabbits may dwell contented among the ferny knolls and honeycombed banks of their warren, but the great herds of the bison require half a continent for the stately march of their browsing myriads. Room, range, the power to grow, to develop, to satisfy the restless love of change that is always latent in even the dullest soul, these have been requirements of both savage and civilised man. And, indeed, the savage needs them most. Elbow-room, to the hunter, is synonymous with daily bread. Forced to kill ere he can eat, each day's sustenance depends on his superior activity and cunning. It is not enough that he approves himself more wily, bolder, more adroit, than the wild things that supply his precariously-furnished larder. He must roam as they roam. He must pursue them to their forest fastnesses, and if they withdraw to haunts more remote, he must follow, or die.

But even to the hunter space is hardly more valuable than it is to the tribes that occupy the second stage in social progress, the pastoral people whose flocks and herds are their only wealth, and the desert or the steppe their home. Mongol and Tartar, Berber and Arab, still, through the northern and central portion of two continents, every day reproduce the unchanging feature of patriarchal life. Give them grass and water, and they ask no more than to rove from the summer camp on the uplands, to the green valleys where winter pasturage abounds. Everywhere the black tents rise to reproduce the roofs of a village community that carries with it its Lares and Penates, and that alters not amid scenes the most dissimilar. In prosperous times the nomads are not very bad neighbours. A little cattle-lifting, an occasional highway robbery, are atoned for by freehanded hospitality towards the guest who claims their protection. But when the wells run dry, or when the locusts come down in a dark cloud to devour every green thing, leaving the earth bare behind them, there is an end of all this smiling picture. For then tribe presses upon tribe, struggling for the precious water and the priceless herbage that cannot suffice for all.

Perhaps some of the most stubborn battles in the world have been due to these encroachments of wandering nations, goaded by hunger, on the territories adjoining theirs. Professional soldiers, prompted by glory or braced by dis-

cipline, can scarcely surpass the desperate valour of these hardy herdsmen when fairly brought to bay. Those Helvetians who faced Cæsar's legionaries, and not one of whom, through three long days of terrible slaughter, was seen to turn his back before the Roman onset, won the great conqueror's admiration, barbarians though they were. But the mountaineers were fighting under the very eyes of their wives and sisters; all that made life worth having was inclosed within the triple rampart of their white-topped waggons, where women and children, flocks and herds, their poor household gear, and their simple possessions, were lodged as in a fortress; and flight implied not merely disgrace and misery, but sheer ruin also. Theirs was no sentimental feeling for the honour of a flag, but merely the dogged, deep-rooted resolve to hold their own.

As a general rule, in the enforced migrations of clans and people of the far-off East, the battle was to the hungry. The lords of the soil made stout resistance, no doubt, to the trespassers on their immemorial grazing grounds, and many a stream was dyed blood-red before the cattle of the intruders could slake their thirst in its waters. But beggary is proverbially valiant, and, after a sharp trial of strength, the ruder and poorer tribe drove back the old possessors of the land. Wave upon wave, like an advancing tide, the mighty flood of Mongol emigration set steadily westward. The enervated Romans saw with horror the successive incursions of Hun, Turk, and Avar, each tribe pushed forward by the pressure of fiercer hordes behind. It is strange to reflect on the fact that some unknown incident in Eastern Asia, the triumph of a Chinese general, the sallying forth of swarms of grasshoppers from the great desert of Gobi, may have proved fatal to the luxurious inhabitants of the Byzantine frontier. Much the same may be said of the southward movement that brought Goths and Vandals and Suevi, like so many icebergs floating down under the thawing influence of the warm summer sun, within the charmed circle of the Roman Empire. The predecessors of Alaric and Genseric, like those of Attila and Mahomet the Second, sought, not for spoil, but for elbow-room. Civilisation, certainly, does make mankind tolerant of close packing. The agriculturist, and still more, the trader, cheerfully endures a deficiency of space which would be repugnant to a nation of shepherds. The most

densely peopled rural tract of country, the Flowery Land alone excepted, is notoriously the flat Pays de Waes, a sort of Flemish China, bearing the heaviest root-crops, to supply the many hungry mouths of those whose patient hands are busy in its tillage. But the citizens of old, whether Greek or Roman, or of mediæval Europe, were eminently squeezable, as their narrow streets and crowded dwelling-places attest. Common interests, mutual reliance, and the division of labour, all prompt people to lean on one another, and to be pleased with the propinquity which facilitates the buying and selling, the quick production and ready barter, which are the life-blood of trade. There is a fine contrast between some burgher of Florence, or of Pisa, who had perhaps scarcely ever in his life been absolutely alone, who took his pleasure in public, as he transacted his business, and who could hardly have drawn breath freely away from the piazzas and the arcades of his native city, and the morose individuality of Colonel Daniel Boone. Yet the grim old bear-hunter, when he pronounced a population of eight to the square mile "inconveniently crowded," and moved resentfully off, deeper into the uncleared forest, was probably no more a hater of his species than was Messer Pietro, or Messer Giuseppe, or however the typical citizen might be called. The Italian townfolk of the middle ages were gregarious to a degree that we can hardly comprehend, but it was less affection and sympathy than habit and fear that knit them together. The sheep clustered in masses, rather from dread of the wolves without the walls, feudal nobles, robber companies, rival commonwealths, than from genuine love of their brother muttons. The American backwoodsman, on the other hand, strongly self-reliant, felt elbow-room to be the first necessity of life, and sought for it according to the instincts of his nature. Egypt, in many respects distinct from other countries, had the marked peculiarity of nourishing multitudes within an area limited by natural causes, and constantly in danger of decrease. The husbandman of the Nile Valley dreads the desert, as the Dutch farmer dreads the sea, that roars and rolls high above the level of his rich meadows. Indeed, Egypt, where the dry land is ever threatening to swallow up the moist alluvial earth, is the direct antithesis to Holland, and the Fellah's great fear, next to a deficiency in the Nile floods, is the encroachment of the desert sand. That

is a foe against which the simple means of irrigation which the poor cultivators possess are in ceaseless requisition, against whose inroads every palm-tree is a fortress, every patch of greenery an intrenched camp, since water and vegetation alone can scare away the gaunt wolf from an Egyptian cottage-door. Kings who chafed at the contracted boundaries of the Delta have waged costly war on nature, digging canals, forming artificial lakes, struggling to annex the desert. But the desert, in the long run, aided by war and misgovernment, has proved an overmatch for Pharaoh or Ptolemy, and the granary of the Eastern Empire has now not much corn to spare. The lack of elbow-room has been as a millstone round the neck of what was once the wealthiest of kingdoms.

The discovery of America acted as a magic watchword, as a kind of "Open Sesame," applied to flesh and blood, and the restless spirits of Europe. Individual enterprise had never before had such a field. For the founding of a Greek colony had been merely the sending forth from the parent hive of a young swarm to build cells of precisely the old pattern, and the Teutonic migrations had been the transference of a prince and people from one home to another. Now, for the first time, a dazzling prospect of easily earned abundance was displayed before the longing eyes of born adventurers, and with it the hope of breaking loose from the fetters of an exacting and antiquated social system. The wonderful Western Indies, that transatlantic Tom Tiddler's Ground, where rubies were as pebbles, and where the roofs were tiled with gold, had more to offer than the pearls and the silver, the massy ingots and the flashing emeralds, of which sunburned rovers boasted to homestaying listeners. There was freedom to be found there—not the highest idea of liberty, perhaps—but still the right to shake off some of the restraints of decaying feudalism and growing kinglycraft. Here was a new world, not as yet hedged and fenced, and set with legal man-traps and statutory spring-guns, as Europe had long been; and the pioneers of emigration, Spanish and French, English, Dutch, and Portuguese, rushed to the country of their adoption with something of the madcap delight of schoolboys out of bounds.

Not merely the name, but the very principle of emigration, would have been

But there'll be faults enough found with you, before you've lived to be my age, never fear, Rosy. Come, ring the bell—I'm dying for a cup of tea. And so is your young friend here, I dare say; Mr. —, I forget the name, though you've told it me often enough. Ah! Nightingale—thank you. There was a Nightingale, some years back, I remember, who used to play juvenile tragedy at York—a gentlemanly young fellow enough—but I don't suppose he was any relation of yours. And, by-the-bye, if he's still living, that Nightingale must be an oldish man by this time. For it's an age ago, now I come to think of it."

"My Duke's relation is the famous Sir George Nightingale," said Rosetta, busy over the tea-cups.

"To be sure. I remember now. I've seen the name often enough in the print-shops; and I've seen Sir George too, though I didn't know who he was for a long time, and wondered what business he had in the Green Room. He didn't come to paint my portrait, it seemed. I call Sir George a handsome man."

"I should think he was a handsome man," said Rosetta. "My dear, his eyes look one through and through; and what a smile he has! I love Sir George."

"Don't talk nonsense, Rosy; and pour out the tea, or you'll have the second cups as weak as weak."

"But I mean it. That is, I mean——"

"You don't know what you mean. You never did."

"I mean that if I were ever to love any one—which isn't likely, perhaps—it would be a man like Sir George, as near as could be. I don't suppose there's quite such another in the world. I'm half afraid of him at times. And somehow I think a little fear is a good thing in love. It keeps love in order, you see; compels one to keep watch over oneself and to behave one's best. I'm always in terror lest I should offend him, and I wouldn't do that for the world. I feel that at a harsh word or look from him I should shrink abashed into my shoes. If I were to offend him I should never forgive myself. That's odd, isn't it, mother?"

"I don't know about it's being odd. I call it foolish."

"Because you know I don't feel that with any one else. As a rule I don't care what I say or do. But it's different with Sir George. Am I afraid of him because I love him? or do I love him because I'm afraid of him? Which, do you think?"

Well, I won't say love, as you seem to object to the word."

"I think your conversation's absurd and improper."

"I'll say like. Come that can't be absurd or improper; for I like you, you know, mother, and Duke here, too, of course—my dear old Duke. That can't be wrong, surely. And I don't care what I say to you, either of you. But it's different with Sir George, as I said before. Not but what he's very kind to me. He makes allowances for me, without, I think, despising me; at least, without despising me very much. He looks down upon me, of course, in his grand way; but yet he is gracious too. He lets me chatter on, and sometimes I almost, but never quite, forget whom I'm talking to. I amuse him, I suppose. It must be new to him to have an odd flighty creature like me chattering about his studio, instead of the superfine lords and ladies he's usually painting. I'm only an actress, paid so much a week to exhibit on the stage. An actress to-day. I was a rope dancer yesterday. I don't forget that. I know it and he knows it. For I told him of it. If he were to despise me for it, he'd despise me less, perhaps, for telling the truth about it. I amuse him, and I like, I take pains to amuse him. I'm rewarded when he smiles, and I often make him smile. There may be a trifle of contempt about his smile; but it isn't all contempt. And to my thinking he's handsomer than ever when he smiles. It's strange how with a look he can set my heart beating ever so quickly. I'm talking nonsense now, mother, I own."

"Then leave off, for Heaven's sake."

"No, I'll go on. Now that I'm sure it's nonsense. For, in that case, there can't be any harm in it, can there? I'm nothing to him; I know that. I'm only a model it suits him to paint from. Perhaps any girl with hair and eyes and complexion like mine would do just as well for him. Only I don't quite think so; I don't like to think so, that's the truth. One doesn't like to think that there's a lot of people about in the world who would do just as well as oneself. Perhaps I am just a little different to the rest, and he's found that out, and so— No, of course I'm nothing to him. And he's nothing to me, or he should be nothing. Only he isn't. And I'd go to him from the world's end if he wanted me to sit to him, if I could be ever so little useful to him. I've miss'd rehearsal to go to him, and I've been fined for it. But he

doesn't know that. And he says my portrait is the best he ever painted, and that it will make us both famous. Both! Think of our being put together like that. But he only said it to please me, likely enough. He's a kind man, only his heart is packed away rather out of reach somehow. I suppose he knows where it is to be found. I don't. Is he well, Duke, your cousin, or uncle, or whatever you call him?"

I was unable to give a very good account of Sir George's health.

"He's ill—that's what you mean. I was sure of it. There's something strange come over him of late. Is he unhappy, do you think? But he can't be—so rich and famous as he is. Why has he never married, I wonder? Has he never loved? But you can't know, of course. Women enough have loved him, I'm sure. He's ill—now he's pale, and now there comes a patch of scarlet on his cheek. And at times his hand trembles very much, and the colour flies from his lips; and his eyes—how strangely they glisten! There, mother, I'll say no more. But when I get talking about Sir George, I never know when to finish."

"You'll excuse her, Mr. Nightingale. She's in one of her madcap humours to-day—although it's Sunday, worse luck."

"Sunday; so it is. Well, I don't act and I never look at a part on Sunday. I'm entitled to appear in my own character, therefore, however crazy it may be. And it is rather crazy, all things considered, isn't it, Duke? You found that out for yourself, didn't you, ever so long ago? Do you like thin bread and butter, or thick? I never tasted butter when I was Diavolo's pupil. I was thankful to get lard—and sometimes—my! what a treat a penn'orth of treacle was! Now, here's every luxury: strawberry jam, and watercresses and shrimps. You'll have shrimps, mother, I know. There's a cold knuckle of ham in the house if any one's particularly hungry. I'm rather in the humour to make a good tea myself. Have another lump of sugar, Duke? Is your tea to your liking, mother?"

"The tea might be better; but it will do. And if you could only sit still and hold your tongue, Rosy, for a little, we should all get on very comfortably together, I dare say."

They both talked, I thought, needlessly loud. I had forgotten that they were in the habit of addressing themselves to large audiences. There was something of the

manner of the stage, too, in the liveliness of their gestures. Mrs. Bembridge possessed a deep strong voice, and spoke with much decision, articulating her words very distinctly, moving her black eyebrows up and down the while, and waving to and fro her small white hands. She emptied many cups of tea and a plateful of shrimps. Rosetta ate with hearty appetite several thick slices of bread liberally coated with jam.

"I'm wonderfully fond of jam," she confessed. "The worst of it is, it makes one's fingers so sticky. I'm afraid you'll think me very greedy and vulgar, Duke."

I disclaimed such an opinion. She was perfectly simple and natural; could she, therefore, be fairly chargeable with vulgarity? To myself, however, I admitted that she was somewhat unrefined in manner. A little while ago I should not, perhaps, have perceived this. I should have rejected the notion of such a thing being possible; but it was clear to me now. She had not changed; but, somehow, my point of view had shifted. I contemplated her now with different eyes. They had studied other objects.

"Of what are you thinking, Duke? Why do you look so grave? Do my flighty ways seem so very strange to you? I'm what you see me to be. Don't think me worse than I am."

She paused for a moment, while her bright, steady gaze searched my face.

"Do you know," she said, presently, "that every now and then you've an odd look of Sir George? I like you for yourself, and I like you still more for that."

Mrs. Bembridge shrugged her shoulders. She disapproved of this persistent harping upon Sir George. I accounted it a mere idle whim of Rosetta's—a freak—without much real meaning. Her manner of speaking was always somewhat breathless and headlong. She gave her thoughts words, on the instant—almost before they were distinctly formed. Her mind was in a state of fermentation; and this subject of Sir George was for ever bubbling to the surface.

"He gave me this chain. Wasn't it kind of him? I shall always prize it for his sake." She showed me a rich gold chain coiled many times round her white neck.

"When Rosy gets 'the talks' on there's no stopping her—and there's no knowing what she'll say, and what she won't say. Haven't we had enough of Sir George for to-night, at any rate?"

strange and hateful to old rulers of the paternal stamp, or to the meddlesome parliaments that supplemented their authority. The monstrous heresy of encouraging the departure of the king's lieges would have found no favour in their eyes. As well expect a colonel to connive at the desertion of his smartest soldiers, as a mediæval monarch to sanction the exodus of hinds and artisans. Hodge was needed to drive the plough in peace, and in time of war he must shoulder his brown-bill and march with the king's militia. Flap-capped Will and Hal had their work to do with hammer and shears, not forgetting to muster with tough yew bows and cloth-yard arrows, when the trainbands turned out. These industrious persons did not exist for their own benefit, but for that of the king's grace, of holy church, and of their fellow citizens, and to transfer their labour elsewhere was a downright robbery of the commonweal. As for any wish to try his fortunes beyond seas, which presumptuous Hodge might entertain, he was held to have no more right to a will of his own than Trip-temus Yellowley, in the *Pirate*, to demur to the compulsory hospitality that was traditional in Shetland.

It was on false pretence, so to speak, that the earlier emigrants were permitted to quit the country of their birth. Such sovereigns as Isabella and her imperial grandson regarded the truants from Old Spain as the missionaries and crusaders of the New. To convert the heathen; by sharp arguments, indeed; and to replenish the treasury of Madrid with tribute wrung from a hundred provinces—these were worthy and kindred objects in the eyes of their Catholic majesties. Nor were other potentates unwilling that their subjects should have a finger in the pie where golden plums lay so temptingly. Thus Elizabeth encouraged the barefaced buccannering of Drake and Raleigh, and saw no cause why the queen's highness should not stand sponsor to the Virginian colony, and get for England some share of the good things with which that inquisitive Genoese pilot had, in her grandfather's time, so largely endowed the pestilent Spaniard. But down to the days of American Independence, and that later date when the Spanish colonies asserted their freedom, no parent state regarded the plantations as other than milch-kine, existing for the emolument of the mother-country, while the settlers were tolerated

rather than approved of, like so many half wild sheep, prone to stray too far afield, and by no means up to the standard of quiet steady-going sheephood.

The long-continued, ever-renewed strife between privileged artificers, privileged merchants, and the mass of malcontent mechanics and disqualified chapmen, was simply a contest for elbow-room. Middle-aged society was hag-ridden by the nightmare of vested interests, to a pitch that was equally absurd and painful. Monopoly was rampant everywhere, from the baron's mill, whither the unwilling peasants plodded with their sacks of coarse grain, to the workshop, where no prentices not free of the city were allowed to learn a trade. Confiscation and fine warned off the purchaser who would buy from any dealer not affiliated to the authorised company. Grocer and draper, currier and cutler, had a claim to your custom, which could not legally be eluded. Hereditary shopkeepers grew up to rear fresh families whose inalienable birthright it was to sell inferior wares at protective prices. It was not the fault of the legislators of that day that classes were not, as among Hindoos, fossilised, and that every occupation was not made over in perpetuity to a caste. Long, hard, and cruel was the smouldering war of riotous discontent and harsh repression, until at last guilds and privileges, arts and mysteries, were fairly, put to the rout, and what rags and relics of the antique system yet exist came to wear little more than an archæological interest.

Some wild and erratic spirits, some vigorous and self-assertive natures, have in all ages set Mrs. Grundy at defiance, daring to strike out a separate path. To be a hermit or an outlaw, to don goat-skins or slay the royal deer, was the alternative that lay, a few centuries since, before the self-willed. In both cases there was an escape from the leading-strings of a ceremonious society. But the anchorite was apt to degenerate into the moody and squalid savagery of a Fakir; and the more jovial outlaw, he of the ringing horn and rattling quiver, for all his gay garb of Lincoln green, and the conventional pleasures of his career, had his full share of hardships, and was likely to be hanged. Those were not times for the indulgence of individual whims. A Bampfylde Moore Carew, that amateur gipsy whose adventures delighted the children of a past generation, could not have existed when the penal laws against Egyptian vagrom

men were strictly enforced. Branding and scourging, nailing of ears, and slitting of noses, with a hempen cord and a short shrift in prospect, would have surely outweighed the fascinations of Zingara life, although even these caustic remedies failed to extirpate the Asiatic parasites of European civilisation.

The eighteenth century, while the elements of the great political earthquake were slowly fermenting, witnessed more than one moral revolt against the tyranny of habit. It must have needed much courage to appear in public plainly dressed, and with no capillary covering save that furnished by nature, at a time when wig and gold lace, ruffled shirt and buckled shoes, the silver-handled sword and the embroidered waistcoat, seemed the indispensable externals of a gentleman. Worsted hose, shoestrings, black stocks, and unpowdered hair, came presently to have an ominous significance, while a certain bluntness of manner, which went well with such studied simplicity of raiment, marked the advocates of change. Oddly enough, that tremendous old lexicographer in the shabby brown coat and snuff-begrimed cravat, was himself unconsciously a standard-bearer of rebellion against the principles he revered. The toughest of Tories, a royalist to the backbone, the editor of the Rambler did much to spread the growth of democratic feeling. In truth, Johnson's combative manliness was out of tune with his submissive theories; his sturdy knees, like those of a more scholarly Tell, were too stiff to bend before any hat howsoever gorgeous and highly-placed; and when he opposed his literary cudgel to the courtly rapier of Lord Chesterfield's dainty sarcasm, he was virtually fighting the battle of common sense and homely honesty against the patched and perfumed hollowness of the age he lived in. The very sight of that huge form, uncouth in garb and gait, rolling heavily along, and the knowledge that the hard-hitting moralist had fought his way up, unhelped, from the humblest station to be a power in England, was, as it were, an embodied protest against the moribund world of fops and cabals, of fine clothes and speeches that were false as fair.

As laws grew milder, and a liberal latitude of choice came to be allowed to the units of the community, diversities of taste became more marked, and Bohemianism blossomed into an institution. Without doubt there always were Bohemians, but

in Plantagenet or Tudor times they were more often mere flotsam and jetsam floated down the currents of events, than persons who had deliberately chosen to dissent from decorous uniformity of manners. The poor player, whom the law called vagabond, and whom Justice Shallow sometimes set in the stocks, was hardly permitted to be respectable. The viol-player, the performer on the lute, the disbanded captain with greasy buff coat and clattering broadsword, sighing for a fresh war, the lean poet in search of a patron, the spendthrift who had brought his noble to ninepence, formed a needy and not over reputable society, given to drink and dice, haunting low-browed taverns, and frequenting the sanctuary of Alsatia. Poverty, not preference, kept these waifs together. Even the fat knight, pattern roysterer as he was, vowed to amend and keep impeccable company in case solid promotion should reward his fabled exploits at Shrewsbury. Whoever could, by some sudden stroke of fortune, afford clean linen and good lodgings was sure to desert the comradeship of Desperate Dicks and idle gamesters. Themis co-operated in thinning the ranks of these outsiders, by bending her frowning brow on the insolvent occupants of this mediæval Adullam. Beadles burst into ale-houses and the dwellings of dubious vintners, on some fine Sunday forenoon, and drove the toppers to church by unsparing application of their parochial staves. The worshipful the sheriff made a raid, now and again, upon the haunts of the reckless, sweeping off scores of black sheep to do penance in Bridewell or the Compter. Is it not recorded to the praise of my good lord, Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, that meeting in Eastcheap with some rakish swaggerer, whose battered finery and long locks displeased the keeper of King Harry's conscience, he bade his followers crop the man's hair close to his head, and then sent him to prison for a quasi contempt of court in wearing it? The chronicler evidently considered this a most wholesome exercise of just authority, but we should be somewhat startled now-a-days if any contemporary lord chancellor were to act upon the time-honoured precedent.

The comparatively harmless Bohemians of our own day are living proofs of the great change of ideas that has gradually taken place, and of the gulf that divides our modes of thought from those of our ancestors. Our forefathers, in the single-

minded conviction that they knew minutely what was right, tolerated no exceptions. Birds that could sing, so they held, must be made to pipe properly at the accredited social pitch. We are more lukewarm, and perhaps less confident, and hence whoever chooses to join the Bohemian camp and to laugh at domesticity, and denounce, between the whiffs of his pipe, the Philistines of respectability, is free to do so. Nobody cares to persecute the modern cynic for choosing a sidewalk in preference to the broad high-road. Diogenes in frayed velvet, with unshorn chin and briar-root pipe, has nothing to fear from the orthodox majority who go about in broadcloth, and shave, and entertain no æsthetic convictions on the subject of light and sweetness. Let but Diogenes pay his weekly bills, and he may rail as he lists. The county-court is the only Philistian institution that may work to his detriment.

A singular but not unhealthy reaction against the results of civilisation has of late years set in. The love of wild land, of picturesque scenery, of spreading seas, giant cliffs, of mountain peaks and darkling forests and stretches of moorland, glowing crimson with the ripe blossoms of the scented heather, dates, at the earliest, from the period of the French Revolution and the rise of the romantic school of poetry. It is chiefly among the educated that this passion for untamed and unspoiled nature is found, and indeed it often appears to increase progressively with the degree of mental culture. Such a taste can hardly be classed among the simple instincts of mankind. It is, indeed, scarcely fair to place a savage in the witness-box in such a case, for his hand-to-mouth life has dulled some senses while sharpening others. To him the most delicious perfumes and the vilest odours are alike indifferent. His sight and hearing are finely developed, for on them depend his dinner and his safety, but, so far as utility is concerned, he might as well be noseless. We can hardly wonder that the keen eyes which detect the lightest footprint of bird or beast so unerringly should pass carelessly over the grandest landscape in the world.

Our own flesh and blood, even our lettered forefathers in square-cut coats and tie-wigs, saw nature through different coloured spectacles to those through which we now behold her. Uncultivated land they positively disliked. To them a mountain range was a grim fact that had to be

scrambled over with painful toil and some danger. A moor spread before them its many-tinted surface, now smiling in the sunshine, now dark beneath a passing cloud, merely to be considered as an ugly plain full of quagmires in which a horse could sink to the saddle-girths, and where there were great facilities for losing one's way, or being stopped by Captain Macheath. In truth, to them an expanse of wild ground did not appear in the least lovely, but simply uncomfortable, barren, and beggarly. A wood, when the white May-flowers were thick, and the young leaves wore their tenderest green, was all very well on a summer's holiday; but a fertile vale like that of Aylesbury, with its many acres under the plough, sheep feeding on the fallows, red kine grazing within the well-hedged fields, won from them an admiration which they would have withheld from Loch Katrine or from Clovelly. The sea itself was to them but a melancholy ocean, giving out noxious vapours. The lakes of Cumberland or Wales were collections of fresh water, offering perhaps some slight advantages in respect to the conveyance of farm produce by boat. Even Goldsmith lavished on the windmills and the canals of Holland an enthusiasm which we now reserve for the High Alps and the other exceptionally choice gems of the world-wide panorama.

Possibly with us the desire for elbow-room has grown in proportion as the chance of gratifying it, so far as home-staying folks are concerned, lessens daily. Our large towns are Briarean as to the brick and mortar arms with which they lock square miles of country in their fatal embrace. The black smoke of tall chimneys withers tree and flower alike in many a spot once renowned for sylvan beauty, and the refuse of dye-works scares away the disgusted Naiads from many a tinkling stream that once ran silver white among the broad-leaved lilies and nodding reeds. High farming is a cruel foe to the picturesque, and as nature becomes more and more bitted and bridled, and kept to regular work, the beauty of glen and woodland tends to disappear. We cannot wonder, then, that things being as they are, every suburban villa lets the better for commanding a view of perhaps a clump of fir trees and some patch of golden gorse, or that strenuous efforts should be made to preserve some scraps and fragments of health-giving recreation grounds for the toiling millions of Londoners.

MODERN ROMAN MOSAICS.

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

THE ancient basilica of the Lateran, which proudly styles herself the "Mother and Head of all the churches of the city and the world," stands on a wide, open space of ground looking away from Rome across the sad Campagna to the Sabine Hills. On a summer's morning or evening all the place is steeped in a pathetic beauty. Silence, sunlight, and peace, brood, dove-like, over the scene. A soft haze glitters on the mighty, mournful plain. The clouds above the mountain-tops are touched with rose-colour. It is as though Memory and Hope had met and kissed each other.

You may be quite solitary there at the hour of dawn or twilight; and, forgetting the labouring city near at hand, fancy that the stream of your life has floated you into some bay or creek of an enchanted region, whose only chroniclers are the poets; whose air, unlike the Lethæan waters, instils oblivion of all save the past; and where old Time himself pauses, leans on his scythe, and looks backward.

But sudden changes and marvellous contrasts belong, by right, to regions of enchantment. And, if you will come with me this blessed midsummer eve to the great grass-grown space around San Giovanni Laterano, you will hear noise and see people enough to make up for the solitude and silence of all the rest of the year.

It is the vigil of the Feast of St. John the Baptist; that is to say, it is the night of the twenty-third of June. Rome, at midsummer, is a terra incognita to most travellers. This Feast of St. John's Eve is a festival specially loved by the Romans. They have it mostly to themselves. There are no crowds of inquisitive foreigners staring and elbowing, as at the Easter celebrations, and other high tides of the Romish Church. The forestieri are gone to the cool side of the big Alp wall, and have left the Eternal City to the Romans and to me!

It is an exquisite, serene night. The pure, deep blue of the sky is strewn with throbbing stars. The air is delicious with that soft freshness peculiar to Roman summer evenings, and the dew falls refreshingly on the short, dry grass of the wide space between the church of the Lateran and that of the Holy Cross.

Per Bacco! the familiar adjuration to

the god of wine, who is invoked by Italians in season and out of season, is appropriate on this occasion, at all events. What a scene breaks on us as we emerge on to the great, open place in front of the basilica! What noise, what confusion, what movement! There are here some thirty thousand human creatures—men, women, and children—dancing, drinking, fiddling, piping, twanging guitars, grinding barrel-organs, singing, shouting, bawling, at the full pitch of their lungs! Yonder are the booths of vendors of *salame*—a kind of sausage, plentifully flavoured with garlic-fried fish, bread, cakes, water, wine, lemonade, beer—yes; even beer!—maccaroni, and Heaven knows what eatables and drinkables besides. Here, on the grass, are thickly-scattered various family groups: fathers, mothers, children, friends, lovers: old, young, and middle-aged, chatting, laughing, eating, drinking, and enjoying themselves. Hecatombs of roast fowls, mountains of maccaroni, tuns of red wine, disappear down the throats of the Roman poplani. Eating and drinking, by way of accompaniment and crown to all manner of merry-making, are supposed by some people to be exclusively British observances. Just look at the preparations for feeding this Roman holiday crowd, and then say what you think on that subject!

See, to our left, where there is a small clear space, they are dancing with all their might to the music of a piffero and a tambourine. The principal dancers are a young couple of Trasteverini—folks from the other side of the Tiber—and fine specimens of the human animal they are. The girl is tall, full-busted, broad-shouldered, stalwart of limb. Her massive coils of black hair have come unfastened in the rapid movements of the tarantella—or, perhaps, have been allowed to fall with artful negligence; for coquetry is no hot-house plant, but flourishes as vigorously among the female children of Nature as among the fine dames who allow themselves to be tastelessly and inartistically clothed according to the vulgar vagaries of a Parisian man-milliner—and the long heavy plaits hang down below her waist. Her brown cheeks glow. Her great lustrous eyes shine under their black brows. Now her partner seizes her by the waist, and fairly lifts her into the air as they whirl round and round, faster and faster, while the pifferaro emits hoarse, breathless shrieks from his shrill instrument, and

the panting tambourine toils after them in vain.

A little farther on we come to a group of waltzers; four or five couples performing new steps and unexpected turns to the sound of a drunken fiddle and a wheezy barrel-organ, which is evidently more than half seas over. Here the girls are Montigiane, women from the hill villages around Rome. They wear the short petticoat, crimson bodice embroidered with gold lace, and striped kerchief thickly folded and disposed squarely on the head in the Neapolitan fashion, which compose an admirably picturesque costume. Coral and pearl necklaces show their delicate rose-colour and creamy white, against nut-brown throats. And massive gold ear-rings dangle and bob in time to the waltzing.

There is singing, too, be sure! In this land of song you cannot fail to hear discordant and strenuous yelling from powerful lungs and brassy throats, which (being in Italy), you *must* perforce delight in, as charming specimens of truly popular music. Moreover there greet the ear scraps from operas, curiously distorted as to the music, and comically distorted as to the words. A passionate phrase of Verdi, a melodious bar or two of Bellini, a sparkling tune of Donizetti, may be distinguished every now and then above the general sound, chaos of instruments and voices, drunken and sober. It is curious to hear, in the intervals of a hoarse bawling to commend the excellence of some *pesce fritto* (fried fish), the Puritan's martial recommendation, "Suoni la tromba;" or, mingled with the cries of "Wine! wine! excellent wine! Who'll drink?" the Traviata's sickly farewell to life and all its pleasures, "Addio del passato, &c., &c.," uttered in a voice calculated to reassure the friends of its owner as to the condition of his lungs, notwithstanding his roared-out assertion that he is fading and dying like a withered flower!

Great torches flare and sputter on the booths. Here and there a lantern dimly illumines some group of itinerant musicians. But, on the whole, the assembly trusts mainly to the stars for light. There is no moon. She is but a thin pale strip of curved silver now, and has sunk to rest long ago. The church clocks chime out midnight, with jangling strokes that seem to jostle each other in the air. And now the fun is fast and furious.

Away from the booths and the lights

wander many a pair of lovers over the grass, and for them the old, old glamour softens all sights and sounds into sweet enchantment. What is it to them that the vendors roar themselves hoarse in vaunting their wares, that the instruments are tuneless, harsh, and moved by unskilled hands, and that the odours of fried fish and garlic pollute the pure night breezes? Poetry dwells within us, and not in external things alone. And Pietro and Giovanna are conscious only of being wafted along in a sweet love-dream, on the outer edges of which a rude throng may rave and roar, but where it cannot enter.

Fat shop-keepers of the lower class, humble tavern-keepers (who have a barrel of good wine somewhere in their cellar, trust me, whatever mixture they may dole out to their customers!) dealers in sausages and tunny fish soaked in oil, with their stout wives and smart daughters, sit upon the coarse herbage, and sup heartily on the contents of sundry bundles and baskets, carefully carried from the little dark home in some winding narrow Roman alley. There is the bachelor artisan, insolent in youth and health, dandified, with a crimson sash girt tightly round his loins, a pair of buff-coloured shoes neatly fitting his slender Italian feet, and a crushed wide-awake hat stuck jauntily on the nape of his neck, casting critical and admiring glances on Marietta and Giulia, and debating with himself which of those damsels he shall honour with his hand in the next tarantella. There is his married comrade, a year or two older, several years more thoughtful, with a little line of anxious calculation between his eye-brows; but smiling—he, too, dressed in his best, and regarding with unconcealed pride and exultation the waddling efforts of his first-born, whom he leads by the hand, to walk on his fat brown legs. While his wife—once as nimble at a tarantella as any of the Giulias and Mariettas of to-night—follows with a baby at her bosom, and a beam in her honest motherly eyes which it is good and wholesome to look at. There are old *contadini* from the Campagna, leaning on their stout staves, and watching the dancing, who all agree in the discouraging opinion that the young fellows are neither so brisk nor so active as they were in *their* day, and that the tarantellas are no longer what they used to be.

On the skirts of the crowd are ranged row upon row of carriages filled with spectators. These are, broadly speaking, all Romans: from the portly Principe and Principessa in their heavy, old-fashioned carriage, to the five government impiegati crammed into a hack cab constructed to hold two, and smoking their cheap cigars with an air of elegant nonchalance. Up to the sweet silent sky rises a roar of mingled sounds, growing ever louder and wilder. The dancers tear round and round. The music eddies about in headlong rushes, wherein time and tune are lost. Drink and excitement are doing their work. Here and there blows are exchanged, curses are heard; and, see—was not that the glitter of a knife in the torchlight?

It is nearly two o'clock, and the decent part of the crowd begins to betake itself homeward. The vast space is growing more sparsely populated every minute. The dealers pack up their booths, carrying away empty baskets and barrels, and full purses. On the grassy plain figures are seen stretched in every variety of attitude, as they have flung themselves down to sleep off the fumes of the strong red wine. The snatches of song, roared out in inebriated tones, are no longer merely ludicrous, but have come to be gross and indecent. The few dances which still go on, are mere wild rompings. Those drunkards who are not profoundly slumbering on the grass are gyrating unsteadily in the vain attempt to find the point of the compass where their homes lie. One man, in a condition of solemn intoxication, has dropped his hat, and stands swaying backwards and forwards, contemplating it as it lies on the ground, with a countenance of reproachful gravity. At length he is heard to address the following profound observation to his battered wide-awake:—

"If I pick you up, I tumble down; but if I tumble down, *you won't pick me up!*"

With which moving speech he staggers away, leaving the unfaithful hat to shift for itself on the now almost deserted piazza.

And now a faint, faint streak of palest yellow lengthens on the Eastern horizon. Birds chirp, half asleep, from their nests in the nooks and crevices of the ancient basilica of St. John. A little morning breeze goes shivering along the dry herbage, all strewn with squalid remnants of the feast. Suddenly, from the campanile of the church sound the bells, calling the faithful to early mass. The Day of St.

John has begun, and the remnant of last night's merry-makers, roused by the sound and the light, rub their heavy eyes, and stumble homeward, blinking like bats in the sunshine.

"LES GANTS GLACÉS."

(AN ANECDOTE OF THE FRONDE, 1650.)

WRAPPED in smoke stood the towers of Bethel,
The battle surged fierce by the town,
On terror, and struggle, and turmoil,
The sweet skies of Champagne looked down.
Far away smiled the beautiful uplands,
The blue Vosges lay solemn beyond;
Well France knew such discord of colour,
In the terrible days of the Fronde.

At the breach in the ramparts of Bethel
Each stone was bought dearly by blood,
For De Baslin was leading the stormers,
And Turenne on the battlements stood.
Again and again closed the conflict,
The madness of strife upon all.
Right well fought the ranks of the marahal,
Yet twice they fell back from the wall.

Twice, thrice, repulsed, baffled, and beaten,
They glared, where in gallant array,
Brave in gilding, and 'broidery, and feather,
The Guards, in reserve, watched the fray.
"En avant les gants glacés!" they shouted,
As sullenly rearward they bore,
The gaps deep and wide in their columns,
The lilies all dripping in gore.

"En avant les gants glacés!" and laughing
At the challenge, the Household Brigade
Dressed ranks, floated standards, blew trumpets,
And flashed out each glittering blade;
And carelessly, as to a banquet,
And joyously, as to a dance,
Where the Frondeurs in triumph were gathered,
Went the best blood of Scotland and France.

The gay plumes were shorn as in tempest,
The gay scarves stained crimson and black,
Storm of bullet and broadsword closed o'er them,
Yet never one proud foot turned back.
Though half of their number lay silent,
On the breach their last effort had won.
King Louis was master of Bethel
Ere the day and its story was done.

And the fierce taunting cry grew a proverb,
Ere revolt and its horrors were past;
For men knew, ere o'er France's fair valleys,
Peace waved her white banner at last,
That the softest of tones in the boudoir,
The lightest of steps in the "ronde,"
Was theirs, whose keen swords bit the deepest
In the terrible days of the Fronde.

OLD FIGHTING SHIPS.

THE "OLD TEMERAIRE" AND THE VENERABLE.

It was during the short peace of Amiens that Bonaparte, distrustful of our long sheathing the sword, prepared seriously for the invasion of England when war should be renewed. His plans for this purpose were as grand as those of the Cæsars. He encamped a hundred thousand men on the chalky heights of Ambletuse, and collected a vast fleet of gun-brigs, praams, and horse-transport boats at Boulogne—a place

where the restless conqueror of Europe had resolved to make a great harbour. France had no great natural ports, except the artificially-made one of Cherbourg, which was still incomplete. Toulon was small; Brest dangerous for large vessels; Rochefort and L'Orient, shoal and narrow; while, as all eminent writers on naval matters allow, in all that long roll of blue water—from Ushant to Dunkirk—there is no port of safety for any vessel of more than four hundred tons.

The great European confederacy against England had crumbled to pieces. Nelson, at Copenhagen, had humbled Denmark. The murder of that cruel madman, the Emperor Paul, had lost Russia to France, for Alexander was like his nation, anti-Gallic, and there was no hope of humbling that Carthage—England—but by providing a safe port from whence the grenadiers of Marengo could be poured into our intractable island.

It was just before the Treaty of Amiens that we first hear of that tough son of Neptune, the "Old Temeraire," originally a capture from the French. When we catch the first glimpse of her from the mast-head she is emerging from a white squall. It was when peace was ripening—but the diplomatic preliminaries were not yet signed—that discontent broke out in our fleet, and more especially on board the Temeraire, the flag-ship of Admiral Campbell. The causes of discontent were these: Nelson's attack on the Boulogne flotilla had proved that even genius may sometimes fail, and Napoleon's Admiral Gantheaume had slipped out of Brest with his fleet, and gone, as it was supposed, to attack San Domingo. Earl St. Vincent had instantly let fly his sea-hawks in pursuit, and Sir Robert Calder was scouring the West India seas in search of his swift-winged enemies.

The Channel Fleet was at this time divided into several squadrons—one watchful at Ushant, another wary at Torbay, a third discontented at Bantry Bay, under Rear-Admiral Campbell. All at once, as the sailors of this squadron (especially those of the Temeraire) were expecting release after eight or nine years' hard and dangerous service, and longing for service and freedom in the merchant service, for cans of flip and Poll-of-Portsmouth's society, a sudden and stern order from Earl St. Vincent had come to the Bay, ordering them off to Barbadoes, as soon as the anchors could

be slipped. Some of the officers being heard to grumble, saying that they would not serve in the West Indies in time of peace, this roused the already discontented sailors, who swore point blank, when the signal went up for sailing, that they would not go. Admiral Campbell acted promptly on board his flag-ship, the Temeraire. He and his officers at once handcuffed the ringleaders, put them under hatches, restored order by threats and promises among the rest, and instantly sailed for Spithead, to report progress and have the offenders tried.

Those slavish days of press-gangs and the boatswain's lash were no times for mercy. Sixteen brave seamen were put upon their trial, and six of the ringleaders hung to the yard-arm. Immediately after this stern lesson Admiral Campbell's squadron sailed for Barbadoes before fresh troubles could spring up.

The Temeraire's first laurel wreath was won on a noble field, and was a victory indeed. The story, however, requires to be prefaced by a few notes to remind our readers of the memorable events that had preceded that crushing victory. In 1802-3, the indefatigable Nelson had traversed six thousand six hundred and eighty-six miles of blue water in search of Villeneuve's fleet. For two years, less only ten days, he had never set foot out of the Victory. Worn out with fatigue and vexation he at last returned to Spithead. He had scarcely kissed the fair syren who bewitched him, when news came to his quiet retirement at Merton that Villeneuve, having refitted his fleet at Vigo and Ferrol, had arrived safe at Cadiz. The Victory was at once prepared, and Nelson's luggage (and his coffin, made from the mast of the L'Orient), put on board. The fine fleet, with which he sailed forth from Portsmouth on the 14th of September, 1805, prepared to "do or die," amounted to twenty-seven sail of the line. To his friend Collingwood the true hero wrote with generous ardour and patriotism, "We can, my dear Coll., have no trifling jealousies. We have only one great object in view—that of annihilating our enemies and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you, and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend, NELSON AND BRONTE."

Nelson's preparations were cool and business-like. The transports were filled with empty wine-pipes, hoops, staves,

and condemned provisions from all the squadrons. Instead of red, white, and blue flags for the three divisions of the fleet, Nelson, for greater contrast with the enemy, ordered all his ships to fight under a St. George's ensign, and to hoist union jacks at the foretopmast and top-gallant stays. The French and Spaniards painting the hoops round their masts black, Nelson painted his yellow. In case of any failure of signals, Nelson's captains were told at Cadiz, as a simple and changeless rule, that no one could do wrong who placed his ship alongside that of an enemy, and fought till he killed or conquered.

Villeneuve at last, learning that Nelson had sent off five of his vessels to escort a convoy from Gibraltar to Malta, and, ignorant of the fact that Nelson had just been reinforced by five other vessels, ventured out from Cadiz one fine evening with thirty-six vessels (thirty sail of the line, four frigates, two brigs). The English fleet comprised twenty-seven sail of the line (seven three-deckers, three sixty-fours) and four frigates.

The fleets joined battle on the 21st of October, at thirty minutes past eleven. At the intercession of Captain (afterwards the Honourable Sir Henry) Blackwood, Nelson had given the Temeraire permission to lead the weather-line, followed by the Leviathan; but neither of these ships could pass Nelson, who would not shorten sail. The Temeraire (ninety-eight)—taken at the battle of the Nile—was commanded by Captain Eliab Harvey (afterwards Admiral Harvey), a brave officer, who had served with Lord Howe on the North American coast, and had afterwards distinguished himself at the reduction of Martinique and Guadaloupe in 1794. Nelson pushed straight at Villeneuve's double row with two lines like the horns of a bull. The Victory was steered straight, through a raking fire, for the bow of the Santissima Trinidad—a huge Spanish four decker. Unable to break the line without running on board a French ship, the Victory grappled with the Redoubtable (whose tops were filled with riflemen), and was received with a broadside, the French instantly closing their lower-deck ports, for fear of the boarders, and firing no more great guns during the whole action. The Temeraire then, like a staunch comrade, fell on board the Redoubtable on the other side. A second French ship was, in like manner, on board the Temeraire, so that the four vessels lay as

if moored in dock, their heads all pointing the same way. The lieutenants of the Victory, seeing this, depressed their middle and lower-deck guns, and fired with a diminished charge, for fear the shot should pass through the Redoubtable and pierce the Temeraire.

In this great fight with two antagonists, the Temeraire lost forty-seven men, and had seventy-six wounded. In this great battle of Trafalgar, that shattered for ever Napoleon's hopes of naval supremacy, nineteen Spanish and French sail of the line were taken or destroyed, and our loss was four hundred and twenty-three officers and men killed, and eleven hundred and fifty-four wounded.

In 1839, our great English painter, Turner, who passionately loved the sea, exhibited at the Royal Academy his fine picture of "The Fighting Temeraire" being towed to her last moorings. The subject was suggested to the painter by Stanfield. In 1838 Turner was with Stanfield and a party of brother artists on one of those holiday excursions in which he so delighted, probably to end with whitebait and champagne at Greenwich. It was at those times Turner talked and joked his best, snatching now and then a moment to print on his quick brain some tone of sky, some gleam of water, some sprinkling light of oar, some glowing sunshine cross-barring a sail. Suddenly there moved down upon the artist's boat the grand old vessel that had been taken prisoner at the Nile, and that led the van at Trafalgar; she loomed pale and ghostly, and was being towed to her last moorings at Deptford by a little fiery steam-tug.

"There's a fine subject, Turner," said Stanfield. So Turner went home and painted it, and it proved one of his most poetical pictures.

It is said that when Turner was obliged to give the correct name of the ship to the engraver, he almost shed tears at having to change the name of his picture to "The Old Temeraire." Mr. Ruskin considers this picture as the last of Turner's, executed with the painter's entire and perfect power.

When the old Temeraire left Plymouth for her last cruise, the officers and men in the dockyard gave her three cheers at parting—cheers of gratitude and regret. At Deptford she was to cease to be a ship, and to become a hospital hulk for the sailors of all nations. "Turner looked at her," says the author of his life, "not as

his old friend going to the grave, but as an old warrior going to his rest; to celebrate its grand apotheosis, he transformed the sky and earth into a gory battle-field, and in gorgeous crimson sunset she moves in pomp to her burial. In Turner's eyes she was then no longer the pale ghost of her former self, but a war ship moving through the sulphurous flame at Trafalgar, with the blood oozing through her planks as the wine pours from the wine-press at vintage-time. He knew, when he painted this picture, that he should touch the heart of England, because his own heart beat faster as he painted."

And now, moving from victory to victory, we turn to the deeds of the Venerable (seventy-four)—that fine old man-of-war that bore Duncan's flag at Camperdown. In 1796, Duncan, who had served with distinction under Keppel and Rodney, held the command of our North-Sea station, his limits extending from the South Foreland to Shetland, and from Calais to an indefinite distance in Norway—a radius worthy of the Queen of the Seas. Duncan commanded a squadron of sixty to seventy sail. Our gallant Admiral's special post was a "hot corner" with us—the mouth of the Texel, watching for the Gallo-Batavian fleet. The mutiny in the English fleet for advance of wages, ending in 1797 with the very serious one at the *Nore*, had given the Dutch hopes that they might, perhaps, defeat our low-manned ships, though our mutinous sailors had all declared that if the enemy put to sea they would out at once and fight them, and then return into port and renew their complaints. Our Admiral's ship, the Venerable, had indeed been mixed up in the *Nore* mutiny, but had been quick to return to better courses.

The French Government was just then planning an invasion of Ireland, and the Dutch Texel fleet was intended to make a powerful diversion at sea. Our ships were of poor quality, with the exception of the Venerable and two or three vessels that joined Duncan from Portsmouth a few days previous to the battle, but it is just to allow that the Dutch ships were clumsy and slow, foul with long lying in harbour, while the crews were raw and awkward, and the officers, though brave, unskilful.

On October 9th, 1797, the master of a cutter brought news to Duncan, who was taking in provisions at Yarmouth, that the Dutch had put to sea. At eleven a.m.

on the 11th, the Admiral obtained a sight of the enemy forming in line on the larboard tack—the wind at N.W. The sandy line between Camperdown and Egmont was seen about nine miles to leeward of the enemy. The Admiral did not wait to mature a theory, scheme, or plan, but at once sent aloft a signal to the ready fleet to bear up, break their line, and engage to leeward every one his man. The vessels at once got between the enemy and dry land, and fell to work hot and fast. Vice-Admiral Onslow in the *Monarch* was the first to bear down on the enemy's rear, his division followed as hounds do their leader, and the action commenced "hammer and tongs" about forty minutes past noon. The Dutch, from the moment they had caught sight of us, had been sidling back towards Holland, so the battle took place in nine fathoms water off the sand-hills of Camperdown, say about three leagues from the land. The wind was dead on the land, or west-north-west, and it was dangerous to get nearer the enemy's shore. Onslow made a gallant fight of it in the *Monarch*, and soon made the Dutch Vice-Admiral's flagship, the *Jupiter*, lower her mast and strike her colours. As for Duncan, he stuck with a bull-dog's hold to the Dutch Admiral, and swept the flagship, the *Vreyheid* (*Freedom*), seventy-four, with storms of fire. In first moving down to her, Duncan was stopped by the *States General*, a fine Dutch ship of seventy-six guns, but the Venerable soon silenced her, and drove her out of the line just as a schoolboy's taw tangents a meaner marble, and on went the Venerable in her angry majesty full tilt at the big Dutchman.

The fight lasted pell mell for two hours, till the Dutch ship had all her masts gone by the board, her sides riddled like a cullender, the decks strewn with bodies, and the scuppers spouting blood. All the vessels on both sides, with the exception of two or three cautious laggards, had by this time joined in the *melée* in which the Dutch were so fairly beaten. About the time the *Jupiter* threw down her arms, many of the other Dutch vessels struck. Brave Captain Burges, who brought the *Ardent* (sixty-four) gallantly into action, was killed soon after the engagement commenced, and the command of the ship was taken by Lieutenant Phillips, who continued the fighting with the utmost intrepidity.

Of the Dutch fleet we took the *Jupiter* (afterwards the *Camperdown*), (seventy-

four), the Haerlem (sixty-eight), the Admiral Devries (sixty-eight), the Gelykheid (sixty-eight), the Warender (sixty-four), the Hercules (sixty-four), and the Delft (fifty-six). The Munikendam was lost not long afterwards, and the Ambuscade was driven on the coast of Holland, but soon after recaptured. The States-General (seventy-four), the Brutus (seventy-four), the Daphne brig (eighteen), the Atalanta (eighteen), the Ajax (eighteen), the Haasje (sixteen), took advantage of the night, stole away, and being near their own coast, hid ingloriously in the Texel. The Cerberus (eighteen), the Leyden (sixty-eight), the Beschermer (fifty-four), the Batavier (fifty-four), the Mars (forty-four), the Helder (thirty-two), the Minerva (twenty-four), the Waaksamheid (twenty-six), and the Galathee (sixteen), were soon afterwards captured. In the waves off Camperdown on that October day, 1797, sank the naval crown of the Dutch; for only four or five vessels escaped with Admiral Story. Thus with twenty-four ships and eleven hundred and ninety-eight guns, we beat twenty-six Dutch ships with twelve hundred and fifty-five guns. Our loss amounted to two hundred and three killed and five hundred and thirty-nine wounded. The Dutch suffered heavily, no fewer than five hundred men being killed in the two flag ships alone. The vessels in our fleet that bore the brunt of the action were the Venerable, the Monarch, the Bedford, the Isis, the Ardent, the Belliqueux, the Lancaster, the Powerful, and the Triumph. The Monarch had one hundred and thirty-six men and the Ardent one hundred and forty-eight killed and wounded. One or two of our vessels fought rather shy of the warm spots, and had no one killed or injured. Captain Williamson, of the Agincourt (sixty-four), was tried by court martial on his return for this untimely display of a retiring disposition. He was sentenced to be dismissed from his command, and to be placed at the bottom of the list of post-captains. His death was reported shortly afterwards, but it was generally believed that he changed his name, and received his half-pay many years longer.

The Delft, one of the ships taken, was in so shattered a state, that after the greatest exertion for five days to keep her from sinking, all hope of saving her was given up. The English prize-officer called aside Mr. Hieberg, who had been first

Lieutenant of the Delft, and who remained on board with the sick and wounded prisoners who were not in a condition to be removed, and represented that it was impossible to save all; that he intended, at a certain signal, to throw himself, with his men, into the long-boat; and he invited Hieberg to do the same.

"What!" exclaimed Hieberg, "and leave these unfortunate men!" pointing to his wounded countrymen, who it had been necessary to bring on deck, as the hold was already full of water,—“No, no; go, and leave us to perish together.”

The English officer, affected by the generosity of Hieberg's answer, replied, "God bless you, my brave fellow! Here is my hand; I give you my word I will stay with you." He then caused his own men to leave the ship, and remained himself behind to assist the Dutch. The Russell soon sent her boats to their assistance, which brought off as many as could leap on board of them. The Delft was now cleared of all but Hieberg and the English officer, with three Dutch subalterns, and about thirty seamen, most of them so ill from their wounds as to be unable to move. While still cherishing a hope that the boats would come a third time, the fatal moment arrived, and on a sudden the Delft gave a gulp and went down. The English officer sprang into the sea and swam to his own ship: but the unfortunate Hieberg perished, a victim of his courage and humanity.

It was in this glorious action that the following instances of daring bravery occurred among the many which so nobly distinguished the character of the British tar. During the time the Venerable was closely engaged with the Vreyhied, the flag halliards of the former were shot away; a young man, named John Crawford, instantly ascended the mast to again hoist the colours; and to prevent a recurrence of a similar accident, he actually nailed the flag to the maintop-gallant mast-head, declaring that it should not come down again but with the mast!

This intrepid youth was a native of Sunderland, which town prepared a medal at its own expense and presented it to him for his heroic conduct on this occasion.

A marine, of the name of Covey, was carried down to the cockpit, deprived of both his legs; and it was necessary, some hours after, to amputate still higher. "I suppose," said Covey, "those scissors will

finish the business of the bullet, Master Mate?" "Indeed, my brave fellow," cried the surgeon, "there is some fear of it." "Well, never mind," said Covey, "I've lost my legs, to be sure, and, mayhap, lose my life; but we beat the Dutch, my boy!—we've beat the Dutch! This blessed day my legs has been shot off, so I'll have another cheer for it. Huzza! huzza!" Covey recovered, and became cook of one of the ships in ordinary at Portsmouth, where he died in the year 1805.

During the battle there were several women on board the Venerable, the English admiral's flag-ship. Amongst these a sailor's wife was shot by the side of her husband, whom she was assisting at his gun. Another young woman had the lantern-bottle shot from her hand while she was holding it for the surgeon to dress the wounds of her father; and, perceiving him look terrified, she ran to him, and cried, "If you have not received any more hurt, never mind the lantern. I am safe and sound, thank God! But how are you? Oh! father, how are you?"

After the capture of the fleet, as the Dutch admiral was ascending the side of the Venerable, to do homage to the British conqueror, a sailor, who had been on the watch some time, no sooner saw De Winter mounting the vessel than he eagerly thrust his hand from an open port-hole, and exclaimed, "Mynheer Admiral, we have been long on the lookout for you, and I am glad to see you, by—. You will be kindly received on the quarter-deck, and so you ought to be, for you fought us like a trump, and knocked us about like nine-pins, for which I hope you will let me be the first to shake your honour's hand." De Winter presented his hand, and the blunt English sailor received it respectfully.

Lord Duncan's reception of his brave captive was courteous and generous. He stood ready at the side of the ship to offer him the embrace of a generous victor, fully sensible of the bravery of the vanquished. De Winter was much affected, and, with deep emotion, exclaimed, "O admiral! you see before you the only Dutch naval commander ever taken alive; but why should I droop? A thousand open mouths of my ship, and of yours, also, bear witness and will all speak for me. They will certify that I did not quit my vessel till she was a wreck."

De Winter behaved nobly, and was the

only person on board his ship who was not either killed or wounded. When he presented his sword, Admiral Duncan gallantly returned it to him with as gallant a compliment. When the two admirals were seen together, it was universally acknowledged that they were the finest-looking men in both fleets. After the duties of the day were all done, these brave fellows dined together in the most amicable manner, and concluded the evening by playing a friendly rubber of whist!

Our gallant admiral's address to the officers of his fleet, when they came on board his ship for final instructions, previous to this memorable engagement, was couched in the following laconic and humorous manner:—"Gentlemen of my fleet, you see a very severe Winter fast approaching; and I have only to advise you to keep up a good fire!"

For their meritorious conduct in this engagement, Admiral Duncan, his officers, and seamen, received the thanks of both houses of Parliament. The admiral was honoured by his Majesty with the dignity of a Viscount of Great Britain and a pension of three thousand pounds per annum, for his public services. Vice-Admiral Onslow was created a baronet. The city of London presented Admiral Duncan with its freedom, and a sword of the value of two hundred guineas; and to Vice-Admiral Onslow the freedom, with a sword of the value of one hundred guineas. His Majesty went in state to St. Paul's Cathedral, to return thanks for the victory, and to deposit there the flags taken on that and other eminent occasions, Lord Duncan carrying the one he had taken in person.

Captains Trollope and William George Fairfax, of the Venerable, were for this victory created by King George knights bannerets. The Dutch Vice-Admiral, Rentjies, who was taken prisoner at the action, died shortly afterwards in England of his wounds.

In 1813 the old Venerable again showed her mettle. She was commanded by Rear-Admiral (afterwards Sir) P. H. C. Durham, and was on her way to Barbadoes, in company with the Cyane, a twenty-four gun sloop, when she fell in with the Alcmenes (forty-four) and the Iphigenie (forty-four) two French frigates. The two Frenchmen had agreed to lay the perfidious English line-of-battle-ship on board at the same moment, but, unfortu-

nately, while the Alcmena's courage rose on being overtaken, the Iphiginie's courage sank. Captain Worth, of the Venerable, the instant his helm was put up, threw a hundred men on board the Alcmena, cutlass in hand, and they soon settled the matter by hauling down the tricolor—killing thirty-two Frenchmen, and wounding fifty others. After a chase of nineteen hours, our admiral also came up with and captured the faithless Iphiginie. Both were new ships, victualled for six months, and fresh from Cherbourg.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LVI. TEA WITH AN ACTRESS.

ROSETTA lodged in the house of a carver and gilder, who dealt also in pictures. The rooms she occupied on the first floor were comfortably furnished, although they wore rather an untidy air. A bonnet and a parasol were deposited upon the cheffonier; there was a hair-brush upon the mantelpiece, amid a litter of soiled gloves, laces, scraps of paper, ribbons, and other odds and ends. The chairs were much occupied by parcels, bandboxes, and articles of dress. A handsome shawl, hurriedly discarded, apparently, rested half upon the sofa, and half streaming down upon the floor. There were slippers within the fender, and a pair of clogs under the table. Allowing for the feminine character of the majority of these objects, the apartment had about it, I thought, rather the disordered and neglected look of a young bachelor's abode.

The fumes of an early dinner of a succulent and highly-seasoned kind—roast pork, I decided—were very present in the house.

I was heartily greeted by Rosetta. "My Duke! How pleased I am to see you!"

She wore a closely-fitting dark merino dress, which displayed her rounded symmetrical figure to advantage. Her hair was somewhat disarranged, thrust from her face in tangled masses; but its variegated richness of colour, its light auburn about her temples and brow, and the many threads of gold that were intertwined in its cables of deep brown, were perhaps best exhibited in that way. I was duly introduced to Mrs. Bembridge; a stout old lady in a lace cap trimmed with scarlet ribbons—which relieved the high suffused colour of

her face. She was sitting near the open window reading a Sunday newspaper, through tortoiseshell rimmed spectacles. She had rather fierce eyes, with heavy black eyebrows.

"I'm glad to see you. You're a good young man, I'm told, and what a comfort that is to think of. There's not too many of 'em about, that I can see. Find a chair, if you can. Rosy, my dear, your rubbish is all over the place."

Mrs. Bembridge gave me her hand; it was small, soft and white—she was proud of it, I think. There were many rings upon her fingers. Rosetta's hand was shapely, but large, with rather a manly hardness about its palm. There was a decanter of sherry on the table, with wine-glasses and a plateful of filberts. These Rosetta cracked readily with her strong white teeth, throwing the husks out of the window. Mrs. Bembridge preferred to use nutcrackers, I noticed. Time had perhaps unfurnished her mouth, although the dentist had apparently refitted it, handsomely enough. But his handiwork could scarcely be applied to such a violent exercise as nutcracking.

"My dear, the stuff they put in the papers!" exclaimed Mrs. Bembridge. "You never read such nonsense. There's a fellow here telling me how I ought to play Mrs. Malaprop—as though I wasn't the best judge of that, at my time of life. Why, I'll warrant I played Mrs. Malaprop before this creature was short-coated. If you ever want to find where the people are who teach their grandmothers to suck eggs, I'll tell you where to look for them—in the newspaper offices. I've no patience with the man: setting me right about Mrs. Malaprop—a likely thing indeed!"

I soon gathered that there had been a representation of *The Rivals* on the previous night, and that the journal Mrs. Bembridge had been reading contained some adverse comments upon her performance in that comedy.

"What does it matter, mother?" asked Rosetta. "Don't be cross."

"It doesn't matter, Rosy. What does anything matter? And I'm not cross, as it happens. Only these things put me out of temper. They'd put you out, too; only you know the writer has loaded you with praise. He can't find words good enough for you. You're perfection, and something more, it seems. What a thing it is to be young, and to have bright eyes!"

Rosetta sighed, stirring her spoon in an empty cup, meditatively.

Presently we were discussing theatrical topics—the triumphs that the future had in store for Rosetta; the past successes and the experiences generally of Mrs. Bembridge. I was an entertained and sympathetic auditor.

We were disturbed by a loud knocking at the street door.

CHAPTER LVII. ROSETTA'S CONFESSIONS.

ROSETTA and Mrs. Bembridge started and looked significantly at each other.

"I cannot see him," said Rosetta, rather faintly, "if it's—you know who!"

"Of course it is. You'd better let me go."

"If you would, mother." Mrs. Bembridge rose, smoothed her skirts and left the room with rather a determined air.

"It does seem strange that you should be here, Duke; you who know so much of my life—though you don't know all. We were but boy and girl when we first met; what a while ago it seems! I'm a woman, now, famous and envied, so people tell me. But I'm not much to be envied when all's said. Knowing what you know, you can think more kindly of me than the others can. Or if you blame me, you'll not blame me so harshly as they would, perhaps."

She was speaking in a sad, soft, musing tone, as she leant forward, pressing her hands upon her forehead. After a few minutes Mrs. Bembridge re-appeared, with a flush of anger upon her face.

"The old story," she said curtly.

"Is he sober?"

"Need you ask?"

Rosetta sighed, went to her desk, which stood on the cheffonier, took from it a scrap of folded paper—a bank note, I felt sure—which she handed to Mrs. Bembridge.

"It's too bad, Rosy."

"It must be, mother. I can't let him want."

"Why not?"

"You know I can't—only he must keep away from the theatre. He must promise that."

"I've no patience. He'll promise anything."

"Give it him, please, mother. Tell him he must make it last a long time—and send him away."

It was now dusk; street lamps were lighted and shining into the room. I had been sitting near the window, looking

out into the quiet street. It was Sunday, and there was little traffic. A man was standing by the post at the corner, crying "Walnuts" with a fruit basket poised on his head. There was no one else to be seen.

Mrs. Bembridge had again left the room. I was alone with Rosetta. She did not speak, but I could hear her sigh. I could hear, too, voices in the narrow hall down stairs. Presently the street door closed noisily.

"Come from the window, Duke," said Rosetta, starting up with some excitement of manner. "Yet what does it matter?" she added, almost in the same breath.

A figure crossed the roadway: a shuffling stumbling figure, dingily dressed, so far as I could see in the uncertain light, round-shouldered, and bowed forward, as it moved along. I could not be mistaken.

"Lord Overbury!" I said almost in a whisper.

"My husband!" Rosetta had hidden her face in her hands. She was crying, I think.

"Husband, indeed!" Mrs. Bembridge had hurriedly re-entered. "Come, Rosy, let's have no more of this nervous hysterical nonsense. Rouse yourself. 'Light up!' Let's have candles, and shut the shutters. I hate this sitting in the dark, like so many cats. If you can see, I can't. This 'between the lights,' as people call it, gives me the blue devils always. I begin to think myself a wicked old woman, and that there's nothing worth living for, and that the sooner I'm 'called,' for good, the better it will be for all parties. The wind blows cold, too. It isn't summer weather, you know. Shut out the night, and the cold, and the dark, and let's be as cheerful as we can. An old body like me may be allowed to be dull and dreary; but for two young folks such as you and our friend here to be giving way to the dismal like this, it's perfectly disgraceful—that's what it is. And on a Sunday, too, of all days in the week!"

Rosetta closed the windows, drew the curtains, and placed lighted candles upon the table. But she did all this as one in a dream might do it, and without uttering a word. Presently she resumed her former place at the table, again leaning forward, resting her head upon her hands.

"My husband," she repeated, softly. "For you know, mother, I always thought him my husband."

"Well, what does it all matter, now?"

demanded Mrs. Bembridge. "You were wrong, as it happened; but it wasn't your fault. Who dares say it was? You were wrong, and the man was a wretch. That's all about it. A good many men are wretches, and that's the truth."

"I was a mad, foolish girl."

"That's very likely."

"I had not sense enough to doubt him; and how was I to know that she was living?"

"You couldn't, of course you couldn't. My dear, you were shamefully used. There's not another word to be said about it. And now, for Heaven's sake, talk of something else."

"No, mother, I must talk of this."

"Well, then, excuse me if I take the easy chair and the newspaper and sit in the corner. And don't be shocked if I have a nap. I can't bear to hear you going on in this way, Rosy. What good can it do to you or me, or to our young friend here, or, indeed, to any one?"

"No good, mother. That's true enough."

"If you'd taken my advice, you'd have locked that monster up long ago, and let the law punish him, as the law would, if it's worth anything, of which, I own, I've doubts."

"I couldn't do that, mother. You know I couldn't. He's not really my husband—that seems plain enough."

"Not a doubt of it. You've been told so over and over again by people who should know, and who do know. That other woman was alive—lives still, I believe. You know what old Vickery said."

"Vickery!" I exclaimed.

"What, do you know him?" asked Mrs. Bembridge. "He's an old friend of mine. He knew all about the case. He, or the lawyer he was with—I don't understand these distinctions—but he's not exactly what you call a lawyer himself—had been mixed up in that wretch's business years ago."

I noticed that they never once mentioned Lord Overbury by name, although there could be no possible doubt that it was to him they referred. But Vickery! It took me by surprise to hear of him in connection with Rosetta's marriage.

"You may take old Vickery's word for it, Rosy," Mrs. Bembridge continued; "and if I've said so once, I'm sure I've said so a hundred times—that your marriage was no marriage."

"He's not really my husband," Rosetta

repeated. "I know that well enough. I ought to. Still I thought he was; and that protects him. It's not for me to punish him. Besides——"

"You'll say you love him next."

"No; but he knocked down Diavolo! I can never forget that. You don't know what a leap towards him my heart took when he did that!"

"Rosetta, you're crazy to go on in this way. At times you're a sensible girl enough, as girls go; but to-night you're fairly crazy." Mrs. Bembridge settled herself in her easy chair and retired behind the newspaper. "I'm sorry you let your friend, Mr. Nightingale, see you in this state. I'm ashamed of you. I don't know what's come to you. I can only assure you Mr. Nightingale, that my lady is not often thus."

"But Duke was there!" cried Rosetta. "He saw him knock down Diavolo, at a blow! a single blow! although Diavolo was as strong as a giant. He could lift enormous weights with his teeth. He could bend bars of iron. He could twist a poker round his neck until it met in front. Yet he went down at a blow! I can hear even now the thump of his fall upon the earth." She spoke with extraordinary excitement; but, after a pause, she continued in a calmer tone. "Ah, Duke, you saw that, you remember? But who could forget it? You were standing by, a mere boy at the time, yet even you, when Diavolo struck me, tried to rush in and shield me. I saw you though I mocked you at the time. My dear, you could have done nothing. Diavolo was my master. He often struck me; he had a right to—so they all said. I was his apprentice. I was to be taught, and beaten if need be, until I did what he told me. What a life it was! And how long it had been going on! It seemed to me that it would never end. I remember Diavolo almost as long as I remember anything. And there was no one to come between him and me; no one dared, he being such a wretch as he was. For father and mother—they were idle, meaningless words to me—I knew nothing of them. I was a stray child. Heaven only can tell why or when or where I came into the world. I came to be Diavolo's apprentice—and for that only, as it seemed. Well, he fed and clothed me after a fashion—and somehow, I learnt to read and write—I often wonder now how that happened. But something I picked up from the other children, his apprentices,

who had been, so far, a little more fortunate than myself. I learnt my letters, I remember, from the bills outside the tents, and something the riders and the circus people taught me. They were kind to me—there are many good true hearts among them—very kind; for they saw what a poor forlorn little wretch I was, and how cruelly Diavolo used me. But they did not dare to interfere much, for that only made it the worse for me. I can hear the whistling of his horrible cane even now; I can almost feel it slashing upon my poor shoulders. What a miserable life it was! Not that I was always crying and repining; don't think that, Duke. I had a child's glad heart—a child's happy forgetfulness—at times I could laugh and make merry with the rest, when our tyrant's back was turned. Once I remember, while he was at the public-house, we broke up and burnt his cane. But we suffered the more for it afterwards; he bought a thicker one. And I liked the applause, the rows and rows of admiring faces, the sea of clapping hands—when I danced. They threw flowers to me sometimes, and sometimes halfpence. I was welcome to the flowers; but the halfpence Diavolo took to buy drink with—for himself. Still, what a life it was, I say again! I shudder and shiver as I think of it. Are you listening, mother?" she asked, suddenly turning to Mrs. Bembridge.

"No, my dear. If I were to listen, I should cry. Besides, I've heard it all before."

"Well, Duke, then you came with him. You both spoke kindly to me—he was rough in his ways, but still he was kind, he meant to be kind—while you were blushing and trembling like a girl, with admiration and love. Wasn't it so? But we won't speak of that. He offered me escape. Think what that was to me! Escape from my miserable life, from blows, and cruelty, and want—from Diavolo! I could not hesitate. It was not because he was a lord and rich, as they said. That was but a small part of the temptation. It was not for love, heaven knows!—the man was old and hideous. But he was able to save and protect me. I had seen him strike down Diavolo. It was very wicked, no doubt; but my heart thrilled with joy and gratitude to him when he did that. I felt that he had fairly won me, and might wear me if he chose—that when he said 'come with me,' I needs must go—there was no

help for it. It was escape, at any rate, let come what might afterwards. So, as you know, I went with him—away from you, from the fair, from Diavolo, from my old life, as I thought, for ever, in a post-chaise and four; it was the first time I had ever travelled so grandly."

She paused for a few moments, collecting her thoughts, as it seemed, or dwelling upon her memories of the past.

"I was to be his wife; he promised me that—he swore it—he was always swearing. I was but a child in years—ignorant enough, I need not say; yet something I had learnt, more than most children perhaps, of the world's wickedness. I had a knife with me. I had kept it hidden by me ready sharpened for some time—to use it—I scarce know how—against myself perhaps, or Diavolo, though I never had courage enough for that, often and often as I wished for his death. But I am wearying you with this long story. He kept his word to me; at least he seemed to keep it. We journeyed on and on, without stopping, weary hours and hours, fast as four horses could go. Diavolo gave chase, but not for long, I heard afterwards, and he took the wrong road. If he had overtaken us, he could have done nothing. He would have been knocked down again, perhaps. And I had my knife! We were married in Scotland, just across the border. It was a lawful marriage, people said, though it took scarcely a minute. I was given my marriage lines, and I called myself, like a fool, Lady Overbury, and thought it sounded well."

"I don't want to be unjust to him," she resumed presently. "He was violent, reckless, and for a long while we wandered hither and thither in a purposeless way; we had no settled abode. He was not rich, as it proved; indeed people said he was ruined, though somehow he had money enough to squander. Still he was kind to me when he was himself; but that wasn't always, for he drank like Diavolo, and then he didn't know what he said or did. I was treated at first like a spoilt child, or a pet plaything. I amused him, I suppose. Then came his sullen morose fits, and he was unendurable, or his storms of wild anger, and then he was worse. He grew tired of me—but he didn't beat me—so far he was not the tyrant Diavolo had been. And at first, in his good-humoured moods, he even took some pains to educate me. I learnt lessons and did exercises. That didn't last long. Still it

improved me. He had read many books, you know, Duke," she explained, simply; "he had been to college and was really learned—though he had not turned his learning to very good account. But he was very different in that way to the people—the riders and circus folks—I had lived amongst. For all his strange looks, and rough doings, he was a nobleman, and had not altogether forgotten how to behave like one. He was bad enough, but he was not all bad. And he would have me be a lady, he said; he corrected me when my words or my ways seemed to be too much those of the circus. He made me rich presents; he bought splendid dresses for me to wear. And then I used to act, and learn speeches, and recite them, to please him or to keep him in a good humour. I was a different creature, after my marriage, to the child you saw in the booth at the fair. My marriage, I say, for I thought I was married. But he tired of me, as I said. And then we quarrelled. I was jealous; as his wife, I had cause to be. We led a wretched life together. At times I thought him downright mad. I ran away from him, as you know. I was not too patient, perhaps; but indeed it was more than I could bear. You found me in the snow. I was going, I hardly know where, now—back to my old life somehow—for I knew that Diavolo was dead. I saw it in the newspaper. Your mother—good, kind, sweet soul—took me back to the Hall. It was best, perhaps. He had brought me there—why, I don't know—it was a sudden freak of his. We had moved about in that way, going from place to place, like gipsies, or soldiers on a march. Well, we made up our quarrel for the time. He promised amendment—promised all sorts of things—and we were friends again. It's odd, I think now, the sort of power he possessed over me then. I was afraid of him, and I was grateful to him. Had he so willed, I should have stayed with him for ever—wretch that he was—if only he had given me a kind word now and then. But that wasn't to be. You loved me—didn't you, Duke? and didn't you—or was it all a dream?—look in at the window when I was sitting with him beside the fire in the little room at the Hall? that bitter night, after your mother had taken me home?"

"It was not a dream, Rosetta," I

answered, with some feeling of shame at the thought of my old infatuation, and I related some particulars of my adventures on that memorable night.

"You loved me, my Duke! How proud I ought to feel—and I *was* proud of it—I knew it, though I knew too that it was folly, and that it wouldn't, couldn't last. Still my heart yearned very tenderly towards you, Duke. And yet, in some strange way, your love did not then seem so much to me as one kind word from him. I can't explain it. I can't reason upon it. I dreaded him, at times I loathed him—you know something of what he was—not all; and yet at times I almost loved him too. At least, so it seemed to me, and so, looking back upon it now, with very changed eyes, it still seems to me. You see, Duke, we women are strange creatures. If you haven't found that out for yourself, you will. We're very, very strange creatures."

"Speak for yourself, Rosy, please," interposed Mrs. Bembridge. "Don't speak for me, at any rate. I'll not own that I'm a strange creature, if I die for it."

"Have you been listening, mother?"

"No. But I couldn't help hearing. How can I sleep with all that incessant chatter, chatter, going on? It's nonsensical enough to set one dozing—but it doesn't. When are you going to stop?"

"Very soon now. But you said I had 'the talks' on me. I must make your words good. And my Duke isn't tired."

"I think I caught something about his having once been in love with you. I don't wonder that he soon changed his mind."

"I'm just coming to where I met with the dearest, kindest soul in the world, who took pity on me, and sheltered and helped me in my very sore need. Who saved me, and who's been a mother to me since, the best of mothers, and who is my dear old friend for ever." She rose quickly and caressed her friend.

"I don't want kisses. But I should like," said Mrs. Bembridge, "a glass of hot brandy and water, strong, with sugar in it—or I'm sure I shall not get a wink of sleep this blessed night."

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGBEED," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXVII. DISCARDED.

To think upon the wretchedness that had so suddenly come upon her, to exchange her bright visions of happiness for forebodings for the future that were only too certain to be realised, was trial enough for a tender heart like Evy's; but there was worse to be encountered—it was necessary for her to act. She must herself invite the last stroke of evil fortune, in telling her lover that he was hers no longer. By word of mouth, she felt that she could never accomplish this. If he once got speech with her, and asked, "But do you no longer love me, then?" she could not answer, "Nay." Her whole soul revolted against that falsehood. To see him, to touch his hand, to hear his voice, and then to dismiss him, was an ordeal too terrible for her to face. No, she could not do it. She must write.

The letter to her lover was not the difficulty that some might have expected it to be; words flow free and fast enough when woe makes us despairing; it is only where there is hope—alternative—that one needs to pick and choose for them. Evy dwelt, not much but strongly, upon the completeness of the ruin that had befallen her uncle; on the sacrifice that her lover had already made for her, and which, she said, she had been wrong to accept, and on the absolute impossibility of her permitting him to proceed further in the path of self-denial. Then she touched upon the calamity that had recently befallen her home; she could not bring herself to hint at the scandalous rumours of which Judith had spoken, though they

were very present to her mind, but she spoke of her uncle, as being as broken in health and spirits as in fortune, and needing for the future her exclusive care. Even if circumstances had not otherwise changed with her, it would have been only her duty, she said, to have given up the idea of marriage for years to come, if not altogether, upon this account alone. As it was, she said, her resolution was immutable. She did not pretend that her affection for her lover had suffered any diminution; but she besought him by it, for her own sake, to take this communication as final. Not to do so would be to put her to inexpressible distress; while the answer to any letter, the result of any interview, must needs be still the rejection of his suit. She stated this in the most distinct and positive manner of which she was capable, and then concluded with a few words of farewell, that cost her more than all the rest. The pen trembled in her fingers, and the tears rained down upon the page, as she bade him forget her, and forgive the pain she had caused him, and wished him a more worthy wife, and happy days. Then she signed it—merely with her name—she might not write, "Your loving Evy," nor could she bring herself to set down colder words—just Evy Carthew.

When Jane came with the cup of tea, the letter was ready for the post, and Evy despatched it thither by her hand; when it should once be gone and out of her power to recall it, it seemed to her that she would feel more calm; passionate regrets would be stifled, being no longer stirred by doubt. And to some extent this was so. As when a stately ship, rudely buffeted by tempest, and encumbered with fallen mast and rigging, rights herself, the wreck being cut away, and contrives to make her way towards

port, so she, having with her own hand cast off all that made life worth living for, seemed now more able, though having no haven, at least to keep afloat upon the troubled waves.

As though she would at once have begun that lifelong task she had imposed upon herself, Evy returned to her uncle's room, and with difficulty prevailed upon him to partake of some refreshment—for he had touched nothing throughout the day. He had it brought to him upstairs, and imagined that Evy had had her dinner as usual; whereas a piece of bread would that day have gone nigh to choke her, even had not the presence of Judith at table put her eating anything out of the question. She was not angry with Judith. Her own exceeding wretchedness forbade her entertaining any such feeling toward her; but she felt that her companionship would be just then intolerable. And so the evening wore away, and the night came on wherein she could neither sleep nor weep, and the longed-for dawn appeared at last, only to mock her with its light and song.

Then she arose, and went out into the garden, and paced the cliff walk till breakfast-time. That was about the hour, she knew, when Jack would get her letter. Would he write to her in return, or yield to her entreaties and not write? If he wrote he would be sure to send his answer by special messenger. Whatever it might be, it could make no difference, as she had told him; but the thought that his dear hand might at that moment be penning his words of farewell as she hoped, of passionate vain remonstrance as she feared, and then that the note was on its way, and would arrive shortly, made her heart flutter within her like some dying bird, who sees its mistress coming to the cage with dainties which it cannot welcome more. How different from the eager beat with which but yesterday it had hailed the sight of him!

To escape such thoughts, and also perhaps to procrastinate her meeting with Judith, who was already due at the return, she was about to seek her uncle's room, to enquire after him, when the sound of horse's hoofs fell upon her ear. There was some one coming down the lane that led from the high road to the cottage at full gallop. That surely must be Captain Heyton's messenger, unless, indeed, it were himself! If it were he, then he was cruel. If he compelled her to a personal interview, after what she had written to

him, it would be to torture her. Well, tender women had been racked before now, and had not confessed, and she would not confess how all her life was emptied of its joy because she could not wed him. It was ungenerous of him, and unfair, and since he drove her to it, she would defend herself with the weapon of the weak—with any weapon—but no, she would not see him.

"Jane," said she, as the gate bell pealed without, "if that is Captain Heyton, I do not wish to see him. Tell him, please, that I have walked out," and with that she passed into the shrubbery that ran behind the house, and underneath the ruddy cliffs, ruddier in the morning sun. From path to path she hurried, and sat down at last in a stone arbour at the very extremity of the grounds, and which had the sea beneath it and around it. He would never surely be so importunate as to pursue her thither after he had received Jane's message. But would Jane, with whom the captain was a great favourite, and who had looked, when Evy had told her to deny her to him, as though her young mistress had gone mad, deliver the message? Or what was worse, suppose that she should give but the half of it, and say that Miss Evy was walking in the shrubbery, and, as it were, awaiting him there! Minute after minute passed by, and yet, though she strained her ears to catch it, there was no sound of the horse's returning hoofs. It could scarcely then be only a messenger that had arrived. On the other hand, he might be waiting for an answer, and Jane would in that case bring her out the note. But that footstep is not Jane's, though she strives to persuade herself it is; nor is that plaintive passionate cry the note of the sea-gull that is whirling about the arbour like a flake of snow, it is "Evy, Evy, where are you, Evy?" and the voice is that of her lover. It was impossible to avoid the interview he had thus forced upon her, for she had nowhere to betake herself, save what indeed seemed almost a welcome shelter, the depths of the placid sea. So she rose up, and went forth to meet him on the narrow path.

When he caught sight of her, Jack uttered a glad cry, and ran forward towards her, but slackened his pace when he drew near.

"Why do you look like that, dear Evy?" asked he, simply, "and refuse even to take my hand?"

"Because it is most distressing to me, Captain Heyton, to see you here. I had hoped—I had expected—that after my letter you would have spared me so sharp a pain."

"Your letter, Evy! Did you suppose, then, that a few hasty words of yours, written under the pressure of calamity, would be accepted by me as final? When a man receives his death warrant, it is only reasonable that he should wish to make quite sure that the signature is genuine; that there is no mistake; and even then he throws himself at his sovereign's feet—and are you not my sovereign, Evy?—and beseeches her to revoke her sentence."

"It is not possible, Captain Heyton, as I wrote to you, to alter the resolve to which I have come. You can torture me of course—you are doing it now—but you cannot turn me from my purpose. For pity's sake, then, leave me."

"Leave you, Evy? give up my hopes of happiness, and the only object, to be called such, of my life, because you chance to entertain an exaggerated idea of the value of money, and a Quixotic sense of duty. No. I will never leave you upon such grounds as those. I have money enough still, not only for both of us, but to afford a home for Mr. Hulet under our own roof, which shall shelter him to his life's end. My uncle may alter his resolve or not—if he sees you, darling, I cannot but believe he will—but if he does not, nay, even if he should take away what he has promised us, which is to the last degree unlikely—there is still no shame in being poor."

For an instant Evy had suffered the sweet voice of comfort to steal into her ear; for an instant she had permitted herself to gaze on that bright picture of the future, which her lover had so earnestly presented to her; but those words "there is no shame" recalled her to the realities of her position, and gave an unexpected succour to the failing powers of her resolve.

"There would be shame, Captain Heyton," interrupted she. "Do not ask me how or what, but there would be shame. I gave you reasons in my letter, all-sufficient reasons as I still think, why, from henceforth, you and I must be strangers to one another; but there are others, also, which I am not compelled to state."

"Indeed, I think I have a right to hear them, Evy."

"I think not, Captain Heyton."

"At all events, tell me this much; have

they reference to yourself, or to your uncle only?"

"To my uncle."

"Yes, I thought so," answered the captain, impetuously. "This old man, selfish and fanciful, has suddenly taken it into his head that he will not be so well looked after—that he will not have such an attentive slave in you, when you are married, as at present. Or, perhaps, he doubts the word of honour that I have passed to him, and believes that I shall throw my means away upon the race-course or at the gambling table. Yes, that is it; and you are his dupe. I don't believe in this story of his sudden ruin."

"You have it in my own handwriting, sir," said Evy, with dignity.

"Yes; but Mr. Hulet may have imposed upon you. At all events, it is clear that you are sacrificing my happiness to his caprices. You love your uncle more than me; you do, I see, Evy; you are giving me up for him. Tell me," added he, with vehemence, "is it not so?"

She could not answer him at first, in words, but catching the path railing for support, she looked him steadily in the face, and bowed her head. Let him imagine that she loved her uncle better than himself, and so depart from her, half cured of his own love.

"Yes," replied she, "it was so."

"Then I do leave you, Evy," said he, bitterly; "and would to Heaven that I had never seen your face."

As if to hide it from his view, she put up her hands, and uttered a low moan. Her agony was almost greater than she could bear. To hear him say that he wished that! She had loved and lost, herself, but she would not have missed that love which she had lost for all the wealth of the world. How could he, could he say such words as those!

"You have changed a wholesome heart to gall," continued he; "doubtless that proof of your power for evil flatters your vanity: let it do so: be happy after your own fashion. I wish you no ill, though you have done such ill to me. I had heard, all my life, that women were vain and deceitful, shallow except in their hates, weak except in their passions, and, until I saw you, I believed it. Your beauty, goodness, truth (as I once thought), won me not only to yourself, but filled me with a reverence unknown before for all your sex. Oh, you have fooled me finely, I confess it. Now go, and tell them that

you have undeceived your miserable dupe at last. It has cost me something, I confess, but now I know them."

He lifted his hat, turned sharp upon his heel, and was gone without another word.

She watched him, with her tearless, heated eyes, move with swift steps along the devious path to the very cottage door; and he never once looked back. She listened for the hasty beat of his horse's hoofs that were to "Beat, beat, beat," she knew—where was it that she had read that line?—"beat into her tortured brain," but it came not: only that plaintive cry of the gull broke the summer silence, and the distant splash of the flowing wave. Was it a dream, a horrible, shameful dream, or had she really seen and heard the man she loved thus look and speak? What had she done to provoke him to do so? That he should have been disappointed at the failure of his entreaties, vexed at her resistance to them, she could have imagined; but why should he have left her—never to see her again while life should last—thus piqued and bitter? "True as I once thought," he had said, but was she not true still? Ah, yes; truer than ever, although she had discarded him, more loving than ever, although he had overwhelmed her with such unmerited reproaches. Why had he judged her false? Was it because she had suffered him to believe that she loved her uncle better than himself. Well, that was false and yet if he had said that he preferred his duty to Lord Dirleton to his love for her, she would not have turned upon him with such barbed words. "Preferred his duty," yes; but she had not said that. She had permitted him to think—reckless of what she did, or doing so, perhaps, in hopes, at all hazards, to end that terrible scene—that she held him second in the world, and another first. "Vain, deceitful, shallow"—yes, indeed, she had been all these if he thought that A high spirited man who had been cruelly used, he was in no respect to be blamed. There went the horse's hoofs at last; not fast as she had expected them to go, beneath an angry rider, but at a foot's pace. And he had delayed his departure for near an hour. She knew that, because the shade had sloped so far towards her from the upper cliff. He had stood there—she knew the spot to a hair's breadth—with the sun behind him, showing his proud presence, handsomer, nobler than she had ever seen it, and now the shadow

had crept on and on, so cold that it made her shiver—

"Evy, dear; Evy."

It was Judith's voice, calling to her from the hillock near the porch, and doubtless summoning her to breakfast. Such an unaccustomed gentleness and pity were in its tone that Evy sighed, "I wonder, has he told her?" ere she took her weary way towards the house.

CARILLONS.

CARILLONS—the name is a pretty one, suggesting the idea of musical sounds, mingling and melting, blending and harmonising one with another; and when we are told about carillons at St. Paul's Cathedral, we have a sort of notion that it must be something pleasant to hear. What form the matter will assume eventually, the future must show; but the facts at present are simply these. A committee intrusted with the devising of a comprehensive plan for restoring and adorning our grand metropolitan cathedral, and collecting a fund for defraying the cost, is said to have in contemplation the provision of a set of carillons in the clock tower. It will be safe thus to treat it simply as an idea or suggestion, the fulfilment of which will be subject to many contingencies. The subject excites interest among those who have any knowledge of carillons, and curiosity among those who have not.

Carillons are bells, or the sounds of bells; so are peals; so are chimes; and it is well to obtain some clear notion of the differences between them.

A clock bell may be struck either on the inside or the outside, according to the clockwork mechanism which moves the hammer; and the same may be said of a row of bells, few or many in number. If the bells are of different sizes and thicknesses, they may be so selected as to give out all the sounds of a musical scale, diatonic or chromatic as the case may be; and the mechanism which works the hammers may be the same as that which belongs to the clock, or may be distinct or separate from it. But there is no necessity for self-acting mechanism, whether deriving its moving power from a suspended weight or from a wound-up spring. There may be a row of keys, like those of a pianoforte; the front end of each key being pressed upon by the finger, and the inner end acting upon a lever or string

which works the hammer of the bell. A player may thus sit down in front of the clavier or keyboard, and play such tunes as the range of tones in the bells permits. A still further simplification may be made, by dispensing alike with springs and weights, keys and keyboards. Men may stand in front of the row of bells, and bang away upon them with wooden or iron hammers; or, as an alternative, they may pull ropes which act upon the hammers, the latter being pivoted at one end; or, as another alternative, they may set the bells themselves swinging by pulling ropes, and cause an iron clapper within each bell to strike a blow at each swing.

Now here we have varieties of all the modes in which church and turret bells may be sounded; and we shall soon be able to appreciate the chief points of difference between carillons and other systems. As to the hammer worked directly by manual power, it is the most primitive of all arrangements. If each man strikes hard enough on his bell, without such violence as to break it, he makes it speak; and if several men operate similarly on several hammers, all the bells give out their sounds, together, or successively, according to the effect intended to be produced. In many of the towns of Russia the bells are rung in this way; they are suspended in a tower, open on all sides, or in arches in the walls of a building; men, armed with hammers, stand before them, and a clatter is kept up at various hours of the day—more noisy than musical, unless the bells are well selected and the men well drilled. Many of our existing sets of bells might easily be rung in this simple way, if deemed expedient; and indeed there is one set, somewhere in the north-east of London, on which a party of bellringers occasionally practise; each player having two hammers, and taking charge of two bells. There are itinerant performers, whom most of our readers may have seen at one time or other—street bellringers. A man has a little fraternity of attuned bells before him, and with a small wooden hammer in each hand he produces a tune by striking the bells in proper succession. This plan illustrates sufficiently the point at present under notice, the production of music by hand-hammers striking on bells. The Campanologists, as the Lancashire bellringers are sometimes called, set to work in a different way; there are clappers, but no hammers; the bells are held in the

hand, and are sounded much in the same way as the bell of the muffin-man, but with a skill and taste which show that the ringers have been well drilled.

When we pass from the hand-hammer system to the rope system, we enter the domain of the peal, in which England takes the lead of all other countries. Select eight bells attuned to an octave, or twelve to give an octave and a half; here we have a peal of bells; and skilled men ring changes on these bells, by pulling ropes which set them swinging. There have been times when the pulling has been done horizontally, and when the rope actuated a hammer which struck the outside of the bell; but the modern and better plan is to pull downwards, giving a swing to the bell itself, and causing it to receive the blows of a clapper inside. The ringers of these sets of bells (technically called a ring of bells) do not play tunes; they do not ring chimes; but they sound the several bells in almost every imaginable order of sequence. Ding dong, ding dong; all the way down the scale, all the way up; dodging to and fro in couplets and triplets; permutations remarkable alike for their number and variety. There may be as many ringers as bells, or each player may manage two ropes, according to the dimensions and other circumstances. The number of changes in the order in which the bells may be rung increases enormously as the number of bells increases. Bell-ringing arithmeticians like to astonish the world by telling them that it would take ninety years to ring all the changes on a peal of twelve bells, at two strokes per second; while twenty-four bells would eat into several thousands of billions of years. The subject of change-ringing on peals of bells has occupied whole volumes by enthusiastic men; and the practice is so exciting to some of them that they write in transports about it. The Reverend Alfred Gatty thus pictures the ringing of a peal of eight bells: "Watch the wild sommersaults performed at intervals by every bell in the peal. For a moment the bells rub against the slur-bar, turned completely upwards; the next moment it swings down, and is immediately turned up again on the other side, the clapper striking as it ascends. Poor fellows! see how they whirl upon their axes! The gazer almost sickens as he watches their extraordinary evolutions and tossings; but the ringer's heart is merciless; and when you look at the

worried bell, as at a thing of life, and almost expect it to drop motionless and dead on the stocks, a 'cannon' is suddenly struck on all eight at once, as if to rouse them afresh for the course of seemingly interminable changes which immediately follow. Henceforth, the bells appears to roll about in frantic disorder." Bellringers are not merely paid servants, nor artisan parishioners who do the work for love without money; they comprise gentlemen and clergymen in their number, who form a private club, quaintly called the College Youths, of whom the readers of this Journal have already heard.*

Chimes are not so thoroughly English as peal ringing; yet they are greatly in favour with all classes; and our poets and essayists have made ample use of them. Southey said: "I never hear chimes that they do not remind me of those which were formerly the first sounds I heard in the morning, which used to quicken my steps on my way to school, and which announced my relief from it, when the same tune methought had always a merrier sound. When I remember their tones, life seems to me like a dream; and a time of recollection arises which, if it were allowed to have its course, would end in tears." The chimes with which we are all of us most familiar, are those that announce the quarter-hours on a church clock. They are two, three, or four in number, and give out their sounds every fifteen minutes. What they play is not a tune, and yet it is something musical, midway between a tune and a peal. The grandest chimes are at Westminster Palace; their four tones, B, E, F sharp, G sharp, are well adjusted; and the majestic sound of melody which they give out can be heard afar off. When turret bells chime a tune in addition to chiming the quarter hours, no new principle is introduced; there is an increase of mechanism, but equally governed by the wheel-work, and pendulum, and weight of the clock.

And now we come, by these successive steps, to carillons, a name which is pretty accurately the French equivalent for our word chimes. Carillons appear to have originated on the Continent, and to have been borrowed by us from thence. Sometimes the bells were sounded by keys like those of a pianoforte, sometimes by pins or studs on a rotating cylinder like that of the barrel organ. The key system pro-

bably preceded the barrel system. The first church organs with keyboards, about eight hundred years ago, had a small number of very large keys, and required a blow with the hand instead of merely a pressure with the finger to elicit the sound, insomuch that an organist in those days was called an organ-beater. The same key mechanism became afterwards used to act upon bells instead of pipes; and then the carillon began its existence. The bells were made to play any tune at the pleasure of the player within the limits of their compass or range, and at any time when he chose to sit down to the clavier or keyboard. Long centuries afterwards Handel was wont to make use of a small imitative contrivance, in order to introduce the effect of church bells into some of his music. An instrument, retaining the name of the carillon, was among those in his orchestra; it had wooden hammers, which struck on metallic bars of different lengths; and these hammers were worked by finger keys. Handel's air in L'Allegro, Let the Merry Bells Ring, and his chorus in Saul, Welcome, welcome Mighty King, were composed for a carillon accompaniment. The name carillon was also sometimes given to short bell-like compositions, much in favour in Handel's time. These, however, are exceptional meanings of the word carillon. What we have here to do with are the harmonised sets of bells in the turrets of continental cities, especially those of Belgium and Holland, which take the lead in carillons.

Doctor Burney, exactly a century ago, published an amusing account of a visit paid by him to the belfry of the Town Hall at Amsterdam, where the organist fulfilled also the duties of carillon performer. This gentleman, Monsieur Pottroff, played some elaborate music; but it was hard work, on account of the vigorous blow which each key required in order to strike the bell with sufficient force. "If Monsieur Pottroff had been put into Doctor Dominicetti's heated cauldron for an hour, he could not have perspired more violently than he did after a quarter of an hour of this furious exercise. He stripped to his shirt, put on his nightcap, and trussed up his sleeves for the execution; and he said he was forced to go to bed the instant it was over, in order to prevent his catching cold, as well as to recover himself, he being usually so much exhausted as to be utterly unable to speak." On another occasion, when at Ghent, Doctor Burney heard a

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. I. p. 303.

celebrated carillonneur. "He was literally at work, and hard work it must be; he was in his shirt, with the collar unbuttoned, and in a violent sweat. There are pedals communicating with the great bells, upon which, with his feet, he played the bass to several sprightly and rather difficult airs, performed with the two hands upon the upper range of keys. These keys are projecting sticks, wide enough asunder to be struck with violence and velocity by the hands edgewise, without the danger of hitting the neighbouring keys. The player had a thick leather covering for the little finger of each hand, otherwise it would be impossible for him to support the pain which the violence of the stroke necessary to be given to each key, in order to its being distinctly heard throughout a very large town, requires." An engraving in Mersenne's *Harmonie Universelle*, published nearly two centuries and a half ago, represents a carillonneur playing exactly as Burney described.

The barrel carillons are, however, those to which attention is more especially directed; because they are played by machinery which dispenses with the services of an organist or carillonneur. In the Flemish and Dutch towns some of the turret carillons are played by keys, but the majority by barrel only; while a few have both keyboards and barrels, the former for playing *ad libitum* music occasionally when the machine music is silent. The barrels are mostly made of wood, and their surfaces are nearly covered with metal pins or studs. When the barrel rotates, these pins catch into levers which set the bells ringing. The arrangement of the pins along and around the barrel depends on the tune; and if the barrel is of considerable size, it will afford room for several tunes. So long as the pins remain as they are, they can only play these particular tunes; if new tunes are wanted the barrel must be newly studded, or a new one altogether provided. The barrel rotates by wheel-work, usually connected with the clock, and gives forth its tunes a certain number of times every day. Some of the Belgian carillons comprise as many as forty, forty-two, and even forty-eight bells, and have cost large sums of money to construct; they play tunes harmonised in four parts, and from many of them the melodies float over the surrounding country in a charming way. Victor Hugo went into a rhapsody when describing the effect at night at Mechlin; but, rhapsody apart, the caril-

lons of Belgium are acknow'edged to be the best ever constructed. The finest in the world are considered to be those at Antwerp.

America has given an introduction to the system. In 1869 a fine set of carillons was sent out to Buffalo, and there adjusted in a suitable turret. They comprised no fewer than forty-three bells. These were founded by Monsieur Bollée and, before being sent to their destination, were shown at the Great Paris Exhibition.

England contains some fine specimens of chimes comprising a limited number of bells, but none, we believe, like the carillons of the Continent, except a few set up within the last few years. Cripplegate Church has a chime of twelve bells, of which the tenor weighs thirty-six hundred-weight. It plays every three hours a day, and is studded with seven tunes, one for each day. Unless changed very recently, the tunes comprise four psalms or hymns, and three national melodies, including *God Save the Queen*. St. Clement's Danes possesses a chime of ten bells, with a tenor of twenty-four hundredweight; it plays only two tunes, and these in a wheezy, rheumatic sort of way. Some others might be mentioned; but they do not call for special notice. Mr. Walesby, an authority on the subject, says: "Most persons who have listened to the delightful music of carillons in Belgium and certain other parts of the Continent, will, I think, regret that we have so very few sets of chimes in England that can play even a plain and easy melody in a satisfactory manner."

Boston, in Lincolnshire, has been one of the first towns to introduce this continental novelty among us. An endeavour has there been made to imitate the carillons of the Continent by a more careful selection of bells and of machinery. A subscription having been collected in the town and neighbourhood, M. Van Aerschodt, a celebrated bell founder at Louvain, was invited to visit Boston and examine the existing peal of eight bells. He decided that the tenor bell should be recast, that the other eight should be retained, and that thirty-six new and smaller bells should be provided—all attuned to the chromatic or semitone scale. This proposal being accepted, the mechanism was intrusted to an English firm, by whom a patented invention had been introduced. There is a difference of opinion among the experts whether a wooden barrel with pins driven

in, or a metal barrel with pins screwed in, is preferable, each plan having some advantages over the other; but this is a matter of detail into which we need not enter. The same may be said concerning two or three different modes of lifting the hammers. It is known that many of our campaniles or bell-towers are well adapted for the reception of carillons, and that many of the existing bells are sufficiently good for the purpose; hence there are three or four other of our towns in which carillons have been set up in existing bell-towers, with additions to the old set of bells and new working machinery.

Within the last few weeks there has been opened a sumptuous building, the turret of which is expressly planned for the reception of carillons more powerful than any hitherto known in this country. This is the new Town Hall at Bradford, the tower of which has a large clock with four faces, at a great height, and a set of thirteen bells—not nearly so numerous as at Antwerp and other Belgian and Dutch towns, but much larger. According to the accounts in the public journals, these bells range from upwards of four tons to less than eight hundred weight, with tones varying from A to E, about an octave and a half. There are three barrels, each studded with seven tunes, and the whole of the twenty-one tunes are played in succession. Each barrel has one hymn tune: the Old Hundredth on one, Rock of Ages on another, and the Easter Hymn on the third; the other eighteen tunes comprise more or less national and well-known melodies belonging to England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, Prussia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Russia, &c. The playing takes place every three hours, and a new tune is "turned on" every day; the change being made at midnight by self-acting machinery. Any one of the barrels can be removed, and a new one adjusted in its place, without disturbing the other parts of the mechanism. There is also provided a finger board with keys and pedals, for any carillonneur who is sufficiently muscular to grapple with the difficulties. This, described in the present tense, probably relates to what is intended to be when finished; there will be ample means by-and-by of judging of the effect.

Like many other new things, the carillon system will have to go through the ordeal of experience and criticism, before its fitness for our country can be decided. Some

commentators think that we have quite noises enough in our streets, and do not want any more: while others say that our old chimes are doleful and often wearisome, simply because they are not well constructed, and that we must have a bit of Netherlands skill over here before we can really appreciate the matter. One nicety to be attended to is, that the smaller bells, while giving out high notes, shall not be too weak in power of sound; else the proper balance in effect would be wanting, and a melody would become (so to speak) lopsided. The thickness of the bell, and the alloy of which it is made, have to be considered as well as the height and diameter: in relation not only to the pitch or tone, but also to the loudness and to that characteristic quality which the French call *timbre*, and the Germans *klangfarbe*, but for which we have no good name in English.

We may or may not live to hear carillons in St. Paul's Cathedral; but the reader will now understand the circumstances which give interest to the question.

BRIGHTON GHOSTS.

It seems almost absurd to connect "merry Doctor Brighton" with anything so dismal as ghosts, and the ordinary visitor to this most popular of all sea-side resorts would have some difficulty in discovering them. They are not to be found in the morning, when the Light Brigade are pattering up and down the cliff, or the pretty walking advertisements of young ladies' schools are passing to and fro; neither are they to be encountered in the afternoon when the pavement is crowded with loungers, and the roadway is blocked with carriages. It is not till long after the sun has set, and the Light Brigade have assumed their evening dresses, and the school girls have retired to their warm white nests and taken a large instalment of beauty sleep; it is not even till the illuminations have become faint in the gigantic hotels, and the lamps along the Parade begin to burn pale, that the ghosts of Brighton begin to flit about. Then, when the streets are silent and deserted, when no sound is to be heard but the tramp of an occasional policeman and the moan of the wind, when the sea drawing back the shingle seems to speak clearly, and then breaks and runs up in a confused chorus, then I can assure you the ghosts come

out very strong indeed. You cannot stir a step without meeting some kind of spirit of the past, of the present century or the previous one, of long ago, or only of yesterday. They come one by one, they come linked together, they come in groups, they come in legions, and the only way one can lay them is to pass them thoroughly in review. Come with me then, O reader, wrap thy Ulster coat around thee, draw thy sealskin cap over thine ears, and stick a gigantic Cabana between thy lips, link thine arm in mine, and I will take thee for a trip in Brighton ghost-land. It is just the period for our expedition, they are just closing the billiard rooms, the Grand Hotel is beginning to look sombre, the wind is moaning dismally, and the voices of the sea are more hollow and mournful than usual.

This particular part is always haunted by ghosts of the garrison. At this very part was the most important fortification Brighton ever possessed. Most middle-aged people can remember it well. It was called the Battery, and it mounted six forty-two pounders, which the garrison were always afraid to fire, for fear of bursting the guns, or breaking the windows, or hurting themselves. The Battery—the small house, which occupied a portion of the site of the Grand Hotel—and the garrison were generally comprehensively alluded to as the Artillery; whether the title applied to the pieces or ordnance, the barracks or the garrison, no one was rash enough to determine. I own I should like to know what position in the British Army the garrison occupied. They wore an unaccountable uniform, something between the remarkable costume of a Chelsea pensioner and the dress of a Russian policeman. We used to call them the Brighton Toddlers. I have a sort of idea that they were a band of veterans, and that the youngest drummer-boy of the corps exhibited a Waterloo medal with considerable pride, and acknowledged to the age of sixty-seven. In connection with this military establishment do I see a queer little man with a closely cropped white beard, with a curiously shapen cap on his head, and with his face turned well up, as if he were trying to read an inscription in the sky. This is the Star Gazer. If you watch him you will see he is careful to close all the gates he sees open, and you may track him all along the road by the clangour of gates. Do you see that jolly looking gentleman in a Bath chair? He

is certainly a hopeless invalid, but evidently makes the best of his position. He is devouring a dozen or two of oysters at the present time, and presently his attendant will bring him out a pot of stout. When he has finished this he will gravely light a long churchwarden-pipe, and sit and puff solemnly before all the fashionable passers by. This is the individual we used to call the Hardened Sinner. But we must move on, for we have lots of work before us this night. Let us turn up West Street. How silent and deserted it seems to be. Stay, do you not notice a handsome face looking out of the tavern window, on the left? Do you not recognise the laughing eyes, the flowing ringlets, the cavalier moustache and imperial. Take off your hat, it looks very much like his most gracious Majesty King Charles the Second. What talking and laughter is going on at the little house opposite! Surely that ponderous voice is familiar. No one could thunder out "No, sir!" with such vehemence unless it were the lexicographical bear. Let us peep through the half-drawn curtains. Yes, there is Dr. Johnson, with his wig very much awry, and his face very red. Sitting close to him is James Boswell, apparently making a memorandum on the back of a letter. Mrs. Thrale, the accomplished hostess, is laughing merrily, and Madame D'Arblay is very much amused by something Mr. Foote, the comediant, has just said. That pretty maid-servant who has just entered the room with a tray of glasses is the one whom Dr. Johnson gets to pump on his head in the morning, when he has taken too much wine the preceding night. Judging from present appearances, I should think the Doctor will require a good deal of pumping on to-morrow morning. Let us pass on. Let us mount the hill, take our way through St. Nicholas churchyard. How quaint the old church looks in the dead of night, and what an orgie of ghosts we might hold here, were we so minded! See, here is Captain Nicholas Tettertel, in his picturesque costume, looking like a stage pirate. Would you not like to have a chat with him about the king, and ask him whether he did not deserve to have a peerage conferred upon him? What a history, too, could Phoebe Hessel relate! Far greater were her exploits than the young lady who "follered arter" Mr. William Taylor "under the name of William Carr," and her reward was less. Mr. Taylor's lover was made captain of the "gallant Thunder-

bomb," whereas the lady love of one of "Kirke's Lambs," and who herself fought at the battle of Fontenoy, was allowed but half-a-guinea a week from royal bounty. Would you not like a little quiet conversation with that rufous kipped individual Mr. Smoaker Miles, and hear all about his saving the Prince of Wales from a watery grave, or gossip with that ancient mermaid Martha Gunn, concerning the beauties she has dipped in her time, or exchange a few words with the beautiful Mrs. Anna Maria Crouch? All this would be really entertaining, but I cannot allow you to linger.

I am anxious to take you up a little narrow, bleak, side street, not far distant. Does it recall anything to your mind? There is a bright light in the lower window, and the reflection of serpent-like plants and spiky creatures on the blind; there is a faint illumination in the upper window, and occasionally the shadows of figures pass across it. Cannot you fancy Mrs. Pipchin is taking her warm sweet-bread in the lower room, and that Florence is poring over Paul's terrors in the chamber above? Do not all the inhabitants of the "castle of the ogress" at once crowd upon your imagination, Miss Pankey, Master Bitherstone, Berry, Wickham, and Susan Nipper? We could linger here for a long while, as we just catch the cadence of the sea in the distance, and wonder once more with little Paul "what the waves were always saying." We get into an entirely different atmosphere when we reach the Steyne. Here we drift into an assemblage of the beginning of the century. Just coming out of the new club-house do we see Mrs. Fitzherbert, looking very beautiful, talking to her friend Miss Seymour, with the finest gentleman in Europe, in a plum-coloured coat and a brown hat, in close attendance. That mysterious looking person who has just passed is Colonel Hanger; and those three lively individuals leaning against the railings are known as Hell-gate, Cripple-gate, and Newgate. That comical looking man in green pantaloons, green coat, and green neck-tie, with powdered hair and a cocked hat, is a harmless maniac; his name is Cope, but he usually goes by the title of the Green Man. That fat man, who has just taken off his hat to the Prince, is General Dalrymple, and the one behind him, in quaint militia uniform, is Earl Berkeley. Colonel Bloomfield is in attendance on the Prince,

and the melancholy looking gentleman who has just dropped his cane is Mr. Day, whose seems to have well earned his soubriquet of Gloomy Day. Do not you wonder who that gentlemanly looking individual in the costume of the middle of the last century, who is evidently searching for something in front of the Albion Hotel, may be? That is Dr. Richard Russell, the actual founder of Brighton, who first recommended the place as a health resort more than a century ago. He is evidently looking for his statue. He used to live on the site of the Albion. Why have not the Brightonians erected a statue to his memory years ago? Those two gentlemen in white coats, with voluminous capes, are two of the most noted whips of the day; the one is Sir John Leach and the other is Mr. Mellish; and talking to them is Mr. Crampton, the famous jumper. What a crowd there is, to be sure! Here comes Lord Sefton, talking to the Bishop of St. Asaph; there is the Duke of Grafton and Earl Craven, the Countess of Barrymore, the Countess of Jersey, and Mr. Sheridan. All these ghosts, and a great many more, start up every moment; they worry us with their everlasting change and their perpetual chatter. Let us flee from them, and drift into a quieter neighbourhood.

I certainly feel more at home here. Do not you? I thought I could not be mistaken in this particular house. This is the very spot in "Steyne Gardens" occupied by Miss Honeyman, and here that kind little lady, assisted by Hannah and Sally, looked after the welfare of their lodgers. It must surely have been to that first floor, with the quaint little balcony, that Lady Ann Newcome, recommended by Dr. Goodenough, brought her invalid boy Alfred. Here came Ethel, too, and Miss Quigley, and the invaluable Mr. Kuhn; and it must have been in that room down-stairs that the dignified little Duchess regaled the courteous courier with some of that especial Madeira. Hitherto frequently came dear old Colonel Newcome, and Master Clive was by no means an infrequent visitor. Mighty pleasant are the ghosts that haunt "Steyne Gardens" and the joyous recollections they bring back. Cannot you call to mind Clive making sketches for his little cousins in these very rooms? Have you forgotten a certain journey by rail that Clive and Ethel made to Brighton in after years, and what transpired on the journey?

Do you remember the meeting in this unpretending little mansion between Clive and the most noble the Marquis of Farmlock? What a debt of gratitude we owe to those kindly magicians who invest commonplace neighbourhoods with such delightful ghosts!

Let us take flight as far as Castle Square. It is silent and deserted. Perhaps we are too early, for surely there should be the roll of ghostly wheels and the crack of ghostly whips. If we only wait long enough, we ought to see a phantom Bellerophon come lumbering in, or the wraith of the Quicksilver flash past. We may perhaps see the whole place change like a scene at the pantomime, the shutters of the shops fall down and become suddenly converted into the Age, Blue, Red, and Snow's coach offices, and the place may become once more crowded, and we may look in wonder as we see the Times, the Royal Clarence, the Comet, the Union, the Rocket, the Red Rover, the Economist, and twenty others whirl noiselessly past, and vanish into the dark night. Does Sir John Lade ever come back in the dead of night and perform those wondrous feats with a phantom four-in-hand through the narrow streets that made him so famous in the days of the Regency? We ponder this in our minds as we take our way down Ship Street, one of the quaintest bits of old Brighton yet remaining. We halt opposite the Old Ship Assembly Rooms, and gaze upon the old-fashioned entrance and bow window, and half expect to see the roadway blocked with sedan chairs, and to hear the clamour of noisy linkmen. I wonder whether the guests at the Old Ship are ever disturbed by the sound of dancing and weird music, in the middle of the night. Do the disembodied spirits of Mr. Tart, Mr. William Wade, Mr. J. S. Forth, and Lieutenant-Colonel Eld, ever come back and institute "assemblies" at the witching hour? and is "Lady Montgomery's Reel," and such like bygone Terpsichorean vagaries ever executed by a pale courtly company in powder and patches?

Once more along the cliff; the night is getting chilly, and it looks very black out at sea. We shall have a wet rough night, but still we feel scarcely inclined to go home yet awhile. It is a most fascinating pursuit, this ghost hunting. We pause before a quaint comfortless home, a prim mansion that looks as if its footman could

floor you with a classical quotation, and its housemaid thoroughly acquainted with the first book of Euclid. A hopelessly classical and irremediably cold house. Without doubt this is Dr. Blimber's; here Mrs. Blimber lamented she had not had the pleasure of knowing Cicero, here came little Paul to school, and here was Cornelia, adjured to "bring him on." The house is so still now, everybody is gone to bed, that one can hear a chain jingling in the back yard, and the pompous strident tick of a clock in the hall. We cannot help wondering whether that is Diogenes dragging at his chain, and cannot help fancying that the clock is making the enquiry "How is, my, lit, tle, friend?" We should not be at all surprised to hear a pompous voice say in its sleep, "Gentlemen we will resume our studies at seven to-morrow morning." Surely that window up above, that small window to the left, must be where Paul waited and watched for his sister Florence. The ghosts of fiction are after all pleasanter than those of fact: they even seem more real, and we believe in them more implicitly.

But the wind is increasing in violence, we have to struggle against it, the street lamps flicker violently, the sea has begun to roar. An occasional scud of spray drifts across the Parade, the rain is beginning to pelt down in good earnest, we have no umbrellas, so cannot at present pursue any further our researches in Brighton ghostland, although, in truth, we have hardly as yet even stepped across the border of that wonderful country—a country such as no other town in the world can boast of.

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

XI. LOWER STILL.

DREPER and deeper still. The monastic refuge, with its scrupulous cleanliness and stern regimen, was a boarding-house wherein people might abide for a few days gratis, provided they could show a change of clothes, and were duly recommended by a subscriber. But surely, I reflected, there must exist yet another class of establishment somewhere in town where rags would speak for themselves in their mute eloquence, and where the last stage of indigent respectability may lay its head without the degradation incident to the casual ward.

All through the more wretched portions

of great London I sought this ideal spot, and having at length pitched upon it, rising like a gaunt barrack from amidst the hovels where vegetate the toy-makers, I was not surprised to find its scant accommodation so much in demand as to render admission a matter of no little difficulty.

Night after night, at the hour of six, I picked my way through the black mud which dryeth never, and hung about, hoping against hope, to receive each evening the monotonously discouraging rebuff, "No vacancy, my man."

In vain I pleaded extreme poverty, ignorance of London, trifling sickness, even—but without avail. Always the same answer, spoken kindly but firmly, "No vacancy, my poor fellow; we're full. You can't have more of a cat than his skin. It's a crying shame that there should not exist more similar resorts," &c., &c., leaving me always out in the cold with a dirty door labelled, "Refuge, Male Ward," slammed inexorably in my face. But perseverance is a virtue which usually, even in our lopsided world, meets with its reward. At last, after much wistful importunity, the master took pity on my homeless state, almost promising to keep a vacancy for me for the following evening. I arrived accordingly, tapped timidly at the master's private door, and was received by his son, a pretty lad of twelve, his pale hair and face glorified with premature authority, who, with an assumption of extreme dignity, bade me follow him to the male ward already closed, and refusing all help from my superior height with a disdainful wave of the hand, proceeded to make dashes at the too aspiringly situated bell, till a murmur and clatter of keys was audible from within, and the dirty door swung upon its hinges, apparently of its own accord. But no—my proud little protector muttered a few words to a baby janitor, barely two feet high, standing in tiny corderoys and blue shirt crossed by leathern braces, with close cropped convict hair, and oh! such a wicked, puny, wizened face, cunningly scanning mine, and then bowing me a cold good-night, left me to the tender mercies of the pigmy.

Innocent little dear! How delightful a web of fancy might be woven from this consignment of tempest-tossed wrecked man to the guidance of a child. How charming a To my dismay the Liliputian slowly closed one eye, placed an extremely grubby finger on the root of his snub

nose, and giving vent to the strange remark, "You're a dead 'un. Oh! yes. You aint got a blessed drab. Oh! no. You're a blooming pauper, you air. Oh-yes-of-course-to-be-sure-I'm-fly," opened wide his mouth, rolled round his eyes, gurgled, protruded his infant tongue, banged the door to with all the wee strength that he could muster, and strutted on, still winking violently, as he piped forth a command to follow him.

This refuge is a huge place, square, grimy, ungainly, as forbidding and unutterably ugly as the grievous poverty which it is its mission to conceal. There is a female ward, a male ward, and a ragged school, or, more properly speaking, a reformatory; for the hundred screaming mischievous little demons of which the school is composed have all either been picked up by the police, as waifs from the refuse population seething in metropolitan courts and alleys, or have been sent here to be cured of precocious wickedness by order of the worshipful the Mayor. A shrieking unmanageable crew they are—tough twigs to bend—their hair standing up in obstinate shocks like a pony's hog mane, their young faces prematurely hardened and lined by vice, dark with the closed shutters of departed innocence, their cherry lips opening but to launch some ribald remark, or to make use of some awful oath, such as makes one's hair emulate their own. It is a thing to meditate over, to hear them in chapel of a morning like devilets suddenly broken loose, bandying obscene jokes as they thumb their hymn-books, and upon entrance of the master as suddenly changing into angels, raising their clear bell-like voices chirpingly in artless pæans of praise, as though the ingenuous act came as natural to them, as spontaneously joyous, as the pure bright larks' notes they so much resemble, soaring upwards in guileless thankfulness for the beauty of the world in which they have been placed. Yet who shall blame their crooked ways, poor outcasts? All they know of the loveliness of God's handiwork is the fetid stifling den from which they sprang, the grinding suffering in which father and mother have been steeped till life became unendurable save through the rosy glamour of alcohol; kicks, blows, curses, dirt, disease, their heritage; a stomach never filled their daily lot; strength denied through lack of sufficient sustenance; a dreary prospect

of a life of never-ceasing punishment, with no hope of relief or change, but in the pauper's grave that grimly closes the squalid prospect.

One of these boys, picked from the more or less best behaved, is told off in daily rotation as gatekeeper, his business being to pass on any person that may call to the man in charge of the men's ward hard by. In pursuance of his orders, the facetious urchin aforementioned, with much parade of importance, unlocked an inner door, upon which grease had long taken the place of paint, and crying in shrill accents, "Here's another bloke," deftly prodded me in the back, sending me forward with a jerk, and locked the door behind me. I found myself in a low room, some six yards square, squalid and dirty to the last degree, with a bar running round it about two feet from the ground, to which was attached, by means of hooks, the heads of canvas hammocks rolled away. For furniture there were four benches and a broad plank on trestles to serve as table, while the single jet of gas, by which this uninviting chamber was lighted, further disclosed two dust-grimed windows opening inwards, and a portal without a door opposite, leading evidently to a brick-paved, but improperly drained, and consequently odorous wash-house. Two or three labouring men, silent and gloomy, sat at the table drinking their tea from tin mugs, and cutting their half-loaves of excellent white bread with pocket-knives, well-nigh worn away with sharpening. Moody all of them, for they had been on the tramp all day seeking work and had found none. By degrees the rest dropped in, seventeen in all, specimens of almost every trade. A few were being temporarily employed on the establishment, and came in accordingly from time to time reeking from their work, more especially the gentleman who sat next to me, a white-washer, whose face and hair and arms were speckled like acuba leaves, and who took a grim delight in rubbing his garments against mine, which were seedy enough, indeed, and whose seams scarce wanted whitening. There was a biscuit-baker, too, an intelligent, quiet fellow, who had fallen into indigence through illness, and talked in his humility of the outer world as "civilians," as though by having sunk so low, we could claim no more communion with the common throng—as though we had been turned into Pariahs with a visible mark of Cain upon our brows. And

then there were two Irishmen, a dock-labourer whose injured hand prevented his obtaining work, and a shoemaker of the fierce, ferocious class of Celts of which Fenians are made, and who seem as if trouble had rubbed away their veneer of humour, only leaving an underlying gnawing sense of injustice and of wrong. There were two carpenters always at logger-heads as to the best way of executing a given piece of work, distinguished one from the other by the rest, the one by the sobriquet of "Planes," the other by the nickname "Old Chips." For once received within those doors, you cease as utterly to have a name as far as your companions are concerned, as though you were enjoying open air and improving exercise at Portland, being invariably addressed by the style of your trade, or should two of one trade be present, by some facetiously appropriate nickname. Tea being over, and the tin pots removed, we leaned our elbows on the table for an hour's chat before prayers and bed, and each aired his pet grievance to anyone who had good-nature and unselfishness enough to listen to it. One related, amidst breathless admiration, that a gentleman had bestowed on him three-and-sixpence, which on the morrow he intended to expend on a suit of clothes, "for no one," he added, as an axiom, "will give work to a man ill-dressed."

"Isn't three-and-sixpence rather cheap for a suit of clothes?" I enquired, timidly. "For a new suit from a West End tailor it might be, young Inks (this in reference to my passing for a journeyman printer), but down at Petticoat-lane, or thereabouts, I could rig myself first class for three-and-six. A slap-up pair of kicksies and a gum-stretcher, a paper collar and second or third-hand tie. Of course boxes would not be included. I'd have to manage them as best I could, and mine with a wipe of blacking would look first class." For the benefit of the uninitiated, I had, perhaps, better here explain that boxes mean boots, and that a gum-stretcher is a long coat, such as shall mask all deficiencies, rendering such an article as a waistcoat a superfluity. "Rich and rare were the togs he wore, and a brand-new box on each clump he bore," chimed in the maimed but frolicsome Irish day-labourer, who was in Tapleyan spirits, despite adverse conditions, for ever singing favourite snatches of tunes, ingeniously adapted to suit circumstances.

"I say, Inks," sagely remarked the biscuit-baker, "you seem new to this sort of thing, and a refined sort. Take the advice of one who knows. Stand any hunger, and any thirst, and any privation, and any trouble, but never part with your clothes. So sure as your clothes find their way into the pop-shop, so sure you will never get no work, never no more. That's my experience, anyways."

"When I sees gents rigged out in gloves and summer hats, and canes and that, it do make me so wild," grumbled another, with over-developed bald head, glistening with tightness of skin, as though he had water on the brain, and whose appearance and manners were rendered the more unpleasant by the complete absence of one eyebrow, from a burn, a lisping style of speech, weak watery eyes, and blood-thirsty proclivities. "I'd like to tear their gewgaws from their backs, I would."

"Darling Isabella, with her gingham umbrella," gently carolled the musical one.

"It's the unfairest thing out," continued the revolutionary orator, with an indignant snort at the interruption, "the aristos pay no taxes, live on the fat of the land, and won't even touch us if they can help it. Lookee here, now. There's somewhere about three millions in London. About two thousand are tearing rich, curse 'em. About ten thousand are well to do, and all the rest, two millions and more, are struggling against each other in the mud, tooth and nail, for bare life. Is that proper? Civil war 's the only thing for us. Other countries have found that out, and we're a coming to it, too, let me tell yer. There are too many in the world, much too many in the town here. I'll go bail, Paris is the better for its burning. We must kill some of 'em off to make the equipoise right, as they call it, and the only way to do it legal is by civil war. Do a thing legal, and don't fear consequences. Hang the means, I say, it's the end as we want. Of course you and I may be among the killed, and so much the better for the rest. We must take our chance of that, and devil take the hindmost, say I. I'd dearly like to see blood flowing in them swell squares, I would, among them fine flaunting la-di-da ladies, with their mincing ways and trash. Ain't we better nor them?"

And the iconoclast mopped the water from his weak eyes, while his neighbour warbled in an undertone, "The la-di-da

ladies to Old Harry are gone, in the ranks of death you'll find 'em."

"You're a fine lot, you are, to settle things," cried out another, who had been pencilling something on the bare table, "where would be my trade, but for the la-di-da ladies, and many another trade too? I'm a painter and decorator, and must earn my bread as well as you."

"Oh, hark to the artist!" they all laughed, "and see what a beautiful thing he's been doing!" as they crowded one over another to admire the work of art just sprung from his hand, which consisted of the royal arms, very fairly pencilled, as we see them engraved on bills, "by special appointment to Her Majesty."

"I quite agree with 'Planes' there that something should be done," put in the Irish shoemaker. "See how we're moved on if we stand for a moment in the street. But the la-di-das may lounge before shop-windows all day. No one says nothing to them. And when we go into the country how we're stopped at every turn with questions, 'are we on the tramp,' or 'have we means, and are we going to work'; and if we sit down in a field to rest, why, we're had up for trespassing."

"Ah! the law of hospitality," thoughtfully sighed the biscuit-baker, "that's played out! In old times, as you might read in books, mates all, you stopped at a castle-door, and only had to blow a trumpet for people to give you food and ask you kindly to sit by the cheerful fire, and let you lie on a clean shakedown of fresh straw somewhere in a donjon-keep, whatever that may be, but we read of it in the London Journal. I'd like to know who'd do that now? You go and ask for a night's lodging, and see what'll happen. You'll get a month from the nearest magistrate, that's about what you'll get. We live in a beastly world, sure-lie."

But now the young gentleman neatly clad in black came in—the schoolmaster, whose business it is to coerce into respectability that batch of devilish urchins; and, arranging a homely desk and books, commanded us to stand for prayers. Two or three verses from the Psalms and a short prayer followed, and the schoolmaster left us to prepare for bed. This interested me much, as I had been counting again and again the hammocks coiled against the wall and could make out only eight. Seventeen into eight won't go. How were we going to manage? I puzzled my brains as with the pitfalls of

mental arithmetic we used to be taught as boys. The lucky owners of the eight uncoiled them, fixed the two iron rods attached to the foot of each into sockets in the boards, steadied them with an arrangement of chains screwed into the floor, and drew from a corner a hideous heap of fetid rags, utterly worn-out, falling into gaping holes, disseminating a combination of evil odours with fever on their wings, such as turned me for a moment sick and faint. A murmur became manifest among the seventeen.

"What! those old things again. The master promised us new ones. They are not fit for beasts, much less for Christian men."

"Very sorry, lads," said the superintendent, who never left us alone, but whistled and rattled his keys incessantly. "The master says they haven't come, so you must just do your best with the old ones for another night."

Those amongst us who had not hammocks were now shown our several sleeping-places on the floor, foot to foot, with the exception of myself, who being the new comer, was very properly given the worst place, being accordingly billeted half in the room, half on the damp bricks of the wash-house—a delightful spot, at all events, one of varying flatness, with option of arranging head or feet upon the bricks at will, and a delicious draught from mysterious enclosures beyond, and a strong savour as of sinks from the water-works of the lavatory. Nothing to lie upon but a centaur arrangement of boards and bricks, aforesaid: one foul covering all but in shreds from rottenness, no pillow of any sort; verily, the kennelled dog fares better. Fortunately, I had brought an ancient rug of my own, which I rolled up to save my head from the cold ground. Not having been able to eat my bread at tea, and dreading a reprimand for wastefulness, I had secreted portions of it in my coat-pocket, the crust of which stuck into my back all night, shaping itself like a series of butterpats, with impressions of my vertebrae, as I dared not draw it from its ambush. One bivouacked on the table, one on an improvised couch of benches, the superintendent alone rejoicing in a real blanket and a pillow. They were all very kind to one another, poor fellows, arranging their pitiful rags so as to incommode their neighbours to the least possible degree. Old Chips examined my own rug with great interest.

"Given to me by a kind gentleman," I said.

"If I were you," he answered, "I'd put that away tidily. It's too good for here, though you might get something for it from a 'bus-driver, to-morrow. My! what a prime coat and waistcoat it would make! And I should take off all my clothes, doing them up in my handkerchief, and hanging them on a nail in order that they may not be infested by the morning. You know what I mean. It's always well to have one's clothes clean."

"In what am I to wrap myself, then?" I asked. "Surely not in this one wrapper, so foul and full of holes."

"There are two more spare ones there, which I dare say you can take, as you've the worst place. You'll see that all the rest undress, and I'd advise you to do the same."

Undress they did, poor creatures, and I wished that we, as well as the coverings, had been put through the ordeal of the bath. They coiled themselves up in their filthy drapery, like so many animals, their skins showing through its rents, their heads on the bare boards, a series of large mole-hills ranged round the walls—eleven mole-hills and seven occupants of hammocks in that stifling atmosphere with but the veriest chink of window open. The room being sunk below the level of the roadway, inquisitive passers-by could look in through the interval between glass and wall. Our neighbourhood not being particularly high bred, and being rather given to broad stentorian badinage, it is apparently one of the pet amusements of choice sparks to crane in their heads at auspicious moments, with uncomplimentary remarks on the "Refugees" and showers of orange-peel. Rude street boys well posted in the hours, clustered on railings and window-sill as ten was striking, dispensing shafts of satire with liberal hand, until, as glass became in jeopardy from reckless highlows, our superintendent gave the dreadful order to close the window fast, and I turned upon my bricks and groaned aloud. What was to become of us by morning, with our shortcomings in the way of soap, the lowness of our room, and other drawbacks? True there was a slit or two in the ceiling, of which one man casually remarked that "by five a.m. the air up there would burn blue," but to render the apartment the least wholesome the whole fronting of the room would need

removal. At last all were undressed, running like savages in and out, upsetting over my prostrate body in the doorway, and finally, turning down the gas till it made darkness barely visible, commenced a running fire of chaff and chat. No sleep for us as yet. A privileged hammock occupant would catch up his coverings suddenly, whisking nauseous savours into a contiguous nose. He of the aucuba leaf aspect would rush in casually, announcing that he had only one wall to finish, and wanted but a trifle "more stuff." Bones would rasp against the boards, causing their owners to wince and groan, to turn and toss with muttered cursings. Meanwhile the feeble light flickered unsteadily over the uncertain masses of human beings lying like some Dante group paying the anguished penalty of insuccess, and the superintendent, amid attempts at sleep, admonished chatters with growls to "let the lads take rest."

Rest indeed! as though such an idea were anything but ridiculous when combined with squalid filth, poisonous air, absence of all incentive to repose, hacking coughs, groans and snores, bodies in pain, and minds consequently undergoing imaginary torments. No wonder that all preferred to talk, forgetting in coarse anecdote their bodily sufferings. Old Chips had been a soldier, and had seen war, and had brought back with him highly-spiced recollections, with which he favoured us at unnecessary length, interrupted at times by a chorus of remarks, now incredulous, now appreciative, from his audience.

"You just hold your tongues, men, and don't jabber." This from the superintendent. "Best sleep whilst you may. You'll all be up at work at five, or I'll know the reason why."

"One moment," cried the whitewasher. "Hi, you, shoemaker; will you do a job for me in the morning? See, I've got an awl and a bit of wax. I want this shoe made ship-shape."

"Will you hold your tongue, and let the boys sleep?"

"One minute, Chalks. Have you got a job? Will they have room for me? No? Well, no matter; better luck by-and-by."

"He who cleans without any pay will live to engage journeymen on some other occasion." This chaunted through a chink in a rug, by the Tapleyan labourer.

"Silence! or I'll call the Governor

through the speaking-tube. And then you had best look out all. Short commons, and no going out on Sundays."

And so they gabbled and jabbered without ceasing, with many a toss and groan, rebuked at intervals, and spittings and coughings without end. And when they did mimic sleep at last, what a mockery of rest it was! The devilish brats in the dormitory above sent forth whiffs of discordant sound every now and then, accompanied by scurrying and pattering of naked feet. They yelled, and jeered, and sang, stopped abruptly for an instant, after a muffled harangue from some one, only to burst out fitfully into renewed gibings, to be temporarily bottled up again, like very obstreperous ginger-beer. Belated urchins flattened their noses, after a tussle with rail spikes, against the window, suddenly to vanish, pulled down from behind, their untimely discomfiture being celebrated by a loud war-whoop and dirge of defeat. Carts tore past the building, shaking it to its foundations, on their way to the great Cattle Market; trains shrieked wildly a notice of their coming, as though a monotony of accidents had given them a remorse unknown to their directors; horses struggled to save themselves from falling on the unctuous pavement, lest they should perish and incontinently be transferred to skewers for the benefit of a colony of cats expressing their radical views close by with unmusical energy; women screamed the shady details of each other's lives for the delectation of admiring friends; babies howled and babbled, drivers gee-hupped, the very stones seemed endowed with a distinct clatter of their own; and in the midst of this discordant Sabbat of never-sleeping streets we were expected to woo the poppy-god, praying him to grant us strength for the morrow's conflict with unpropitious Fate.

The clock hanging opposite ticked tranquilly meanwhile, the molehills surged and turned, muttered imprecations hovered in the air, wavelets of hard breathing ebbed and flowed, a sighing sea of numbed but yet protesting human struggle against relentless, hard-pursuing disappointment. Five o'clock.

"Now lads, will you get up? Will you get up, I say, or must I summon the master through the tube? Come, come, tumble up, or we shall be late with work. Remember, no work, no breakfast, and no more stopping here."

Grey dawn groped its way through the clouded casement, lighting up a wild group, that might have been snatched from some savage encampment away in Africa, save that there the winds of heaven would be allowed to play at will. Each molehill with infinite labour was delivered of its occupant, totally unclad, unkempt, unshorn, never washed, fearful to look upon by light of day. A groan, a murmur, a grunt, a general scratching of heads, and the crew of outcasts had stretched their unsavoury forms, had somehow struggled into tattered remnants of what had once been shirts, and pitch-forked vile apologies for coats upon their shoulders, and without the use of water, completed their attire by donning their shapeless hats. Hammocks in a trice were rolled away, the filthy rugs hastily tossed into corners, and the superintendent, with the assistance of a slate, proceeded to select for each the work wherewith he should pay back the hospitality vouchsafed for him.

"Shoemaker, Labourer, Biscuits, and Inks to go down and serve the saw, Planes to work the same; the rest to clean up the Institute."

"How wonderfully incongruous is all this," I thought. "What is the use of playing at brightening up the Institute, when its inhabitants and their coverings are so very foul? Yet another example of whited sepulchres, though the fairness in this case is not ambitiously white. First polish up the exterior of the inmates, their beds and clothing, and then employ the superfluity of energy for walls and floor. Attend to drains, moreover, and flow of water, and above all, give passage to the outer air, and this charity, founded with the very best intentions, will become less a trap for fever and disease."

On Sundays, good young men from city houses flock hither in their best frock coats, and most immaculate neck-ties, and preach and exhort, and read good books all day long. Would the proceeding not savour a trifle less of cant, were they, instead, to see that the broken beds were made good, the worn-out hammocks mended, the lavatory rendered wholesome, the fetid rugs renewed? But then they would be deprived of the satisfaction of hearing their own voices high upraised in solemn admonition, which is a very great satisfaction indeed to amateur apostles.

"What's that?" fiercely demanded the irascible son of Crispin. "Rub down walls and floors? I won't. I don't know how, and

don't intend to learn. Scrubbing, indeed, on bended knees too! That's woman's work. I'm a man. Give me man's work to do. I'll go and serve the saw——"

"You'll do what you're told, or you don't go out to-day, but shall be set to watch the youngsters."

"Murther, and I won't do that indeed; that's too hard work."

"Now, men, go down to the saw."

I followed the others with misgivings, consequent on gibing whispers from the baker to the effect that "the wheel would test my muscularity."

Through the boys' ward we went, where the urchins were already busy chopping squares of wood into faggots, which littered the floor in heaps, to be done up into bundles for sale, and hawked about the streets as the morning tale of work for lads. We meanwhile passed on, down ladders into the bowels of the earth, where in a close cellar a great wheel stood, furnished with iron bars for handles, the object of which was the turning of a circular saw for the preparation of faggot wood. Planes went silently to his post, we did the same, two to each handle, grinding heavily for two weary hours, with one interval of rest, monotonously curving back and forcing the dead weight up and down in the stifling hole, rendered still less agreeable by escaping gas. After awhile we all perspire freely, and I cannot help wondering at myself, buried in this oven, turning with might and main in company with a dock labourer who tries not unsuccessfully to shift all his work on me.

"He sawed her through in youthful prime," carolled the vocalist meanwhile, softly, in general encouragement. "Heave on, my lads; this must be mighty like Portland."

Presently Biscuits breaks down, complaining of want of air, with an apology that he is unused to the work. "Indeed," he adds, "this perpetual canvassing for employment, and finding none, makes one too listless and discouraged to work hard. Besides, we never get a proper amount of rest here, what with the dirt and the unnecessary discomfort. I'm hanged if I do any more; that's flat."

The happy thought struck us to make a raid amongst the goblins above, which we accordingly did, setting five to each wheel handle as an experiment, speedily desisting, however, as, not content with performing no labour themselves, they skipped up and down in devilish glee,

essaying to cut through the wheel-strap, tumbling the wood heaps upon our shins, pelting us with sharp splinters, scampering meanwhile in and out until we were fain to drive them all upstairs again, marvelling at the life which must be endured by the pale gentleman who read prayers last night. A bell sounds. Morning drudgery is over. Prayers and breakfast, and then off we shall all sally in pursuit of "the job," that *Fata Morgana* who delights in mocking all these weary creatures. Long prayers, extempore, by the Governor in the great white-washed schoolroom at the top of the building. The urochins pinch each other to elicit howls which they cleverly proceed to drown with coughs. On the entrance of the Governor they rise and shout genially, "Good morning, Sir," with admirable unanimity, which is as speedily changed to derisive pantomime so soon as he turns his back to mount the steps of the reading desk. The superintendent cuffs them into order surreptitiously, in return for which display of discipline they make hideous faces, at him, accompanied by gestures indicative of hatred, ridicule, revenge, and triumph, the while they are singing with rich fresh voices the morning hymn from the Prayer Book. "Suffer little children to come unto me;" "a lying lip is an abomination to the Lord;" and like Bible maxims frown at them from every wall, but on they sing, nevertheless, like guileless machines, but as vicious looking a set of brazen ragamuffins as ever matriculated for Newgate.

Down stairs again to the common dormitory, as foul with closed windows as ever. Coffee in tin mugs, or rather, let us say, water infused with a soupçon of chicory-dust, great pieces of excellent new bread, a calling over of names, and marking attendance in ledgers by the Governor's dignified offspring, and lo! the outer door is opened, a gush of London fog steals in, so little sullied by carbonic acid, in comparison with the air we have been breathing for fourteen hours, as to seem laden with gales direct from Heaven, and then the sodden, blighted, sallow representatives of labour trudge forth once more to seek work high and low through the vast maze of streets, to offer north and south, and east and west, the muscular force of their willing arms to the dapper gentry with smooth faces, who will shake their heads and raise their eye-brows, playfully remarking that our markets are overstocked.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LVIII. BAD NEWS.

"MIND, I wasn't an angel, nor anything like it," said Rosetta; "and when he was ill-tempered I turned ill-tempered too; only I never swore as he did, I couldn't do that. We were rich one day and poor the next. He was for ever gambling and betting at horse races and prize fights. Now there was money to throw out of window; now there wasn't enough to buy bread, or drink—he cared for that more than for bread. Well, I knew all at last. He told me. My marriage was illegal and I was not his wife. There lived some one who had a better, a real claim to that title. He flung the truth at me as you'd fling a stone at a dog. It was too cruel of him; but he was weary of me, he was sick and tired, as he said, of going dragging about the country with me tied to him, hindering and plaguing him. Well, he wasn't the only one who was weary. So I quitted him on the instant. He was sorry afterwards, I believe, and followed me, trying to get me back again. But he lost trace of me, and then, as I heard, he went abroad for a while. For me, I wandered on without resting, parting with the few trinkets I'd taken with me, one by one, to pay for food and my night's lodging. I was looking for Jecker's booth. I had friends there, I knew, who'd help me back into my old way of life. Then I found mother, bless her, or she found me, and she saved me and made me what I am. Didn't you, mother? The pains she took with me; the kindness she showed me; the love she's borne for me ever since!"

"There, there, Rosy, enough and more than enough's been said about that; another word and I march straight off to bed."

"And I mayn't even sing her praises! I must leave you to guess, Duke—though you'll never guess it all—how good she has been to me, and how grateful I am! I worked hard and tried my best, for I felt that was the only way I had to show her what I felt. How thankful I was to her for all her goodness to me! And I succeeded; I scarce know how. The public liked me; I can't tell why. It was all mother's doing, and no one was more pleased than she was at my success. She stood in the wings to encourage me when I went on to speak my first lines. They'd gone clean out of my head, and my voice

was dead in my throat and I was trembling all over. But I caught courage from her brave kind eyes, and then came the applause, and I don't remember much more or how I got off till I found myself half-fainting in her arms—the good kind soul! I'd succeeded, thanks to her.”

“Rosy!”

“There, I've done, mother. I'm crying, you see, and I can't well talk while I'm crying. That's my story, Duke. I wanted you to hear it so that you might think as well of me as you can. And it's all truth I've told you. Have I been so much to blame? There are lies enough told about me, I know; but you won't believe all they say. I'm on the stage and I can't help their flinging hard names at me. It's the world's good pleasure to do that, and I must bear it. Only an actress! Don't you see the women's lips curl scornfully, and their eyes dart contempt at me as they say the word? If I were as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, I should'n't escape their calumny. That's in Hamlet, you know, Duke. I've played Ophelia in the country—mother, here, was the Queen, though the part's rather out of her line. It was at Norwich, was'n't it, mother? Well, my marriage was no marriage. I thought I was his wife and I wasn't. That's the worst they can say of me. Let them say it; I don't care. Ah, Duke! you don't know what an actress's life is. It makes us as bold and fearless as men, and as heartless, almost.”

“And you've seen him since, Rosetta?”

“Yes, Duke, he found me out; but mother here was with me, and I was not afraid. I was angry, perhaps, but not revengeful. He was poor and wanted money, of me! I never thought he could have stooped so low as that; but he did. He came to me a poor, trembling, downcast, witless creature, asking for money to be lent to him, not given; he had some scheme in his head—such head as was left him—for winning enormously at cards or with dice, I forget which. I was to be paid back out of his winnings. And don't think he was penitent for the wrong he'd done me. He spoke no word of that. He didn't even pretend penitence; perhaps that was as well. He'd forgotten it all very likely, washed it out of his mind with drink. Well, I gave him what he asked for; and he's been since for more and more; and had it. Not that I'm rich. I work hard for all I get, and I don't get more than I know what to do with. Mother,

here, was for handing him over to the law, to be punished, imprisoned, I don't know what; but I couldn't do that. No, I give him what he asks for. That's my revenge, Duke. I pity him. I can't let him want.”

“It's not right, Rosy.”

“Is anything right, mother?”

“But you can't go on like this. How is it to end? You must make money—for yourself—now, while you're young and strong, and put by against rainy weather, which is sure to come by-and-bye, when you're old. My dear, I know, to my cost, what a bad husband is—otherwise I shouldn't be toiling and slaving on the stage at my time of life. Still he was my husband sure enough. That's more than you can say of the creature you give money to. I was his lawful wife, and, fool that I was, fond of the wretch, although he did rob me of all I had, and leave me and my child to starve. However, he's dead now—I cried my eyes out, I know, when they came and told me of it—and there's no good to be got by talking of him. But it's different in your case. You can't go on wearing your heart out on the stage till all those pretty roses and lilies have faded and gone, and you're too old to play young women. What's to become of you then? I shall be dead and buried, sure enough. But you'll never be able to play old women as I do, Rosy. You're clever, my dear, but that isn't in you. You must earn money, and save it, and keep it—make hay while the sun shines. And if a good man with a true heart should make you an honest offer—But there, I'll say no more of that. Marriage seems to be a poor woman's only remedy; we all fall back upon that; but it's a miserable business when all's said, and mars more than it mends, it's my belief. However, you'll marry some of these fine days, take my word for it. It's a risk we women must run—for fate drives us to it; not that there's much driving wanted in most cases, I'm bound to say.”

“No, mother, I shall never marry—again,” said Rosetta, rather sadly. Mrs. Bembridge shrugged her shoulders.

“Well then, there's no more to be said—only this; I'm weary and sleepy, and I'm going to bed—and good night, Mr. Nightingale; and when you come and see us again, as I hope you will soon, for you've a simple, honest, young face, and I like you—I'm an old body, you know, and

may say these odd, blunt things—when you come again, I promise you, we'll be a little more cheerful, and talk about pleasanter topics. I don't know, I'm sure, how we fell into the dismal so. It was Rosy's doing. When she begins her flighty airs she's sure to end in being melancholy. She shan't do so again while you're here. Good night. God bless you!"

"Good night, my Duke."

But before I left, Rosetta insisted upon writing an order to admit me to see her next performance. She wrote slowly, and with some difficulty, her lips and even her tongue visibly following the movements of her pen. She was pleased, however, with the result of her labours, waving the paper to and fro to dry the ink, and smearing the writing in the process; for no blotting paper could be found in the room.

Poor Rosetta! I mused tenderly and compassionately over her story. I had no heart to blame her, if indeed she was at all blameworthy. That she had been cruelly, scandalously wronged, seemed quite unquestionable.

I determined to see Vickery, and gather from him, if I could, the facts connected with Lord Overbury's marriage. I had an excuse for seeing him—I would hand him Rosetta's order. He was a playgoer, and that would tempt him.

He expressed many thanks for the order, and a smile crept over his face as he folded up the scrap of paper and deposited it in his pocket-book. He was fond of the play, he admitted, but he did not go very often now—not of late years. Somehow the play was not quite what it used to be. He remembered Mrs. Siddons, and many other of the great performers that were before my time. No, I could form no conception of how great they really were—it was not to be expected that I could. Still he had heard Miss Darlington very highly spoken of. He would certainly avail himself of my kindness and the order, and go and see her. He promised himself much pleasure from his visit to the theatre. He was much obliged to me.

But on the subject of Lord Overbury he was not communicative. His face changed as I questioned him; his smile faded away, and he eyed me suspiciously. I mentioned Mrs. Bembridge's name.

"Yes," he said; "I have the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Bembridge. I've known her some years. An excellent actress and

a very worthy woman. So I have always understood. Precisely. Yes. I knew her when she was playing here at the Wells a long time ago now. And I'd seen her at Bath before that. For Lord Overbury—well, Mr. Nightingale, you know enough of the profession to know that we don't care to speak openly of official matters. They're in the nature of secrets, you see. What we learn in that way we regard as strictly confidential. But I'll say this: Mrs. Bembridge has been misinformed, or has misunderstood. The late Mr. Monck never acted on behalf of Lord Overbury; his lordship's name, however, was well known in Mr. Monck's office."

"But if he wasn't a client, there can be no harm in your telling all you know about him."

Vickery coughed behind his hand; his eyes blinked. "You seem anxious on this subject, Mr. Nightingale. Well, I don't mind saying that we acted for the late Lord Wycherley. There was an action at law, of course, Lord Overbury being defendant. It was a very scandalous case. We obtained a verdict. Then there were proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Court, carried on by our proctors. Finally we went to the House of Lords, and obtained an act for the dissolution of the marriage. Lady Wycherley was afterwards married to Lord Overbury. It was understood, I believe, that he would marry her immediately after the passing of the act; he had always promised that; under all the circumstances it seemed only right."

"And she still lives?"

"I have not heard of her death," said Vickery, taking snuff. "But I have been informed that she was soon separated from Lord Overbury—why, I can't tell you—and went to live abroad: in Russia, I think. She was said to be a lady of very strange character; not a very estimable person, I take it, though of remarkable beauty, so people agreed, and of noble family—one of the Pomfrets—a daughter of Lord Bannerville's."

"But you know that Lord Overbury has since married Miss Darlington?"

"I've heard of that—a marriage in the Scotch form." Then he added, suddenly, "Ah! you want to know if Miss Darlington is free to marry again?"

It was clear that he thought me a suitor of Rosetta's; and, as I judged, the idea was pleasant to him. His looks

brightened; he was smiling again. It then occurred to me that he had possibly long suspected my affection for Rachel; had been jealous of me, had sought to keep me apart from her, on that account. He had thought me unworthy of her, perhaps? I could not complain of that. Or did he love her himself? Surely that was too absurd.

But now the notion that I loved not Rachel, but Rosetta, was very welcome to him, and relieved his mind exceedingly. Such at any rate was my view of his sudden change of manner.

"It may be well to ascertain the particulars of Miss Darlington's marriage. I take it to be void. I think Lady Overbury still survives. But it's worth looking into. Miss Darlington is, perhaps, anxious to marry again, and no doubt she has many admirers—suitors. All agree that she is a most fascinating actress. That will be my own opinion, I dare say; only I've seen so many fascinating actresses. And then she receives a large salary, I'm informed. That adds greatly to her attractions. Actress's husbands look very sharp after their salaries; so I've heard."

I did not care to pursue the subject further. I inquired after Miss Monck. She was well, Vickery thanked me. I tried to bring him again to the story of Sir George's early life. But he was not in a communicative mood. He persisted that he had told all he knew; that there was nothing more to tell. I asked if he had any news of Tony? No, he had no news.

But in the course of a few days news came, and very bad news.

My mother wrote briefly to say that Tony was very ill, that his state was indeed alarming. He had expressed a desire to see me; and she begged me to start forthwith for the Down Farm.

CHAPTER LIX. MY BOY-FRIEND.

In my position as Sir George's assistant I could hardly quit London without his sanction. I sought him in his studio and explained my wishes. He listened patiently, and at length consented to my departure, but rather reluctantly, I thought. He was in a languid, listless mood, reclining in his easy chair. His eyes were heavy and his face very sallow. There was an open book on the floor at his feet; as though he had carelessly thrown it down after vainly seeking amusement in its pages. His palette, ready prepared, with its semi-circle of mounds of fresh colour, and a sheaf of

clean brushes rested on a small table beside him; but he had not been at work apparently. There was no glisten of wet paint on the canvas fronting him.

"You can go, Duke, of course, if it must be so. A sick friend, you say? The young man you mentioned to me some time since? Yes, I remember. And he is very ill, you fear; dying, it may be? Poor fellow! I'm sorry to hear it. And yet, perhaps, if all were known he's rather to be envied than pitied. 'He whom the gods love dies young.' But he's your friend, you tell me. Well, you must go to him, I suppose. It's not because you've grown home-sick—weary of being here? You're sure? I shall miss you, Duke; you're wanted here, remember. I'm obliged to rely more than ever upon my assistants, for, somehow, I can't work as I used to. I don't see that your going can do much good. You're not a doctor, you know. He's well cared for, I suppose, in the country. Does this Down Farm of yours lose its magic in your absence? But you've set your heart upon going, I see. Have you money enough? No ceremony, please. Well, come back as soon as you can."

He spoke with effort and his voice sounded faint and hollow. He passed a tremulous hand across his weary eyes, then held it pressed against his forehead.

"You are in pain, Sir George?"

"It's nothing," he answered rather petulantly. I was quitting him.

"Stay," he said, rousing himself and speaking in firmer tones. "Let this thing be understood between us, Duke. You come back here; you promise. Whatever happens you come back here. I have your word for that. I trust you may find your friend better than you expect. The account you have received of him is perhaps exaggerated. People in the country always exaggerate. They live in a world of small events, and view them through magnifying glasses. And they like to send bad news. It reflects importance upon the senders. You can write to me if you will. Yet, no. Don't write. Letters are always a nuisance, and make great mischief. I can't write them, and I hate to receive them. I won't ask, therefore, even for yours. But come back to me, yourself, and let me see you as soon as may be, whatever happens, remember that. Now good-bye."

So I left him.

Mole kindly accompanied me to the Golden Cross and witnessed my departure

by the early coach for Dripford. I spoke to him of Sir George. He shook his head significantly.

"He's in a queer way, very queer. I don't know what to make of him. He suffers much at times, I think, and he has increased his daily dose of laudanum. It relieves him for a while; but a terrible depression follows. There's no help for it, however. And I suppose it's no affair of yours or mine."

My uncle met me at Dripford. He looked grave and anxious, and much older, I thought. There was increase of age in the slowness of his movements, in his apparent disinclination for speech. For the old are not so garrulous as many suppose; they are as often taciturn, with abstracted eyes, turned, as it were, towards distant things, the past or the future; these seeming more immediate to them, perhaps, than the present.

He received me with a sort of subdued kindness, answering my questions very briefly, as he drove slowly towards Purrington.

He was well and my mother was well. Poor Tony was sinking, it was feared, though for the last day or two there had been little perceptible change in his condition. Dr. Turton, from Steepleborough, had been in constant attendance, and though he declined to speak confidently, held out but slight hopes of his patient's recovery. He was very weak.

"It's a sad business," said my uncle, "and so we all feel it. There's not a soul upon the farm that hasn't got to care for the poor lad. He'd always a good word or a kind look for everybody. So young as he is too. Your mother's been grieving sorely over him; it's almost as though he were her own son. Yet she's known him but for a little while, after all. In truth, the boy's almost a stranger to us. Ho's neither kith nor kin of ours. But she's grown uncommonly fond of him somehow. She'd always a tender heart, poor soul."

He was silent for some time after this. Evidently he was much depressed, but he did not care to show his feelings. He had always held himself in the background, as it were, distrusting his right to occupy attention, desiring rather to escape notice. Yet it had seemed some relief to him to speak of my mother's sorrow, as though he obtained in such wise outlet for his own.

The farm was doing fairly, he said, in reply to my inquiries. At any rate he was as well off as his neighbours, and had no

particular reason to complain. Corn was high and in demand, and he had sold his wool for a better price than he had obtained for some years past. The sheep looked well, and he had a good stock of food for them. Altogether he hoped to get through the winter months pretty comfortably.

Then I brought him back again to the subject of Tony.

They had thought him but an ailing lad from the first. "When you brought him down, Duke," said my uncle, "it seemed to me he'd such a white, London face, and so slight a frame, that there was little promise of long life about him. The poor boy had no strength—was so scant of breath—and was for putting his hand to his side after the slightest exertion." But they fancied he had improved after a while. There had come some healthy colour into his cheeks, and he walked with a firmer step. "His heart had always been light and full of life, and his eyes, I've noticed, have been often as bright as stars. He'd a blithe and cheery way with him—was very merry at times—and enlivened the old house wonderfully. You being away, Duke, it was very pleasant to have him about us. The young seem meant, somehow, I think, to comfort the old, in the matter of gay speech and bright looks. Perhaps we shouldn't ask or expect much more of them than that. And then he was never tired of singing your praises, Duke, and you may judge that your mother didn't grow weary of listening to him." But soon a change had come. As the autumn air grew more and more keen and chill, and a look of coming winter darkened the landscape, he had faded and withered like a hothouse flower in a frost. His decline since had been rapid. His strength had given way completely. He was so weak now that he could scarcely stand without assistance.

"We might have sent to you before, Duke; but of what use was it? You could do nothing—and we didn't like to give over hoping. We kept thinking—or trying to think—that it was but a bad cold—an attack he might rally from, and shake off. He's so young, you see—and one can't quite believe that death will take the young when there are so many old about—ready, waiting, almost anxious for him. But it is to be, I fear. The poor boy's but a shadow of what he was—and he was slight enough then, surely. He weighs but a trifle. I carry him down stairs, at times—and I'm shocked at find-

ing how light he grows. I lift him as easily as though he were a mere child. It's a sad business, as I said. But he doesn't suffer much, I think—at least he doesn't complain. I doubt if he knows his danger; and we haven't the courage, none of us, to tell him of it. Not but what he's a brave heart, I think, for all he looks such a boy. And he's so grateful for all that's done for him. God knows he's welcome to it all; and it's little enough; for what can we do, after all? and who could refuse help in such case?"

There were tears in his eyes as he spoke. As we neared Purrington he had grown more talkative; he became, perhaps, more accustomed to my presence, and found that there was a sort of comfort in giving sorrow words. Yet each sentence fell from him slowly, as though doled out reluctantly, and every now and then he lapsed into silence again, and it was only with an effort he would recommence speech.

"You must be prepared to find him much changed, Duke." But I had gathered as much already from his simple statements. "Not but what there's a flush in his face, at times, that looks almost like health, only it's too bright in colour, and it comes and goes so quickly. He's carried down stairs most days—though he'd be better in bed to my thinking, for the dressing exhausts him so—and he sits in the easy chair by the fireside in the little room. He's out of draughts there, and in nobody's way, and we keep him there as warm and comfortable as we can. Your mother's constantly at his side and seems never tired of doing all she may for him. It's a way women have, you know, with the sick and helpless. If nursing and tending him could alter matters he'd soon be sound and strong again. But I scarcely dare hope that. It reminds me—when I see the poor boy sitting there wrapped up by the fire—of old times, when you, Duke, were an ailing child, struck down with fever or what not. Your mother thinks that, too, perhaps, and Kem as well, may be—women take count of these things more than we do, you know. They open their hearts to them and set great store upon them. And then this poor boy—I call him a boy, for he's that to one of my years, though he's of your own age, I dare say, but then sickness makes children of people, if not so young they're as feeble—this poor boy, I was saying, is an orphan, it seems. Never saw his mother's face, that he remembers, so I learn; that

makes the women very pitiful to him, and tender and compassionate. They think that, so young as he is, and so stricken, he should have a mother to see to him, and smooth his pillow, and take him to her heart; that sets them striving to fill her place and do her duty by him; hoping, perhaps, that if she can look upon them from beyond the grave, she'll thank and bless them and give them her prayers; and that any how they're sure of reward in Heaven. Not that they do it reckoning upon that or by way of buying aught for themselves by-and-by. It's no sacrifice to them. They've too much comfort in it for that, perhaps. But—I don't know why I talk of such things—for I'm not sure I've got them rightly understood in my own mind; and I can't, therefore, make them any way clear to you—but women have more religion—of a sort—than we have, Duke. And whatever we may think of it, it seems sufficient unto them and to benefit and to gladden them greatly."

He had been talking in a musing, self-communing way, scarcely conscious, as it seemed, of my presence, although he had occasionally mentioned my name, as though really addressing himself to me. But he had done this mechanically, I think, for the most part.

"Now you can see the farm house," he said presently. "When we get on a little further you'll be able to make out your mother standing by the front gate. She's been looking for your coming this long time past, I'll warrant."

Sure enough there she was. And soon she was clasping me tenderly in her arms.

"Duke, my boy!" She could say no more.

She looked very wan, I thought, and her hair was now quite white. A hungry sort of joy seemed to dance in her eyes at the sight of me.

"You're well mother? and Tony?"

Her face saddened, she sighed and shook her head significantly.

"You shall see him—he'll be so pleased—in one moment. But—let me look at you, Duke—I do think you're growing still."

She wrung my hands. Then she seemed moved by a sort of devout gratitude, which surely could not be counted as merely selfishness, that I was yet well and strong, and not as my poor sinking friend; that I was spared to her, and likely to be; that she need not fear for my safety. But this was only for a minute.

"Poor boy, he'll be so glad. He has been so longing to see you. He has so set his heart upon it. Don't ask me how he is; I don't know, I daren't think. You must see him and judge for yourself. Hope? I can't say; we can only pray, Duke; that, perhaps, will enable us to hope."

She led the way into the house, carefully closing the door after her, avoiding noise, and shutting out the cold wind.

"Well, Duke, old fellow; how good of you to come!"

Tony was sitting, as my uncle had said, wrapped up by the fireside in the little room I so well remembered. I had prepared my lessons there—ages ago as it seemed—for Mr. Bygrave.

His voice sounded toneless and hollow, yet there was life in his manner and bright light in his eyes; they looked very large, his face was so thin; his hair, I noticed, had grown long, and its flaxen curls clustered about his neck. He tried to rise, but I gently restrained him, for I knew how weak he was. He gave me his hand, it was burning hot, and so thin and transparent, it had the look of white wax.

"I'm a good deal pulled down, as you see, Duke. I've grown thinner than ever; I know it by the way my clothes hang so loosely about me; and my ring slips off my finger now; it never used to, you know, it fitted tightly once; my strength has gone from me suddenly, I can't tell you how. If I could only get that back again, I should do well enough. Beyond that, there is not really much the matter with me."

My mother was watching my face, trying to read there what I thought of his state. It seemed to me, as I stood beside him, quite hopeless. For his strength failing him, it was his life, he should have said. He was dying.

"How good of you to come," he repeated. "But it's only like yourself. I knew you'd come—though it was but to humour a whim of mine. That's why I didn't send to you before. It seemed hardly right, for so poor a matter, to bring you this long way. So much as you've to do in London too. How is the dearsmoky old city looking? No cleaner or wholesomer, I daresay. But I can't love the place the less on that score. Not but what I love the country, too. I've good cause. Your mother, Duke, I can't tell you how good she's been to me. But I've no

need to tell you. You know her—you know it all already. I couldn't believe people could be so kind. But they saw how sick and faint and broken down I was, and then their good kind hearts wouldn't rest until they'd done all they could to set me on my legs again. And I shall be better soon, I daresay; at least I hope so. Your coming so kindly and promptly, old fellow, has made me feel better already, done me more good than all the doctor's physic. And what have you been doing, Duke, all this long while? You've been wonderfully busy, of course; and what are your plans for the future? I've such a lot of things to talk to you about and to tell you of. Don't mind my teasing you with questions. Now you've come you must sit beside my easy chair; for it seems odd, Duke, but I can hardly stand without help; as for moving about, that's not to be managed any how—so you must sit beside me and have a long, long talk with me."

But the excitement of seeing me, and the efforts he made thereupon, were bad for him, my mother judged. Upon some excuse she drew me from the room, promising that I should soon return.

"Well, Duke—you think—? Yes, I see. I don't wonder that you're grieved. I couldn't but send for you. Thank God, you came."

I felt, as she felt, that in a little while it would have been too late.

"Has no one else been informed or sent for?"

"He has no father, no mother, Duke."

"But he has a cousin—Miss Rachel Monck."

"She is here, Duke."

"You sent for her?"

"I was about to send when she arrived. Something in his last letter to her—it was but a few lines written hurriedly in pencil—the fatigue of dipping his pen in the ink has been almost more than he could bear—something she read alarmed her—though it was not meant to do so—and she came."

"You have made her welcome, mother?"

"Need you ask me, Duke?"

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CHAPTER. XXVIII. DEEP BEYOND DEEP.

OF actual pain there was no more for Evy that morning; she had been on the rack too long to feel it. But had she been less tried, there would have been many a pang in store for her. To sit at that silent breakfast-table, and pretend, for her uncle's sake, to eat, and watch his white worn face, was a sad ordeal. Then, scarcely was it over, than who should come but Mr. De Coucy, full of talk, but carefully avoiding any reference to the late calamity, save what was implied by the significant pressure of his hand. Upon the whole, his presence seemed to cheer his host a little, or perhaps it was that when he came Judith withdrew from the room, a circumstance which, whenever it happened, always seemed to afford Mr. Hulet some relief.

"Well, my dear sir," said the visitor, after exhausting several topics, which had no interest either for himself or his hearers, but were obviously introduced with the benevolent intention of distracting their thoughts from the subject, on which he took it for granted they were dwelling, "I want to have a talk with you about that portrait of your ancestor—John Hulet, is it not?"

An expression of pain, caused doubtless by the recollection that that historical personage had been the cause of his last quarrel with her who was now no more, flitted across his descendant's face.

"The matter, indeed, can be discussed another time," continued Mr. De Coucy, hastily, "but I would wish you, when you have leisure, my dear Hulet, to put to-

cerning the authenticity of the picture. It is not mere curiosity that prompts me to ask this, I do assure you; and by-the-bye—for strange as it may seem, it is by-the-bye—that reminds me that I have just met our gallant captain on his grey, looking like Death on the Pale Horse—you must have been snubbing him very much, my dear young lady!"

"Has Heyton been here this morning, Evy?" asked Mr. Hulet, raising his bowed head, and exhibiting, for the first time, some signs of interest.

"Yes, uncle."

Only those two words, yet there was something in the tone in which she spoke them that startled both her hearers.

"I hope—I trust, dear Evy, that nothing has happened?"

"Nothing more, uncle, than what I told you needs must happen," returned Evy, calmly. "It is quite as well that Mr. De Coucy, as a valued friend of ours, and—and his—should hear it from my lips before it becomes the common talk it doubtless will be. My engagement with Captain Heyton is at an end."

"Great Heaven!" cried Mr. De Coucy, rising to his feet, "but this is incredible. It must not be—it shall not be."

"It is," answered Evy, decisively. "Captain Heyton and I have parted for ever. There was no quarrel, Mr. De Coucy, nor anything of such a nature as you probably conjecture, and if there was a fault on either side, it was not on his side. Pray do not wound me—"

"But, my dear young lady, this is monstrous—you cannot tell how monstrous—how grievously such a course would be to be deprecated, though in a day or two, perhaps, I may be in a position to convince you of it. Hulet, speak to her. Are you

"My uncle and I are quite in accord upon the subject," returned Evy, firmly: "circumstances have occurred since you last saw us——"

"What, since two days ago?"

"Yes: or at least they have come to our knowledge since then, which put it quite out of the question that I should marry Captain Heyton. He has been made aware of them himself, and acquiesces—yields, I should say, to an overpowering necessity."

"Hulet, my dear friend," exclaimed Mr. De Coucy, earnestly, "let me hear you speak; tell me that this is a mistake—a remediable one—owing to some fanciful, though doubtless creditable, objections raised by this excellent girl. She thinks she is causing Jack to make too great a sacrifice in giving up his expectations. Tell me that and make me happy."

"No, no," groaned Mr. Hulet, "I cannot. Evy knows what is best. It is not her fault, Heaven bless her; it is mine, all mine."

"Do not pain my uncle thus, dear Mr. De Coucy," pleaded Evy. "It is no one's fault, but a misfortune that has overwhelmed us both. Pray respect it, and be silent. For one thing, though that is not the chief cause of what has happened, we have had a severe pecuniary loss."

"Yes, we are ruined," said Mr. Hulet, slowly.

There was a long silence, during which, whether from embarrassment or emotion, Mr. De Coucy twice strove in vain to speak.

"After the command you have laid upon me, my dear Miss Evy," said he, presently, "I will urge nothing further. As to this ruin, pray permit me to say that never before have I experienced any satisfaction in being a wealthy man. My good friend" (here he turned with a frank smile to Mr. Hulet), "let me make a confession, which I have little doubt will be news to you, since your niece has too kindly a nature not to have spared me a humiliation when she could, though others of her sex would have taken pleasure in inflicting it. I was fool enough on our first acquaintance to make this young lady an offer of marriage. She will not suppose, I know, after what has occurred, that I should ever be so ungenerous, or insane, as to do it again. She always will think of me, I hope, as a second father, another uncle, like yourself; and she will not refuse, I trust, to accept my affectionate help and service in that capacity. The fact is, my dear Hulet—though as I don't want to be made much of for my money,

I wish the fact to remain a secret among our three selves—I am as rich as Plutus. Now don't—don't look so proud and pained, good friend. What is the use of a friendship, the sole restriction of which is that no man should ever help his fellow? I have not a poor relation in the world, nor any human being dependent on me. Why the deuce shouldn't I adopt Miss Evy yonder, if I like, just as your poor wife adopted Miss Judith?"

Over Mr. Hulet's listening face, which had been hitherto overspread with a grateful, if not an assenting smile, here passed a cloud of sadness; he sighed, like one who having for a space forgotten his griefs, is suddenly reminded of them, while the words that he had been apparently about to utter faded on his tongue.

"It is impossible, dear Mr. De Coucy," answered Evy, whose attention none of these appearances escaped, "to over-estimate our sense—for I am sure I am expressing my uncle's sentiments as well as my own—of the very great generosity and kindness of your offer; but, indeed, indeed, sir, we cannot accept it. I thank you for it, with all my heart; but we would wish to make our own way in the world without help, even though proffered so delicately as yours has been, and lean on one another rather than on a friend. Would we not, uncle?"

"Yes, yes; Heaven bless you for your friendship, De Coucy; but Evy knows what is best for us," answered Mr. Hulet, in slow mechanical tones.

It almost seemed as though, in relegating his powers of judgment and decision to his niece, he had made over to her also those of speech, so inactive had his once so ready tongue become.

"You refuse then, from fear of incurring some wretched sense of obligation, to give me any opportunity of proving my regard," said Mr. De Coucy, in offended tones.

"Oh indeed, sir, you are wrong," put in Evy, earnestly; "we have incurred that sense already, and it is very far from making us wretched; in my eyes, at least, your noble conduct strikes like a burst of sunshine through this disastrous day. You will not part from us in anger, surely?"

"No, my dear Miss Evy, no," answered Mr. De Coucy, taking both her hands in his; "but only in sorrow and disappointment. If you ever think better of this harsh resolve, you will be giving me the greatest—I had almost said the only—pleasure, which life has to offer me, in

letting me know it. For the present I will say no more upon that subject. You are going to leave the cottage, I hear?"

"I believe so," answered Evy, quietly, and turning to her uncle, who rousing himself with effort, answered—

"Yes, we go in a few days; the furniture will be sold at once; and by-the-bye, De Coucy, you will be doing me a kindness if you will call at Dale's, the auctioneer, and send him up to me."

"I will do that," said Mr. De Coucy, with a little sigh, as he took up his hat. "Good-bye, Hulet, for the present, then, and God help you—unless, indeed, you are too proud to ask help of Him."

The two men shook hands with a warmth that neither had ever evinced before, and Evy accompanied their visitor to the front door.

"One moment, Mr. De Coucy," said she, taking him aside into the study; "you said that you had heard we were going to quit the cottage, who told you that?"

"Really, my dear Miss Evy, I don't know. I——"

"I see," said Evy; "it is the common gossip."

"Yes, just so; you know how people's tongues do run at Balcombe."

"But they must have given some reason for it, and not the right one, since they did not know of my uncle's misfortune with regard to money matters. What was it?"

The old man's cheeks became white and red by turns.

"There was no reason, absolutely none," he stammered. "I was a fool to mention it. It was conjectured, I suppose, after what had happened here, you know, that the place would be distasteful to Mr. Hulet."

"That was not all, Mr. De Coucy, though your kindness would conceal from me the rest. It was something in connexion with the verdict."

"Well, perhaps it was. Vulgar minds are almost always ill-natured, my dear young lady. They like scandal; which not even the law has power to restrain. Such people are beneath contempt or notice."

"I need ask no more," sighed Evy. "But you may show your friendship, dear Mr. De Coucy, in one way yet. If any one speaks of my poor uncle as anything but a good kind——"

"I know, I know," interrupted the other, tenderly; "oh, pray don't give way like that unless you wish to see an old man weep. Your uncle's marriage was not a happy one, but no one who knew

him would suspect him of unkindness. Good-bye, good-bye, Miss Evy. You have many a firm friend yet, each of whom is worth a thousand of such babblers; and I cannot think this world is so ill-governed, that happy days are not still in store for you."

Then placing his hand upon her head, which shook in sad dissent, the old man murmured an earnest "Heaven bless you," and hurried away.

It was a pitiful sight, indeed, from which he fled, for Evy, finding her worst fears realised, with respect to what was rumoured concerning her unhappy uncle, had for the moment utterly broken down. The one thought, so soon as she grew calm enough to think, was how to keep this wicked scandal from Mr. Hulet's ears, to get him away from the neighbourhood of Balcombe, and its evil tongues, for, if their venom should once reach him, she verily believed that it would kill him as surely as any serpent's bite. With this idea uppermost in her mind she returned to the drawing-room, and not finding her uncle where she had left him, was about to seek him in the garden, when her attention was arrested by these words:

"I tell you, sir, as I told you before, that I wish to hear no explanation on that subject from your lips——"

"But, Judith, if I proved to you——"

"It would be all the same. I could not believe my ears against the testimony of my eyes. Such importunity, let me add, is most shocking and offensive to me——"

Evy had only just time to hurry back and close the drawing-room door before the two speakers entered that apartment from the lawn. What she had heard she could not avoid hearing, and yet she felt that not for the world would she have had them know that she had heard it. To have shown that she had done so, would have been, in the first place, to inflict a cruel humiliation upon her uncle, for nothing could have exceeded the imperious insolence of Judith's tone. Nor could it have been the first time that she had thus spoken to him. "I tell you, sir, as I told you before," she had said: and "your importunity is most shocking and offensive."

What could have happened to justify, or rather to embolden Judith to make use of such astounding language? was the thought that thrilled Evy's frame with a chill of horror, as she fled noiselessly upstairs into her own room. That Judith had always disliked Mr. Hulet, Evy, of course, was well aware, but she also knew

that she had entertained a wholesome dread of him, and why had that dread so utterly disappeared that not even the shadow of it was left? She called to mind Mr. Hulet's excessive nervousness on the occasion of her own interview with him of the day before, lest Judith should overhear their talk through the open window, and coupling it with his almost suppliant tone upon the present occasion, she could not but conclude that, for some reason or other, her uncle was afraid of Judith. What circumstance, then, could possibly have occurred to reverse, as it were, so suddenly their mutual relations, save one—the possession of some compromising secret; and what could that subject be, “too shocking and offensive” to be listened to, except Mrs. Hulet's death? Her mind flashed to this conclusion through all the arguments which affection strove to interpose. Yes; either her unhappy aunt had really committed suicide, or Judith had convinced herself that such was the case, and possessed the means of convincing others. Upon this supposition, and on this alone, the hints Judith had let fall to Mr. Hulet's disadvantage were explicable enough, and also her conduct at the inquest. She had wished to avoid facing the jury if it were possible, on the plea of indisposition, but upon being compelled to do so would have revealed all she knew, or suspected, but for Evy's appeal to her at the last moment. Evy's nature, though tender and impulsive, was eminently just, and she gave credit to Judith for all the moral difficulties which she herself would have had to encounter if placed in a like position. There was one sentence in what she had overheard that pointed with inexorable finger to the conclusion that Judith knew rather than suspected that Mrs. Hulet had come to her death by her own act: “I would not believe my ears,” Judith had said, “against the testimony of my eyes.” To see was certainly something vastly more than to suspect, though what that was which she had seen, it was utterly impossible to conjecture. Evy did not believe even yet that her aunt had committed suicide, though she felt that Judith believed it; and even if she had committed it, she would fain have ascribed it to aberration of mind, rather than to the one alternative, an uncontrollable fit of melancholy subsequent to that rupture with her husband, which had certainly exceeded in violence all their previous quarrels. It was probably the former view

which Mr. Hulet had been so solicitous to press on Judith, and to which the latter had refused to listen; and there was something to be said for her—some excuse for her hostile incredulity—it must be confessed.

Shut fast in her own chamber, and working out this terrible problem, Evy was compelled to arrive at this result; she was convinced, indeed, that her uncle was innocent; whatever irritation he might have exhibited with respect to his wife, his behaviour towards her had not been such as to have driven any woman in her right mind to commit self-destruction; but, on the other hand, Judith believed that she had committed it, and probably from that very cause. It was true that Judith had not evinced any strong affection for her patroness, but in old times she might have entertained such a feeling, and, when Mrs. Hulet had thus miserably perished, the sense of her ancient kindness might well have stirred up the girl's hostility towards him when she believed to have been morally to blame for the catastrophe. She would feel a natural abhorrence and contempt for him, which would be by no means mitigated by the reflection that she had acted contrary to her own sense of duty, contrary, indeed, to the oath that she had taken to speak “the whole truth” at the inquest, in order to save him from obloquy, if not from legal censure. Upon the whole, then, Evy was not now inclined to reproach Judith for the part she had lately played so severely as she had done; she could not like her, but she felt that she had judged her harshly, and took a step back, as it were, from that brink of loathing her, on which she had almost stood. At the same time the pity for her uncle, which before had seemed incapable of larger growth, filled all her swelling heart, and for the moment, drowned the sense of her own bitter woe.

THEATRICAL GAGGING.

THE stage, like other professions, is in some sort to be considered as a distinct nation, possessing manners, customs, a code, and, above all, a language of its own. This, by the outside world, is designated slang; just as in one country the tongue of another is vulgarly described as gibberish. Now and then, however, a word escapes from the peculiar vocabulary of the players, and secures the recognition and acceptance of the general public. It may

not be forthwith registered in formal dictionaries, or sanctioned by the martinet of speech and style; still, like a French son or a Jersey halfpenny appearing amongst our copper coins, it obtains a fair degree of currency and circulation, with little question as to the legitimacy of the mint from which it originally issued.

"Gag" is a word of this class. It belongs of right to the actors, but of its age or derivation nothing can be ascertained. Modern lexicography of the best repute does not acknowledge it, and for a long time it remained unnoticed, even by the compilers of glossaries of strange and cant terms. Thus, it is not to be found in Grose's Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue, published in 1796. This is a coarse, but certainly a comprehensive work, and from its omitting to register gag, we may assume that the word had no ascertained existence in Grose's time. In the Slang Dictionary, or The Vulgar Words, Street Phrases, and "Fast" Expressions of High and Low Society, published in 1864, gag is duly included, and defined to be "language introduced by an actor into his part." Long before this, however, the word had issued from the stage door, and its signification had become a matter of general knowledge.

And even if the word be comparatively new, the thing it represents and defines is certainly old enough, dating, probably, from the very birth of the drama. So soon as the author began to write words for the actors to deliver, so soon, be sure, did the comedians begin to interpolate speech of their own contriving. For, as a rule, gag is the privilege and the property of the comic performer. The tragedian does not gag. He may require his part to be what is called "written up" for him, and striking matter to be introduced into his scenes for his own especial advantage, but he is generally confined to the delivery of blank verse, and rythmical utterances of that kind do not readily afford opportunities for gag. There have been Macbeths who have declined to expire upon the stage after the silent fashion prescribed by Shakespeare, and have insisted upon declaiming the last dying speech with which Garrick first enriched the character. But these are actors of the past. If Shakespeare does not often appear upon the modern stage, at any rate he is not presented in the disguised and mutilated form which won applause in what are now viewed as the "palmy days" of the drama.

And the prepared speeches introduced by the tragedians, however alien they may be to the dramatist's intentions, and independent of his creations, are not properly to be considered as gag.

It was in 1583, according to Howes's additions to Stow's Chronicle, that Queen Elizabeth, at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham, and with the advice of Mr. Edmond Tylney, her Master of the Revels, selected twelve performers out of some of the companies of her nobility, to be her own dramatic servants, with the special title of the Queen's Players. They duly took the oaths of office, and were allowed wages and liveries as Grooms of the Chambers. Among these actors were included Robert Wilson, described as gifted with "a quick, delicate, refined, extemporal wit;" and Richard Tarleton, of "a wondrous, plentiful, pleasant extemporal wit." From this it would almost seem that these comedians owed their fame and advancement to their skill and inventiveness in the matter of gagging. No doubt these early actors bore some relation to the jesters who were established members of noble households, and of whom impromptu jokes and witticisms were looked for upon all occasions. Moreover, at this time, as Mr. Payne Collier judges, "extemporal plays" in the nature of the Italian *Commedia al improvviso*, were often presented upon the English stage. The actors were merely furnished with a "plat," or plot of the performance, and were required to fill in and complete the outline, as their own ingenuity might suggest. Portions of the entertainments were simply dumb show and pantomime, but it is clear that spoken dialogue was also resorted to. In such cases the "extemporal wit," or gagging of the comic actors, was indispensably necessary. The "comedians of Ravenna," who were not "tied to any written device," but who, nevertheless, had, "certain grounds or principles of their own," are mentioned in Whetstone's *Heptameron*, 1582, and references to such performers are also to be found in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and Ben Jonson's *Case is Altered*. And Mr. Collier conjectures that when Polonius, speaking of the players, informs Hamlet that, "for the law of writ and the liberty, these are your only men," he is to be understood as commending their excellence, both in written performances and in such as left them at liberty to invent their own discourse.

But however intelligible and excusable its origin, it is certain that by the time Shakespeare was writing the "extemporal wit" of the theatre had come to be a very grave nuisance. There is no need to set forth here his memorable rebuke of the clowns who demonstrate their "pitiful ambition" by speaking more than their parts warrant. It is to be observed, however, that while this charge is levelled only at the clowns, or comic performers, the faults of the serious players by no means escape uncriticised. The same speech condemns alike the rant of the tragedians and the gag of the comedians. Both are regarded as unworthy means of winning the applause of the "groundlings" in one case, and the laughter of "barren spectators" in the other. Sad to say, Hamlet, in his character of reformer of stage abuses, failed to effect much good. The vices of the Elizabethan theatre are extant, and thriving in the Victorian. It is even to be feared that the interpolations of the clowns have sometimes crept into and disfigured the Shakespearian text, much to the puzzlement of the commentators. Often as Hamlet's reforming speech has been recited, it has been generally met and nullified by some one moving "the previous question." At the same time, while there is an inclination to decry perhaps too strenuously the condition of the modern stage, it is fair to credit it with a measure of amendment in regard both to rant and gag. Of late years rant has certainly declined in public favour, and the "robustious perriwig-pated fellow" tearing a passion to tatters, to very rags, is a less familiar spectacle upon our boards than formerly; albeit, this statement is obviously open to the reply that the system of "o'er-doing Termagant," and "out-Heroding Herod" has ceased to prevail, inasmuch as the tragedies and vehement plays, which gave it opportunity and excuse, have vanished from the existing dramatic repertory. And gag, except, perhaps, in relation to certain interpolations, which are founded upon enduring, if absurd histrionic traditions, acknowledges stricter limitations than it once did. A gagging Polonius, Dogberry, Gobbo, or Gravedigger could scarcely expect much toleration from a modern audience; while it is true enough, that these famous personages do not often present themselves upon the scene in these times. As a rule, the gag of the present period is to be found mainly in those more frivolous and ephemeral entertainments, which are not

much to be damnified by any excesses with which the comedians may be chargeable.

There is no gainsaying that in all times gag has been indulgently considered, and even encouraged by the majority of the audience. Establishing relations of a most intimate kind with his audience, the comic actor obtains from them absolute license of speech and conduct. He becomes their "spoiled child," his excesses are promptly applauded, and even his offences against good taste are speedily pardoned.

Of early gagging comedians one of the most noted appears to have been Will Pinkethman, who flourished under William and Mary, and won honourable mention from Sir Richard Steele, in the *Tatler*. Cibber describes Pinkethman as an imitator of Leigh, an earlier actor of superior and more legitimate powers. Pinkethman's inclination for "gamesome liberties" and "uncommon pleasantries" was of a most extravagant kind. Davies says of him that he "was in such full possession of the galleries that he would hold discourse with them for several minutes." Nor could he be induced to amend his method of performance. It was in vain the managers threatened to fine him for his exuberances; he was too surely a public favourite to be severely treated. At one time he came to a "whimsical agreement" with Wilks, the actor, who suffered much from his playfellow's eccentricities, that "whenever he was guilty of corresponding with the gods he should receive on his back three smart strokes of Bob Wilks's cane." But even this penalty, it would seem, Wilks was too good-natured to enforce. On one occasion, however, as Davies relates, Pinkethman so persisted in his gagging as to incur the displeasure of the audience. The comedy was Farquhar's Recruiting Officer; Wilks played Captain Plume, and Pinkethman one of the recruits. The captain, enlisting him, inquired his name. Instead of giving the proper answer, Pinkethman replied: "Why, don't you know my name, Bob? I thought every fool knew that." Wilks angrily whispered to him the name of the recruit, Thomas Appleton. "Thomas Appleton?" he cried, aloud. "No, no, my name's Will Pinkethman!" Then, addressing himself to the gallery, he said. "Hark ye, friends; you know my name up there, don't you?" "Yes, Master Pinkey," was the answer, "we know your name well enough." The house was now in an uproar. At first the audience enjoyed the folly of Pinkethman, and the distressed air of Wilks; but soon

the joke grew tiresome, and hisses became distinctly audible. By assuming as melancholy an expression as he could, and exclaiming with a strong nasal twang, "Odds, I fear I'm wrong," Pinkethman was enabled to restore the good humour of his patrons. It would seem that on other occasions he was compelled to make some similar apology for his misdemeanours. "I have often thought," Cibber writes, "that a good deal of the favour he met with was owing to this seeming humble way of waiving all pretences to merit, but what the town would please to allow him." A satiric poem, called *The Players*, published in 1733, contains the following reference to Pinkethman:—

Quit not your theme to win the gaping rout,
Nor aim at Pinkey's leer with "S'death I'm out :"
An arch dull rogue, who lets the business cool,
To show how nicely he can play the fool,
Who with buffoonery his dullness clokes,
Deserves a cat-o'-nine-tails for his jokes.

At this time, Pinkethman had been dead some years, and it is explained in a note, that no "invidious reflection upon his memory" was intended; but merely a caution to others, who, less gifted, should presume to imitate conduct which had not escaped censure even in his case. With all his irregularities, Pinkethman was accounted a serviceable actor, and was often entrusted with characters of real importance, such as Doctor Caius, Feeble, Abel Druggier, Beau Clincher, Humphrey Gubbin, and Jerry Blackacre.

But an actor who outdid even Pinkethman in impertinence of speech was John Edwin, a comedian who enjoyed great popularity late in the last century. A contemporary critic describes him "as one of those extraordinary productions that would do immortal honour to the sock, if his extravasations of whim could be kept within bounds, and if the comicality of his vein could be restrained by good taste." Reynolds, the dramatist, relates that on one occasion he was sitting in the front row of the balcony-box at the Haymarket, during the performance of O'Keeffe's farce of the *Son-in-Law*, Parsons being the Cranky, and Edwin the Bowkitt of the night. In the scene of Cranky's refusal to bestow his daughter upon Bowkitt, on the ground of his being such an ugly fellow, Edwin coolly advanced to the foot-lights, and said: "Ugly! Now I submit to the decision of an enlightened British public, which is the ugliest fellow of us three; I, old Cranky, or that gentleman in the front row of the balcony-box?" Here he

pointed to Reynolds, who hastened to abandon his position. Parsons was exceedingly angry at the interruption, but the audience appear to have tolerated, and even enjoyed the gag. As Reynolds himself leniently writes: "Many performers before and since the days of Edwin have acquired the power, by private winks, irrelevant buffoonery, and dialogue, to make their fellow-players laugh, and thus confound the audience, and mar the scene; Edwin, disdaining this confined and distracting system, established a sort of *entre-nous-ship* (if I may venture to use the expression) with the audience, and made them his confidants; and though wrong in his principle, yet so neatly and skilfully did he execute it, that instead of injuring the business of the stage, he frequently enriched it."

Edwin seems, indeed, to have been an actor of some genius, notwithstanding his "extravasations of whim," and an habitual intemperance which probably hastened the close of his professional career—for the man was a shameless sot. "I have often seen him," writes Boaden, "brought to the stage door, senseless and motionless, lying at the bottom of a coach." Yet, if he could but be made to assume his stage-clothes, and pushed towards the lamps, he would rub his eyes for a moment, and then consciousness and extraordinary humour returned to him together, and his acting suffered in no way from the excesses which had overwhelmed him. Eccentricity was his forte, and it was usually found necessary to have characters expressly written for him; but there can be no doubt that he was very highly esteemed by the playgoers of his time, who viewed his loss to the stage as quite irreparable.

But of the comedians it may be said, that they not only "gag" themselves, but they are the cause of "gagging," in others. Their interpolations are regarded as heurlooms in the *Thespian* family. It is the comic actor's constant plea, when charged with adding to some famous part, that he has only been true to the traditions of previous performers. One of the most notable instances of established gag is the burlesque sermon introduced by Mawworm, in the last scene of the *Hypocrite*. This was originated by Mathews, who first undertook the part at the Lyceum, in 1809, and who designed a caricature of an extravagant preacher, of the Whitfield school, known as *Daddy Berridge*, whose

strange discourses at the Tabernacle in Tottenham-court-road, had grievously afflicted the actor in his youth. Mawworm's sermon met with extraordinary success; on some occasions it was even encored, and the comedy has never since been presented without this supreme effort of gag. Liston borrowed the address from Mathews, and gained for it so great an amount of fame, that the real contriver of the interpolation had reason to complain of being deprived of such credit as was due to him in the matter. The sermon is certainly irresistibly comical, and a fair outgrowth of the character of Mawworm; at the same time, it must be observed that Mawworm is himself an excrescence upon the comedy, having no existence in Cibber's *Non Juror*, upon which *The Hypocrite* is founded, or in *Tartuffe*, from whence Cibber derived the subject of his play.

In the same way, the additions made by the actors to certain of Sheridan's comedies—such as Moses's redundant iterations of "I'll take my oath of that!" in the *School for Scandal*, and Acres' misquotation of Sir Lucius's handwriting: "To prevent the trouble that might arise from our both undressing the same lady," in *The Rivals*, are gags of such long-standing, that they may date almost from the first production of those works. Sheridan himself supervised the rehearsals, and took great pains to perfect the representation; but, with other dramatists, he probably found himself much at the mercy of the players. He even withheld publication of the *School for Scandal*, in order to prevent inadequate production of the comedy; but this precaution was attended with the worst results. The stage long suffered from the variety of defective copies of the work that obtained circulation. The late Mr. John Bernard, the actor, in his amusing *Retrospections of the Stage*, has confessed that, tempted by an addition of ten shillings a week to his salary, he undertook to compile, in a week, an edition of the *School for Scandal* for the Exeter theatre, upon the express understanding that the manuscript should be destroyed at the end of the season. Bernard had three parts in his possession, for upon various occasions he had appeared as Sir Peter, as Charles, and as Sir Benjamin. Two members of the Exeter company were acquainted with the speeches of Old Rowley, Lady Teazle, and Mrs. Candour, while actors at a distance, upon his request, sent him by post the parts of Joseph and Sir Oliver. With

these materials, assisted by his general knowledge of the play, obtained from his having appeared many times in authentic versions of it, the compiler prepared a fictitious and piratical edition of the *School for Scandal*, which fully served the purpose of the manager, and drew good houses for the remainder of the season.

Altogether, while few writers have done so much for the stage as Sheridan, few have met with less reverent treatment at the hands of the actors. The Critic has long been known in the theatre as a "gag-piece," that is, a play which the performers consider themselves entitled to treat with the most merciless license. In this respect the Critic has followed the fate of an earlier work to which it owes much of its origin—the *Rehearsal*, by the Duke of Buckingham. It is curious how completely Sheridan's own satire has escaped its due application. "This is always the way at the theatre," says Puff: "give these fellows a good thing and they never know when to have done with it." The Critic is not very often played now-a-days; but every occasion of its revival is disfigured by the freedoms and buffoonery of its representatives. Modern costume is usually worn by Mr. Puff and his friends; and the anachronism has its excuse, perhaps, in the fact that the satire of the dramatist is as sound and relevant now as it was in the last century. And some modification of the original text might be reasonably permitted. For instance, the reference by name to the long since departed actors, King, Dodd, and Palmer, and the once famous scene-painter, Mr. De Louthembourg, must necessarily now escape the comprehension of a general audience. But the idiotic interpolations, and the gross tomfoolery the actors occasionally permit themselves in the later scenes of the play should not be tolerated by the audience upon any plea or pretext whatever.

One kind of gag is attributable to failure of memory or deficiency of study on the part of the player. "I haven't got my words; I must gag it," is a confession not unfrequently to be overheard in the theatre. Incedon, the singer, who had been in early life a sailor before the mast, in the royal navy, was notorious for his frequent loss of memory upon the stage. In his time the word "vamp" seems to have prevailed as the synonym of gag. A contemporary critic writes of him: "He could never vamp, to use a

theatrical technical which implies the substitution of your own words and ideas when the author's are forgotten. Vamping requires some tact, if not talent; and Inledon's former occupation had imparted to his manners that genuine salt-water simplicity to which the artifices of acting were insurmountable difficulties." Inledon had, however, a never-failing resource when difficulty of this kind occurred to him, and loss of memory, and therefore of speech, interrupted his performances. He forthwith commenced a verse of one of his most popular ballads. The amazement of his fellow actors at this proceeding was, on its first adoption, very great indeed. "The truth is, I forgot my part, sir," Inledon frankly explained to the perplexed manager, "and I could not catch the cue. I assure you, sir, that my agitation was so great that I was compelled to introduce a verse of Black-eyed Susan, in order to gain time and recover myself." Long afterwards, when the occupants of the green-room could hear Inledon's exquisite voice upon the stage, they were wont to ask each other, laughingly, "Is he singing his music, or is he merely recollecting his words?"

That excellent comedian, the late Drink-water Meadows, used to relate a curious gagging experience of his early life as a strolling player. It was at Warwick, during the race week. He was to play Henry Moreland, in the Heir-at-Law, a part he had never previously performed, and of which, indeed, he knew little or nothing. There was no rehearsal, the company was "on pleasure bound," and desired to attend the races with the rest of Warwickshire. No book of the play was obtainable. A study of the prompt-book had been promised; but the prompter was not to be found; he was probably at the races, and his book with him. The representative of Henry Moreland could only consult with the actor who was to play Steadfast—for upon Steadfast's co-operation Moreland's scenes chiefly depend. "Don't bother about it," said Steadfast. "Never mind the book. I'll come down early to the house, and as we're not wanted till the third act we can easily go over our scenes quietly together before we go on. We shall be all right, never fear. It's a race night; the house will be full, and noisy. Little of the play will be heard, and we need not be over and above particular as to the 'sylls'" (syllables).

But Steadfast came down to the theatre very late, instead of early, and troubled with a thickness of speech and an unsteadiness of gait, that closely resembled the symptoms of intoxication. "Sober!" he said, in reply to some insinuation of his comrade, "I'm sober as a judge. I've been running to get here in time, and that's agitated me. I shall be all right when I'm on. Take care of yourself, and don't fret about me."

The curtain was up, and they had to face the footlights. Moreland waited for Steadfast to begin. Steadfast was gazing vacantly about him, silent save for irrepressible hiccups. The audience grew impatient, hisses became audible, and an apple or two was hurled upon the stage. Moreland, who had gathered something of the subject of the scene, found it absolutely necessary to say something, and began to gag:

"Well, Steadfast" (*aside to him*, "Stand still, can't you?") "here we are in England, nay more, in London, its metropolis, where industry flourishes and idleness is punished." A pause for thought and reply; with little result. "Proud London, what wealth!" Another pause, and a hiccup from Steadfast. "What constant bustle, what activity in thy streets!" No remark could be extracted from Steadfast; it was necessary to proceed. "And now, Steadfast, my inestimable friend, that I may find my father and my Caroline well and happy, is the dearest, the sole aspiration of my heart!" Steadfast stared and staggered, then suddenly exclaiming gutturally, "Amen!" reeled from the stage, quickly followed by Henry Moreland, amid the derision and hisses of the spectators. "Treat you cruelly!" said Steadfast, incoherently in the wings. "Nothing of the sort. You quite confounded me with your correctness. You told me you didn't know your words, and I'll be hanged if you were not 'letter perfect.' It went off capitally, my dear boy, so now let's go over our next scene." But the manager deemed it advisable to omit from the play all further reference to Moreland and Steadfast.

To performers who gag either wantonly, or by reason of imperfect recollection of their parts, few things are more distressing than a knowledge that some one among the audience is in possession of a book of the play to be represented. Even the conscientious and thoroughly prepared actor is apt to be disconcerted when he

hears the flutter of leaves being turned over in the theatre, and discovers that his speeches are being followed, line for line and word for word, by critics armed with the author's text. On such occasions his memory is much inclined to play him false, and a sudden nervousness will often mar his best efforts. But, to the gagging player, a sense that his sins and failings are in this way liable to strict note and discovery, is grievously depressing. Some years ago a strolling company visited Andover, and courageously undertook to represent an admired comedy, with which they could boast but the very faintest acquaintance. Scarcely, an actor, indeed, knew a syllable of his part. It was agreed that gag must be the order of the night, and that the performance must be "got through" anyhow. But the manager, eyeing and counting his house through the usual peephole in the curtain, perceived a gentleman in the boxes holding in his hands a printed copy of the play. The alarm of the company became extreme. A panic afflicted them, and their powers of gag were paralysed. They refused to confront the footlights. The audience grew impatient; the fiddlers were weary of repeating their tunes. Still the curtain did not rise. At length the manager presented himself with a doleful apologetic face. "Owing to an unfortunate accident," he said, the company had left behind them the prompt-book of the play. The performance they had announced could not, therefore, be presented; unless," and here the speech was especially pointed to the gentleman in the boxes, "any one among the audience, by a happy chance, happened to have brought to the theatre a copy of the comedy." The gentleman rose and said his book was much at the service of the manager, and it was accordingly handed to him. The players forthwith recovered their spirits; exposure of their deficiencies was no longer possible; and the performance passed off to the satisfaction of all concerned.

It has been suggested that gag is leniently, and even favourably considered by audiences; and it should be added that dramatists often connive at the interpolations of the theatre. For popular actors characters are prepared in outline, as it were, with full room for the embellishments to be added in representation. "Only tell me the situations; never mind about the 'cackle,'" an established comedian will observe to his author. "I'll

'fill it out,'" or "I shall be able to 'jerk it in,' and make something of the part." It is to be feared, indeed, that gag has secured a hold upon the stage, such as neither time nor teaching can loosen. More than a century ago, in the epilogue he supplied to Murphy's comedy, Garrick wrote:

Ye actors who act what our writers have writ,
Pray stick to your part and spare your own wit;
For when with your own you unbridle your tongue,
I'll hold ten to one you are "all in the wrong!"

But this, with other cautioning of like effect, has availed but little. The really popular actor gains a height above the reach of censure. He has secured a verdict that is scarcely to be impeached or influenced by exceptional criticism. Still it may be worth while to urge upon him the importance of moderation, not so much for his own art's sake—on that head over-indulgence may have made him obdurate—but in regard to his play-fellows of inferior standing. He is their exemplar; his sins are their excuses; and the license of one thus vitiates the general system of representation.

The French stage is far more hedged round with restrictions than is our own, and cultivates histrionic art with more scrupulous care. In its better works, gag is not tolerated, although free range is accorded it in productions of the opera bouffé and vaudeville class. Here the widest liberty prevails, and the gagging actor is recognised as exercising his privileges and his wit within lawful bounds. The Parisian theatres may, indeed, be divided into the establishments wherein gag is applauded, and those wherein it is abominated. By way of a concluding note upon the subject, let an authentic story of successful French gag be briefly narrated.

Potier, the famous comedian, was playing the leading part in a certain vaudeville, and was required, in the course of the performance, to sit at the table of a cheap café, and consume a bottle of beer. The beer was brought him by a figurant, or mute performer, in the character of a waiter, charged with the simple duty of drawing the cork from the bottle, and filling the glass of the customer. Potier was struck with the man's neat performance of his task, and especially with a curious comical gravity which distinguished his manner, and often bestowed upon the humble actor an encouraging smile or a nod of approval. The man

at length urged a request that he might, as he poured out the beer, be permitted to say a few words. Potier sanctioned the gag. It moved the laughter of the audience. Potier gagged in reply; and there was more laughter. During later representations the waiter was allowed further speeches, relieved by the additional gag of Potier, until at the end of a week, it was found that an entire new scene had been added to the vaudeville; and eventually the conversation between Potier and the garçon—not a line of which had been invented or contemplated by the dramatist—became the chief attraction of the piece. It was the triumph of gag. The figurant, from this modest and accidental beginning of his career as an actor, speedily rose to be famous. He was afterwards known to the world as ARNAL, one of the most admirable of Parisian farçours.

YOUR LETTER.

I AM going to burn your letter; I sit by the hearth alone;
I hear on the pane the sobbing rain, I hear the night winds moan:
But safe in its hush'd tranquillity lies the little world of home,
While the fire-light flashes fitfully about the quiet room;
And brightly it glints on the chequer'd tints of the paper in my grasp,
Safe, for a moment yet, my prize, in my loving, lingering clasp;
Safe, though around the funeral pyre the fierce flames flash and leap,
For I shall burn your letter, love, and to-night, before I sleep.

Yes, I shall burn your letter; though again, and yet again,
I read the words, as to music's chords one sets a sweet refrain;
Though I open it where the firelight falls, with touches slow and soft,
And bend once more o'er the written words, that I have traced so oft,
To please myself by fancying, "he smiled when that phrase he wrote;"
Or, "there a shade, like a summer cloud, o'er the clear brown eyes would float;"
Or, "here did he leave a kiss, like me, all for the fond word's sake,
Or for love of the echo that he knew their melody would wake."

Still, I shall burn your letter; I think I have found a joy,
Whose center'd pleasure, nor thought can measure, nor time nor tide destroy;
I know I wish my life may pass, ere that dream dissolved I see,
Yet I will keep our secret, love, for you, and the angels, and me;
Our bond is hard to understand, though its web is true and pure,
And I might die to-night, you know; the flame is a guardian sure.
Well, flowers spring thick in summer; my heart has a bright new June,
And I say, as I burn your letter, "He will write me another soon!"

OLD FIGHTING SHIPS.

THE VENERABLE, THE VANGUARD, AND THE BELLEROPHON.

IN June, 1801, soon after the conquest of Malta, so important for the preservation of our trade in the Levant, Rear-Admiral Sir James Saumarez was sent to maintain the blockade of Cadiz, Sir Richard Bickerton's squadron having been sent to Egypt to thwart the French at the mouth of the Nile.

The light-winged squadron of Sir James Saumarez consisted of the Venerable (seventy-four), the Pompée (seventy-four), the Audacious (seventy-four), the Cæsar (flag, eighty), the Spencer (seventy-four), and the Hannibal (seventy-four). As the rear-admiral lay off Cadiz, an advice boat brought him and his eager sailors word that a French squadron of three sail of the line and one frigate had anchored near Algeiras, four miles off the Rock. Saumarez instantly resolved—for English sailors' minds are soon made up on such occasions—to capture the French ships and return to his look-out at Cadiz, before the Spanish blockaded squadron could gather courage to slink out and steal off. As Saumarez entered the strait he flew the signal to clear for battle and anchor by the stern, as Nelson had done at the Nile. The wind was favourable, all sail was made, and, at forty-five minutes past seven the Venerable, then abreast of Cabrita Point, made the signal for seeing the enemy, and was, at the admiral's direction, at once anchored between the batteries of Algeiras and those of Green Island. The captain of the Venerable, Samuel Hood, had fought beside Rodney, in 1782, and had been through the fire with Earl St. Vincent, off Toulon, and with Nelson, at Teneriffe. At the Nile he had fought in the Hydra, in which he captured the Guerrier, and fought four French ships single handed. When in command off the coast of Egypt he had destroyed no fewer than thirty sail of transports. Nor had Admiral Saumarez himself been previously backward in gathering laurels. He had won his lieutenantancy, in 1776, in attacking the Americans at Fort Sullivan, near Charlestown; he was under Sir Hyde Parker in the battle with the Dutch, in 1781; he fought in the great struggle between Rodney and De Grasse; had helped Sir John Jervis in 1797, and had been at the Battle of the Nile. With such men there was no chance of irresolution or too much finessing; they meant

business, and every ship was in fighting trim before you could reef a flying jib.

At twenty-five minutes past eight our leading ship opened fire, and the dancing soon began. From the first, luck was against us. The Venerable, trying to get as near the enemy as possible, "broke round off" by a flaw of wind — just then very capricious — so Hood, afraid of not getting nearer, let go his anchor at two cables' length from the Indomptable, and "let her have it." The Pompée, more lucky, got into a fine position, on the bow of the French admiral, and raked him within pistol-shot with a tempest of fire. The Audacious, passing under the lee of the Venerable, anchored in a line a-head of her; while the Cæsar fixed herself in line of the Audacious—a pretty family party. The Hannibal and Spencer, being becalmed to leeward of the Cæsar, signalled to be towed into action. Just then, however, a breeze sprang up, and the Hannibal made sail towards the Orange Grove, tacking in shore, in hopes of being able to lay the French admiral on board on the land side. Unfortunately, the Hannibal took ground close abreast of the battery of St. Jago, and so near the French rear-admiral's ship, the Formidable (eighty), as to be terribly tormented by her fire. From this crisis Fortune turned against our squadron. A sudden flaw of wind took the Pompée, so that, instead of destroying the French admiral, she was cruelly raked by his guns, and had to at once cut her cables and be towed off by the boats of our squadron. A fresh breeze springing up capriciously, the Cæsar cut her cable, and veering round, attacked, simultaneously, the Dessaix and the Green Island battery, supported by the Audacious and the Venerable; the Hannibal, like a brave comrade, all the time pelting steadily at the Formidable as well as the island batteries. This went on for two hours under every disadvantage of calm, and light and baffling airs, the boats being incessantly employed in towing the ships so that they might bring their broadsides properly to bear until called away to assist the unlucky Hannibal, now inextricably wedged into a shoal. Twenty men already lay dead on her decks. It was a *coup manqué*, as even the bravest began now to see, and about noon Captain Ferris struck his colours and surrendered. The admiral, in the Cæsar, however, continued fighting, supported by the Audacious and the Vene-

rable, until half-past one, and then, finding the matter hopeless, sullenly retired to Gibraltar to repair damages and land his wounded. The Pompée repaired new lower masts, and the Cæsar's mainmast had been destroyed by French shot. When in the hottest part of the action, the Cæsar broke her sheer, and could not get her guns to bear on the enemy: so the captain ordered a cutter to be lowered down from the stern, to convey a warp to the Audacious; but the boat had been knocked to pieces by the enemy's shot. Before other means could be resorted to, Michael Collins, a young sailor, belonging to the Cæsar's mizen-top, seized the end of a lead-line, and, exclaiming, "You shall soon have a warp," darted from the taffrail and swam with the line to the Audacious, where it was drawn in, and by that means a hawser run out, which answered the intended purpose.

The loss of the Hannibal was a great mortification to Sir James Saumarez, although Captain Ferris had brought it on himself, by rashly venturing too near the shore, in his eagerness to get at the French admiral. But perpetual victory at sea had, by this time, rendered our sailors so confident that they felt still secure of success, and longed for the moment when they would be again slipped on the French. Moreover, they had not failed to observe that all through the fighting of the 5th of July, the French admiral was busily employed in warping his ships as close to the shore as they could get without running aground.

On the 9th of July, just after the French admiral had refused to exchange prisoners, the Superb and Thames ran into the bay, hotly pursued by a Spanish squadron of five sail of the line and three frigates, which suddenly, at sight of us, hauled round Cabrita Point and joined their French friends at Algeiras. The new arrivals had evidently been sent for to escort the French ships and their prize, the Hannibal, safely to Cadiz.

The lion's leap is soon made. Saumarez at once resolved to attack the enemy with his small and crippled force, the moment they left the shelter of their batteries, although the Cæsar and the Pompée were hopelessly crippled, and the Audacious was much injured. When Sir James expressed his intention of passing the men of the Audacious over to the sound ships, the sailors gave three cheers and shouted, "All hands to work, day and night, till

she is ready." And they did work; on the 8th they warped the ship into the Mole and stripped the lower masts, and on the 9th they got a new main-mast in. On Sunday, the 12th, at daybreak, the French and Spaniards loosed sails, while the *Cæsar* was still loading powder and shot at the Mole and preparing to haul out.

At noon the enemy began to move, the wind fresh from the east, and as they cleared the bay, they took up stations round their rendezvous at Cabrita Point, joined by the great Spanish men-of-war, the *Real Carlos* and the *Hermenegilde*, of one hundred and twelve guns each, crowded with young Spanish nobles eager to escort their English prize to Cadiz, and to share in the glory of the so-called victory. The summer day was fine; all the "scorpions" of Gibraltar crowded to line the Mole head, the dockyard, and the batteries. The band of the *Cæsar* played "Come cheer up my lads, 'tis to glory we steer," while that of the garrison, equally noisy and exultant, replied with "Britons strike home." Every eye sparkled with joy and pride, every heart glowed with the prophetic enthusiasm that precedes victory; even the wounded crawled down to the Mole and begged to be taken on board. At three p.m. the *Cæsar* hoisted the admiral's flag and swept out to sea. It was a proud day for Englishmen; for in five days only our squadron had repaired its damages, replaced its masts, respread its sails, patched its shot-holes, and was now eager for revenge and glory, following an enemy of triple strength. If the French were to be victorious, it would be a victory more disastrous than many defeats.

Our fleet consisted of the *Cæsar* (eighty), the *Superb* (seventy-four), the *Venerable* (seventy-four), the *Andacious* (seventy-four), the *Spencer* (seventy-four), the *Thames* (thirty-two), and the *Calpe polacca* (fourteen). The French and Spanish fleet consisted of the *Hermenegilde* (one hundred and twelve), the *Real Carlos* (one hundred and twelve), the *Neptuno* (ninety), the *San Fernando* (eighty), the *Arrogante* (eighty), the *San Antonio* (seventy-four), the *St. Augustine* (seventy-four), three thirty-six gun frigates, the *Formidable* (eighty-four), the *Dessaix* (eighty-four), the *Indomptable* (seventy-four), and the *Meudron* (forty).

We soon had them at bay. The *Cæsar* brought to off Europa Point, and our squadron, settling down like a flock of crows, soon closed round her. At five p.m.

the English admiral sent up the signal to enquire if all the ships were ready for action, and at thirty-five minutes past six the answer came that every one was in complete fighting trim and eager to begin. Sir James then signalled the whole fleet to observe his signals after dark, and keep in close order of sailing. At eight o'clock the enemy bore up to the westward, and the admiral, firing a blue light, gave chase at full speed; the *Superb* soon pushed abreast of the *Cæsar*, and the admiral spoke her to bring the northernmost enemy's ship into action, in order to keep them as much as possible from hugging the Spanish shore. At five minutes past eleven the *Superb* opened fire on a Spanish three decker, which seemed to puzzle the *Don*; for he and his companion ship fell on board of each other in a most lubberly and truly Castilian manner. The foretop-mast of the weathermost fell just as the one was firing by mistake into her companion to leeward: at the same moment that the *Cæsar* flew round to open her broadside a sail fell over the guns of the first Spaniard and took fire, and flames sprang with inconceivable rapidity at once to the mast-head of each. The *Cæsar*, shifting her helm, left the two doomed ships to their fate, and pushed on to support the *Superb*, already grappling with the *San Antonio*, a Spaniard under French colours, which, however, had surrendered as the *Cæsar* came abreast of her. Sir James Saumarez, therefore, followed by the *Venerable*, pushed on after the flying pack. At midnight the wind increased to a gale, and the new masts of the *Cæsar* began to complain so much, that it was necessary to close reef the main-topsails and take in the foresails. About twelve, two of the Spanish three deckers blow up with the roar of volcanoes, and at five a.m. the *Venerable* brought another of the enemy into action. The wind had gone down, and the *Cæsar's* boats were vainly trying to tow her into action, but the victory was complete, and more captures followed.

We now leave Saumarez to turn to Nelson's Vanguard.

In 1798, a year after the loss of his arm in the daring but unsuccessful attack on Teneriffe, Nelson, set sail for Egypt in search of the French fleet, which had slipped out of Toulon and eluded our blockading squadron. On the 1st of August, 1798, Nelson came in sight of the

low sandy shore of Egypt, crowded with windmills, and saw, to his great joy, the tricolor flag flying on the forts of Alexandria.

The French fleet had been detained there by Napoleon's special command, although he had, with his usual meanness, the shamelessness to accuse Admiral Brueys, after his death, of lingering on the coast of Egypt contrary to orders. Unable to enter the neglected and almost ruined port, Brueys had moored his ships in the bay of Aboukir in a close and compact line of battle; the headmost vessel to the north-west, lying close to a shoal, and the rest of the ships forming a curve along the edge of the deep water, so that they could not be turned from the south-west. Bonaparte had, in fact, offered a reward of ten thousand livres to any pilot who would take the squadron into a safer place near the town guns; but no one had come forward.

The French force consisted of thirteen ships of the line and four frigates, carrying one thousand one hundred and ninety-six guns, and eleven thousand two hundred and thirty men. The English had also thirteen ships of the line, and one fifty-gun ship, carrying altogether one thousand and twelve guns, and eight thousand and sixty-eight men; but then the English ships, it must be remembered, were all seventy-fours, while the French had three eighty-gun ships and one three-decker of a hundred and twenty.

At Nelson's frequent conferences with his captains, on board the Vanguard, he had conceived a fixed idea of victory, and a firm resolve how to secure it. Where there was room for an enemy's ship to swing, he thought, there was room for one of ours to anchor. He therefore determined to keep on the outer side of the French line and station his ships, when possible, one on the outer bow, and another on the outer quarter of each of the enemy. Nelson had derived this idea, as he acknowledged, from his old commander, Lord Hood. It had been a plan (never carried out), for approaching the French in their anchorage in Goujean Road. When Nelson explained his daring and heroic plan, Captain Berry said—

"If we succeed, what will the world say?"

"There is no if in the case," replied Nelson. "We are certain to succeed; who may survive, Berry, to tell the story, is another matter."

As our squadron moved into action, the batteries poured on them shot and shell, while the French fleet opened within half gun-shot distance, and commenced a steady fire from the starboard side of their whole line. It was a terrible gauntlet to run, but our men being employed in furling sails above and tending braces below, to make ready quick for anchoring, bore it carelessly and in perfect silence.

In vain an artful little French brig was sent to try to decoy the English on a shoal off the island of Bekier. We heeded the brig no more than a lion would a puppy. About half-past six p.m., Foley led the way in, the Goliath struggling for the post of honour with the Zealous. He had planned to lead between the French and the shore, thinking that the French guns on the land side would most probably be neither manned nor loaded. In trying, on the very edge of shoal water, to fix himself on the inner bow of the Guerrier, his anchor unfortunately hung, and before all was clear the Goliath had drifted to the second French ship, the Conquerant. Captain Foley therefore anchored by the Conquerant's stern and inside of her, and after ten minutes' busy work, shot away one of her masts. Hood in the Zealous, seeing Foley had got his work comfortably in hand, took his berth beside the Guerrier, and in twelve minutes knocked her dumb.

Our third ship, the Orion (Sir J. Saumarez) passed to windward of the Zealous, and blazed away with her larboard guns at the Guerrier, then passing inside the Goliath, sunk (en passant) a frigate which had vexed her, hauled round the French line, and anchoring inside, between the fifth and sixth ships from the Guerrier, took a snug station between the Franklin and the People Souverain, receiving and returning as good or better than she got. It was sunset now, and French hope sank with the sun into the crimson ocean. Gould, in the Audacious, poured hot fires into the Guerrier and Conquerant, and fixing himself on the larboard bow of the latter, hauled down the tricolor, then passed on to drub the Sovereign People, who had already had nearly enough of it.

Miller in the Theseus, in the meantime, shot down the Guerrier's two masts, and then, gluttonous for more victory, anchored inside, dangerously close to the Spartiate, the third ship in the French line.

While the French were thus being

crumpled up, Nelson, hungry for fighting, had, characteristically, had six colours lashed to the rigging of the Vanguard, lest one should be shot away. He veered half a cable, says the best narrator of the great victory, and then opened a tremendous fire, protecting, as with wings of flame, his four eaglets, the Minotaur, the Bellerophon, the Defence, and the Majestic, who had sailed on ahead of the flag-ship. The furnace was now, indeed, heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated; in a few minutes every man at the first six guns of Nelson's ship was either killed or wounded, and three times were the same guns cleared by the French fire. Captain Lewis, in the Minotaur, anchored next ahead and drew off the fire of the Aquilon, the fourth of the French line. The Bellerophon, Captain Darby, then passed ahead and dropped her stern anchor on the starboard bow of the Orient, the seventh hostile ship—the French admiral's own vessel of a hundred and twenty guns. The odds were seven to three; the weight of shot of the Orient's lower deck alone exceeding the whole broadside of the fiery little Bellerophon. Ahead of the Minotaur came Captain Peyton, in the Defence, closing with the Franklin, the sixth in the French line. The Majestic, Captain Westcott, getting entangled with the rigging of a French ship, got severely punished by the Orient. Now swinging clear, she got grip of the Heureux, the ninth French ship, and received also the fire of the Tonnant, the eighth in the French line. The other four English ships, having been detached, were some distance off.

They soon, however, hurried up, the fiery Trowbridge first, in the Culloden, eager for action; but in the dark, in spite of careful sounding, she got aground. Nor could the Leonora and the Minotaur brig in any way succeed in extricating her. She, however, served as a beacon to save the Alexander and the Swiftsure from a shoal, where they would inevitably have been lost. Captain Hallowell, in the Swiftsure, bearing down with the regulation four horizontal lights at the mizen-peak, suddenly came on a ship with no lights showing and sails loose. She proved to be the stubborn but over-weighted Bellerophon, almost a wreck. Her lights had gone overboard; all her masts and cables had been shot away; nearly two hundred of her crew lay killed or wounded; and there, perfectly helpless,

she was drifting out of the English line towards the lee side of Aboukir Bay. The Swiftsure at once took her place in the dance, and opened a steady fire on the quarter of the Franklin and the bows of the Orient, the French Admiral's flag-ship. At the same instant Coleridge's friend, Captain Ball, in the Alexander, passed under the stern of the Orient, and, anchoring inside on her larboard quarter, raked her and tormented her sailors with musketry.

Our last ship to arrive in the *melée* was the *Leander*, which had been detained by the disaster of the *Culloden*. She tried to anchor athwart hawse of the *Orient*; but the *Franklin*, being so near her ahead that there was no room to pass, she took her station athwart hawse of the *Franklin*, so as to rake both the French ships.

Victory was already certain. The third, fourth, and fifth French vessels were captured about half-past eight. Meantime, the crew of the Vanguard had been almost wild with despair at a severe wound Nelson had received. He had been struck on the forehead by a piece of langridge shot; and the blow was at first supposed to be mortal. Our hero, however, refused to be taken down to the cock-pit to be tended before his wounded men, and, soon after the wound was dressed, wrote a few words of a despatch with his own hand.

It was while Nelson was writing these few words that the great and most awful catastrophe of the battle occurred. About nine p.m. fire broke out in the *Orient*. The unfortunate ship had been newly painted, and many oil jars were lying on the poop. The admiral, almost cut in two, was dying on deck. The spreading crimson of that conflagration lit both fleets, as if hell's doors had suddenly opened. About ten p.m. the *Orient* blew up with a shock that made every vessel tremble. Many of the officers and men jumped overboard, and clung to floating spars and wreck. Some were saved by our boats or dragged in at the lower ports by their ever generous enemies. The majority, however, bravely stuck to their ship, and fired away till she went down. An entire and awful silence followed the explosion, a silence so deep that it was only broken by the sound of the falling masts. About seventy of the crew were saved by our seamen. "Among the hundreds who perished," says Southey, "were the commodore, *Casa Bianca*, and

his son, a brave boy only ten years old." They were last seen floating on a shattered mast, and they perished in the whirlpool of the sinking ship. She had on board six hundred thousand pounds, the plunder of Malta. The burning wreck seriously endangered the Swiftsure, and a port-fire fell into the maintop-royal of the Alexander.

The firing continued till about three a.m. At daybreak the Guillaume Tell and the Genereux, the two rear ships of the French line, were the only two of the enemy who still had the tricolor flying. These vessels had never been engaged, and in the forenoon they cut their cables and fled, in company with two frigates. The Zealous pursued, but was recalled by Nelson. These four vessels were all that escaped of Bonaparte's once redoubtable fleet.

"Victory," Nelson wrote home, "is a name not strong enough—it is a conquest."

Of thirteen French sail of the line, nine were taken and two burnt; of the four frigates, one was sunk, and another burnt by its captain, who, with his crew, fled to shore. Our loss in killed and wounded was eight hundred and fifty-five. Westcott was the only captain that fell. The French had to mourn three thousand one hundred and five, including wounded and captured, while five thousand two hundred and twenty-five perished. As soon as the victory was completed, Nelson sent orders round the fleet to return immediate thanksgiving to God, who giveth the victory. Had he had frigates or bomb vessels, Nelson could have destroyed all the French store ships and transports in the port of Alexandria.

This was the summit of Nelson's glory. He had already sacrificed an arm and an eye in the cause of England; he had now saved our settlements in India. The Sultan's first act was to send Nelson a magnificent sable pelisse and his own diamond aigrette, value eighteen thousand dollars. The Czar of Russia presented him with his portrait set with diamonds. At home countless honours awaited him. He was made Baron Nelson of the Nile, and received a pension for three lives of two thousand pounds a year. The delighted East India Company voted him a grant of ten thousand pounds, while the Turkish Company presented him with a piece of plate, and the City of London gave a sword of honour to him and each of his captains.

ZULU NURSERY TALES.

COMPARATIVE mythology has taught us that our nursery stories have come down from the old, old time, when those "Aryans," who were the forefathers of our race, and of half-a-dozen other races besides, had not yet thrown off the successive swarms, some east and some west, which were to grow into the Hindoo and Persian nations and into almost all the European nations besides. This is proved by the fact that most of our household stories are found, with slight variations, among all these different peoples. For they could not have been handed from one to the other; indeed, the variations are of a kind which make this exceedingly unlikely. Nor is it possible that so many different nations could all have hit on the same stories. Hence, if they have not learned them from some one else since their dispersion, nor yet invented them for themselves, they must have brought them with them from that "cradle-land" from which they brought the use of the plough, the growing of corn, and a few other of the earliest "elements of civilisation."

This is all straightforward enough. Gaul and Teuton and Slavonian and (though it does not seem so natural, somehow) "mild Hindoo" and money-making Parsee, are all of one race, having at bottom the same language, however unlike their different ways of talk have become after ages of separation. And the tales are there, sufficiently alike (amid much diversity) to show us that human creatures, black, white, or copper-coloured, think much the same under similar circumstances—that there is after all "a great deal of human nature in man," whether he be Aryan or non-Aryan, whether he can trace back to one cradle-land, or has been so long cut off from other races as to make some people assign him a different origin from that of the more favoured people.

You shall judge for yourself how it is with the Zulus, certainly as un-Aryan a race as any—the pick, in fact, of the great negro race, all brotherhood with whom our learned men would utterly repudiate. The stories are not our household stories; but they are strangely like them—as like them, I think, as ours are like the Russian, for instance. I shall give a few short notes, and then a longer story, all taken from a most interesting book called Zulu Nursery Tales, by Doctor Callaway, a missionary and fellow-worker with Bishop Colenso.

Doctor Callaway was a model missionary, brimful of energy, and abounding in resources. Were his people ill he doctored them (I hope he does still, for that matter); he did not disdain to act as vet. to their cattle; he taught them how to improve their beehive huts. In short he showed himself jack-of-all-trades, and master of every one that he put his hand to; so that to the Zulu he became an Admirable Crichton, and set them thinking that the white man's religion must be true, since it was taught by one who knew so many useful and valuable things. In his leisure moments the doctor got together the tales, taking them down from the mouths of old men and women; just as Mr. Campbell did his West Highland stories. Then he was, to a great extent, his own printer, and the book (which you can buy at Trübner's) was published nearly four years ago at Springvale, the mission capital of Zululand, and deserves to be much better known in England than it is.

First, let us pick out a few instances of that belief about the dealings of animals with men, which is common to Aryan, and negro, and Red Indian. Here is a tale built on the same general lines as the story of the Sphinx. The *isitwalangcengea* is a terrible creature—as, indeed, it ought to be with such a name. It is like a hyena, only it has a broad flat head, like a carrying-basket. For the most part it keeps out of the way in the woods; but in famines it comes and lies in wait outside the villages, pouncing down on the children, and carrying them off on its head. So once, when an *isit* had eaten up most of the children, it caught hold of a man, and, swinging him up, trotted away. After its fashion (for it has a grim politeness of its own) it asked him, "Will you go by the way of the rocks?" "No, by the way of the bush," said the man. And, as they went, he broke off the dead boughs and put them into the *isit's* head-basket. When he had got a good lot, he caught hold of the branches of a big tree, and let the *isit* pass on, and, when the creature got to its den, lo! there was nothing on its head but a load of dead sticks.

Another time an *isit* seized Udhlokweni, the chief's wife of a great village. "Which way?" asked the monster. "The way of the narrow pass," said she. And as they went she too tried to get up into a tree; but the *isit* was too sharp for her, crying, "Dost thou climb, Udhlokweni? Come along; it's no use." And then, as it trotted

on, it began taunting her: "Udhlokweni, they are mourning for you; and what a mourning it is! Your funeral lament makes the ground thunder. How great you must have been to get so many mourners!" "Yes, I was great; and I used to treat them all kindly." "Now the children are crying at your dirge." "Yes, I used to love the children much, and gave them many things, them and the women, aye, and the men too. I regarded nothing as my own, but freely gave of my possessions." "Yes, all are grieving for you. But now you're on my head. I've taken you from the people of your village for ever."

And now they had got almost to the river; and, as the *isit* rushed down the steep way to throw the queen in, she made a desperate effort, and clung to a tree that grew just by the brink; but the monster could not stop itself, and plunged in. And as soon as it touched the water it found out its mistake, and cried, "Woe is me, Udhlokweni; where are you gone? I've killed myself, thinking I was killing you." But the queen was already on her way back to her village.

There is a slight smack of the Gorgon in this, with which we may compare the Celtic stories of the *mudris*, a monster living at the bottom of loughs, so hideous to look on that the faces of those who saw it become permanently distorted. A man put a worm on his hook and fished, and instead of a fish he caught the old man of the waters. "Why should you catch me, who never did you any harm, Nogi, son of Matakon, son of Etsibaloto, and so on," said the old man, naming the fisher's ancestors for ten generations. "Put me in again, for I'm afraid of the sun." Their eyes met, and the man ran home crying, "I've seen the fish who knows the names of all the old people. Put a pot on my head to hide me. It's looking through me now. It will destroy me, though I'm here. It is as if it was here with me." By-and-by cried the man: "I see it still; put all the blankets in the village on me." But that did no good; so he said: "Hide me in a corn hole." "It will be too hot for you." "Leave the stone away from the door, and it will be cooler." So they put him in, but he soon cried louder than ever: "Take me out, take me out. The beast is even here looking at me; and the heat is killing me. Take me into the house." So he died, because his eyes had met those of the old man of the waters who knows the names of all the old people.

Here is the Scotch "brownie" adapted to Kaffir life. The Utikoloshe come to dances, and join in them; they steal milk, and when the boys have drained the cows they tell their fathers "Utikoloshe have been round milking them." Many a woman has an Utikoloshe husband, subject to her real husband, who is a great help in drawing water and carrying in firewood.

Here are the classic pigmies; the Abatwas go under the grass, and live in ant-hills; they sometimes prick your feet sharply as you walk along. When they go a hunting they sometimes get on a horse, sitting, a whole row of them, along from mane to tail.

We remember how the Norsemen explain the taillessness of the bear. Reynard persuaded Bruin to sit on a hole in the ice, and let down his tail to catch fish. The hyrax is tailless for a different reason. In the old time no beasts had tails, but they could get them by asking for them. So when flies began to be troublesome every other creature made personal application; but as it was raining hard the hyrax said: "Here, some of you; you're wet already. Do go and get me a tail, like good neighbours." Of course there were plenty ready to go, but somehow the hyrax hasn't got a tail to this day. Doctor Darwin tells us how men lost their tails when they finally developed from the primitive ape. The Zulus say, on the contrary, that the baboons were once a tribe of the Tusi nation; but they were idle and conceited, and self-willed. So one day, instead of going properly afield they fastened on their digging-sticks behind, thus throwing scorn on the honourable duty of labour. But the sticks stuck fast, and became tails; and the tribe for very shame took to the rocks, whence they come out now and then to have a look at their old kinsmen.

Jack the Giant-Killer, or rather a compound of that hero and Tom Thumb, is found in Zulu tales in the person of Uthlakanyana, who speaks before he is born, cheats every one, even his own mother, and shows himself "the best man in the village" when he is only a babe. Says his father, "he's best man who first gets hold of this leg of beef that I throw into the kraal." So all the rest crowded to the entrance, and pushed so that none could get in. But Uthlakanyana crept in underneath at the far end, and got the beef without any trouble. Trolls and giants, in Norse and Celtic tales, are treated by

"Boots" just as he treats the cannibals who had captured him. They go out one day while he is fattening, leaving no one with him, but the old mother. "Just untie me," says he, "and let us play at boiling one another." She agrees. "Begin with me; but mind you take me out soon, for it's only play." The water is only lukewarm, and the cannibal's mother keeps her word; so he gets out unhurt, and builds up a roaring fire, telling the silly woman it'll be all the more fun if the water's dancing about. So he pops her in and holds down the lid. "Let me out," she screams. "It's burning me dreadfully; it's only fun, you know." "No; you can't be done, or you would not be able to make that noise," so he boils her till she says no more. Then he puts on her clothes, and lies down in the old woman's corner. When the children come in, they begin to eat. "This looks just like mother's hand," says one. "No," says another; "how can that be? There's mother on the bed." But Uthlakanyana thinks it best to be off; so, disguising his voice, he bids them leave the doorway clear and hobbles out. Just as he rushes off they fish up their mother's head, and start in pursuit. He is brought up by a wide river; so he turns himself into a weeding-stick. The cannibals trace his footprints to the brink. "Yes," says one, "he must have got across just here," flinging over the stick to emphasise his word. Safe on the other bank, Uthlakanyana resumes his shape, and thanks them for putting him across. "We thought you were a weeding-stick," reply the discomfited cannibals; but we are not told that they burst from vexation, as trolls were in the habit of doing. But Uthlakanyana is very hungry; so meeting a hare he says, "Stop, master, I've got such a pretty story to tell you." "I'm sure I don't want to hear it," says puss. "Ah, but if you were to hear the beginning of it you'd not be able to help listening." "Yes, I should though," persists the hare. "Do you know it's all about those horrid cannibals; they had me cooped up, but I managed to boil their—" And as the hare, in spite of himself, is stopping to listen, our hero gets hold of him, eats him, and makes a flute of one of his leg bones.

And now for our long story with the very long name, Utkombekantisi. A certain king had several wives besides his queen. Now these wives kept bearing

crows instead of children (just as in one of the Eddas a certain queen is always brought to bed of oxen). But the queen had no child at all, so that even they who bore crows laughed, and she in her shame could say nothing but, "Did I make myself? Even you are mothers because it was said be ye mothers." So she was very sorrowful because of her reproach, and when all the men were out digging, and the women drawing water, she would go alone into the garden, and sit there weeping. And one day two pigeons came to her and said, "Why weep you?" "Because I have no child, and even they who bear crows flout me, and my husband looks askance at me." "What will you give us if we get you a child?" "All that I have." "Aye, but what food?" "All my corn." "We don't eat it." "All my arum root." "We don't like it." "What can I give you, then?" "Give us castor-oil seeds. And fetch them in a basket on your head, and pour them out on the ground." You must not think that the doves go on in this quick business-like way; their speech is full of "vukootu" (Zulu for "coo"), and continued appeals to one another, "Why don't you go and find out why this queen is weeping?" "Why do you stay up there and not come and ask her what she'll give us?" But at last they get the seeds spread on the ground; and next they bid her bring a horn and lancet, and turn her back to them. They then cup her on the loins, and bid her go home and put the clots of blood into a big vessel, and not open it till two moons are dead. So, when the third moon comes, the queen uncovers the vessel, and sees therein two small children; she puts them into a larger pot, and leaves them three moons more, and then she looks in, and sees them quite big and laughing, and she rejoices greatly. But, going down, as usual, into the garden to dig, she asks herself, "Can it be that my children will live, mine who am daily jeered at and flouted?" So she sits there pining till sundown: and then, hastening in, she puts a mat against the door, that none may see, and takes out her children, and gives them milk. The boy drank, but the girl would not. But they both grew, and soon crawled, and then walked. And she kept them hid, lest the crows should kill them. Now because she had no children, people used to spill her water, and strew ashes over her hut, so that she said, "My husband cares not for me." Therefore one

day the girl said, "Let us fetch water for our mother, for the crows have spilt hers." But the boy answered, "Mother warned us never to go outside the hut." And his sister said, "None will see us, for they are all gone to'tig." So they went. Now the boy had no name, for he had said, "I will not have a name till I am a man, and my father gives me one," but the mother had called the girl Ukkombekcantsi. But when they got to the river, and the boy had filled his water-pots, lo! a great company, who all asked him to draw for them. He gave them all to drink, and they told him, "We're looking for a very beautiful girl, because our king is going to be married to his first wife." So they went away, and the boy put the water-pots on his own and his sister's head, and they returned. But the mother was angry and afraid, and strictly charged them not to go out again. Next day a great company came with many cows to ask the king's daughter in marriage; but the people jeered, and said, "What, would he choose a crow, having so many cattle?" "Who would cast away so many cows for a crow's dowry?" And the king said sorrowfully, "I am the father of mere crows. Go home." But the ambassadors are urgent. "Refuse us not, for we met the king's daughter by the river, and she was radiant with beauty." Then the head-man swore that he had no child, but crows only; and while they stood looking at each other, and pointing to the house which the children had described to them, the queen came out and shouted. Then the mothers of crows began to jeer, "Ye, ye; is the childless woman come out to see the bridegroom's men?" And her husband asked, "Why do you shout?" "I am shouting for my children, who are mine only." "Let them come out." And they came out; and the boy ran and embraced the king. And when the queen told her story her husband asked: "Have women then so great courage?"

Then was there much joy, and they all cried, "What bullock shall be slaughtered? As for mere goats they are not to be thought of." So they picked out a fine young bullock; and all the customs were done for the girl, and she danced for the bridegroom's party, and next day they took a leg of the ox for provision for the journey, and went their way. "You will meet a green animal on your way," said the mother, "be sure not to pursue it." But the soldiers of the prince would pursue it; and when they didn't return, the prince,

tired of standing in the sun, went off after them. And he, too, did not come back; and when the bride and her damsels were weary with waiting, there came to them an imbulu (a big, harmless, stupid lizard, very fond of milk, and said to suck cows). "Good day, lovely princesses, and you, queen of all; I should so like to see if your handsome dress fits me. So come down off your ox and let me try." At last, after much worrying the princess came down, and let the imbulu try on her dress. "Oh, how well it fits me, and now I must have a ride on the ox." So the imbulu got on; but when the girl wanted to get back again, it said, "Oh no, you let me get up, and now I shall never come down." And lo! the damsels were straightway changed into finches, and the bride into an uluve, and they all flew off to the forest.

But when the bridegroom and his men returned they wondered that there were no bridesmaids, and that the bride was grown so small, and brown, and shrivelled. And as they went the finches flew round and mocked them, saying, "Out on him; he is going off with an animal."

When they got to his father's kraal all the men said, "What is this for a bride?" and the old king ordered that they who had brought word about the lovely princess should be put to death for lying. "Nay, father," said the young king, "I saw her, too, and she was lovely above all things;" and then he told the story of the green animal.

Now, next day, all the village was afield, except one old legless woman who used to roll herself along (like the old cripple of whom Sir S. Baker speaks, and who was as good a man as any in the tribe). The bride and her damsels came to her and said, "We will now do all the village work, while the others are afield, only don't you tell of us." "No, I'll say I did it," replied the old woman. So they drew water and made beer; and when the people returned they all wondered. And next day the girls brought firewood, and ground corn, and made a mash, and cooked; and the people thought, "Now we've got a wonderful old woman who will work for us." And the third day the girl said, "You are a good creature, because you have not told of us;" so they gave her some of their beer. But at last the old woman could not keep silent any longer, and she told the king's son: "Every day at noon come many damsels, but one is most

beautiful, bright and glistening, and they make beer, and do the work of the village." And so he hides himself in her hut, and when the girls have come in, he runs out and blocks the doorway, crying to his bride, "Why did you leave me thus?" But she says: "Out on you; it was you who left me; you went off with an imbulu." "Alas," replies he "I shall soon die now that I no longer see you." Well, he tells his father, and they make ready a grand wedding feast; and the imbulu thinks it is for her. But the king has a big pit dug, and the women jump across it, and they pour milk into it, and persuade the false bride to go and jump too; and when she sees the milk she cannot resist it, but straightway unfolds her tail and leaps in, and they all run everywhere for boiling water and pour it on her till she dies.

And then all the people danced and rejoiced, and ate flesh for several days, and it was a right grand wedding, and a very large kraal was built for the young king and his bride, and all the damsels of the tribe thatched it for them with grass.

There, you will see at once how the imbulu bride and her fate resemble what you've read in a score of home stories, in which the real bride gets put aside for months or even years; and you will, I hope, be tempted by these samples to go yourselves to Doctor Callaway's book, and also to Doctor Bleek's Hottentot tales, which are equally curious, and like these "present strange points of contact with Aryan thought." The stories are very old, one proof of this (says Doctor Callaway) is that in none of them is there a word about the "medicine," which is now so large an element in Kaffir life. Languages may differ radically, fundamentally, but the thoughts and fancies, which are far deeper down than even the roots of language, are substantially the same in Aryan as in Zulu.

One thing I am very glad of; Doctor Callaway prints his tales, not for English readers only or chiefly, but for Zulus. One column is in Zulu, the other in English, and he finds "they pore greedily over the tales thus given to them in their own tongue." It must be a wonderful way of making them read. "Always Bible or goody book," is not Doctor Callaway's plan. He feels that men (especially savages) must have amusement, and so he gives it them in the best and pleasantest form.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LX. PARTED.

I WAS again under the same roof with Rachel.

We met, I remember, on the wide landing of the old oaken staircase of the farmhouse.

It was evening, after an angry sunset; a boisterous wind had torn the clouds into ragged strips and shreds; the flushed horizon was fast fading and darkening. As she stood by the casement window, however, a stream of dusky light fell upon her face, and I could see that she was very pale, that her lips quivered, and that her eyes shone with a feverish brightness. I murmured some few words of welcome to her. She thanked me with a smile that was yet very sad and plaintive, and gave me her hand. For some moments she could not speak.

"You are surprised, no doubt, to find me here, Mr. Nightingale," she said at length, in a sort of parched, fatigued, toneless voice. "And, indeed, it was very bold of me to come. But I felt sure of compassion and forgiveness. And what else could I do? My anxiety would not let me rest. I could not even write. My hand shook so, my eyes grew dim, and my heart—how it ached! I had been for many days without news of him; and when, at last, news came—it told me so little—it seemed to hide from me so much! The letter was very brief, but my fears added lines and lines to it, and revealed to me the worst of tidings. I could not but come with all haste. I did right, did I not? I am sure you will not blame me. My poor boy is so dear to me. And you are all so good and kind, so full of pity for him and for me, too. But how sad it all is! How very, very sad! It breaks my heart to think of it." Her voice failed her and she averted her face. Presently she asked, very faintly, without turning to me, "You have seen him? And you find him greatly changed? You think him in great danger?"

"Indeed, I fear so."

"You think there is no hope?"

"But little, I fear. Indeed, Miss Monck, I would say otherwise, if I only could." She was swaying to and fro, as though impatient under the suffering my answer had inflicted upon her.

"I know, I know. I am the only one that dares to hope. I must, I cannot but hope. And yet you are his friend!" This

was said almost bitterly. "He clings to you; he has been asking for you so many times; he has been so longing to see you. 'Has Duke come yet? When will Duke be here?' Poor boy, he can think of nothing else. It is strange how firm a place you hold in his heart. And yet you can so easily resign all hope! Well, I'll hope still to the last, though I am left alone to hope. Yes, and I'll pray, too; I'll pray, too."

There was despair in her accents. She scarcely knew what she said, I am sure. In her sore trouble her love had become cruelly jealous. It angered her to think that I had obtained a share of her cousin's affection. She yearned to possess his whole heart.

"I have seen so little of him, of late. And he wrote so seldom. He did not know—how should he? that his letters were most precious to me. But he might have guessed that—made sure of it. And when he wrote, it was such a very, very few lines. His long letters were for you. You, it seems, are more, much more, to him than I am—though you are almost a stranger to him. You have known him but a little while, and I have loved him all my life. He is my brother. I can remember him as far back as I can remember anything; and surely he cannot have forgotten. We were children together. It seems an age since he left me. Why did you come between us to part us? It was your doing. I did not complain. I thought it was for his advantage, and so I bore it—as I have borne other trials—finding strength, I can't tell how. But, oh! how wrong it all was! This bitter cold country, the cruel bleak wind that blows here, it has killed him. Can't you see that? He came here to meet his death. Why, why did you suffer it? Why did you do this wicked thing? Had you no pity, no mercy, for him, if not for me?"

She spoke wildly and impetuously, and yet not noisily. The passion of her grief seemed so intense as for the moment to deprive her of strength to express it fully. Her voice had sunk almost to a whisper. Her whole frame seemed trembling with nervous excitement. I feared that she was fainting, and stretched out my arm to support her. But she shrank from me and leant against the balusters, clutching them tightly with her quivering fingers as she panted for breath.

I was greatly distressed. Something I endeavoured to say in exculpation of myself—in reply to the unjust, unreasonable charge that she had brought against me.

"Yes, yes; you did it for the best. I know that. I am not accusing you—not really accusing you; but only see what has come of your interference! Look at my poor boy now! How pale, how weak and worn he is! He was not like that when you took him from me. He was well then. He would be well now, if you had but left him to me; at least, he was not so very ill—he did not suffer: there was no danger, or thought of danger. But now—now—"

She winced, and closed her eyes as though to avoid some too painful spectacle. I was silent; I could say nothing to soothe her in this paroxysm of her sorrow. Pained but not offended at what she had said—for, indeed, I could not hold her accountable for her vehement words—I was leaving her. In her present mood the sight of me seemed only to wound and irritate her. She had spoken cruelly of me, but I could not complain. I sympathised too wholly with her suffering; I pitied her with all my heart.

She wrung her hands, and her form writhed. She seemed wrestling with her anguish, as though it was some living and palpable opponent; and now her tears began to fall fast.

"Stay," she said, suddenly, in a sobbing voice. "Don't leave me, Mr. Nightingale. I have been talking like a mad creature. I feel like one at times. But you mustn't heed what I said. Do what I may to hinder them, bitter thoughts will come into my mind; harsh words will fall from my lips. It's for a moment only. Then I am myself again; ashamed of my weakness, and pained, and sorry, as you see me now. Say that you forgive me. Let me be sure of it. Give me your hand in token that you forgive me, and will forget the wicked nonsense I've been talking. I did not, I could not, really mean it. You are his firm, true friend; and mine, too. He loves you tenderly; surely that's reason sufficient why I should ever respect and esteem you. And in other ways I owe you so much. You have always been so kind and considerate. I could never be really ungrateful to you. I should not be so, even in seeming for a moment, but that my brain whirls—my heart throbs so. I suffer more than I can bear almost. But I will bear it, and bravely, you shall see. Be sure, I will not speak to you so again; only say that you forgive me."

Poor Rachel! with an effort she recovered herself, and brushed the tears from her

face. Her voice resumed its wonted musical tone, and gradually she mastered the passion which had so strangely stirred her. She was composed again, with wistful, penitential looks imploring my pity and forgiveness. It was more than I needed. I was grieved, indeed, that she should address me so beseechingly on such a subject. I felt that I had nothing to forgive; that she could do nothing I could not forgive; that I loved her more absolutely than ever, although it might be more hopelessly. Briefly and hurriedly I laboured to soothe and compose her, as far as I might. I assured her that her reproaches were natural enough, even though they did me some injustice; that at such a moment I could not expect from her complete control over her agony of grief; that it was best she should give her sorrow words—any words, the first that occurred to her. I sought to convince her that her charges had not really disquieted me, and should hold no place in my memory. Her sorrows were mine, I said, and I promised to hope with her, and to join in her prayers for the recovery of our poor Tony. So I left her, calm and appeased somewhat, I think. Such want of accord as had existed between us was, at any rate, over.

It was plain to me, however, that my poor boy-friend had but a little while to live—that day by day he was weakening and sinking. How deeply this afflicted me I need not say. I may not dwell upon the subject. It was almost my first experience of real sorrow. I felt that I was for ever passing from the sunshine into the shade of life. I now began to perceive how very dear he was to me. It was true, as Rachel had reminded me, that my friendship with him had been but of brief duration—was to be numbered by months rather than by years. Yet of what worth and consequence it had been to me! How he had cheered my desolate state in London; in how many ways he had brightened my existence! I thought fondly of his airy talk, his bright manner, his engaging frankness, his pleasant smile, his kindness on every occasion. There had never been a moment's disunion between us. Even his little dandy airs, and boyish foibles of that kind, I thought tenderly of. They were hardly to be counted as affectations; they were rather natural exuberances of his genial, sprightly nature, and quite innocent in themselves. No one was more conscious of their absurdity or readier to join in laughing at them than he

was himself. I would not, if I could, have had him other than he was. And his friendship had been of real service to me. At least, from him I had learnt something of myself. I am not speaking only of the fond praise he was so prompt to lavish upon me and my productions in art and in literature. This was excessive, as I know and knew then. But it was inspiriting and encouraging, nevertheless. It had been, I think, without mischievous result. It was only sympathy urged towards extravagance. And, seeing how my early days had been passed, I derived from it unspeakable comfort and support. Moreover, our many conversations, though, doubtless, they had often been boyish and foolish enough, had yet an intellectual and aspiring leaven. The ambitions we had taught each other to cherish might be vain, but they were not contemptible, or in the slightest degree unworthy. In truth, our friendship had opened to us new studies and experiences—had helped us on towards manhood, nerving our efforts and developing our resources.

But all this was over now. For the first time "never more!" that burthen of the song of life—a whisper at its beginning—a deafening chorus at its close—was to sound in my ears. Poor Tony was doomed. I had to learn the bitterness and sadness of mortality.

I would not be thought to over-estimate my sorrows. Let it be remembered how young I still was, and that youth is the season of friendship, and of sentiment tending to excess. What manner of man Tony might have become had he lived, how far my relations with him would have stood the tests of time and the chances and changes of life, I need not try to conjecture. He was little more than a boy when Death took him from me. His departure was to me most lamentable. His memory is very dear to me. Years have since passed, but I cannot think of him, even now, without a heart-ache.

Doctor Turton came over frequently from Steepleborough. With professional reticence he had long refrained from expressing any distinct opinion upon the state of his patient. He had indeed refused to avow that the case was without hope. But reserve had now become quite unavailing. It was plain to us that Tony's illness could have but one termination. And now the doctor confessed that medical art was baffled; that he could do nothing more; and that the end was at hand.

Our circle of friends and neighbours

was very small; but all shared our sorrows. Somehow all had made Tony's acquaintance, and been drawn towards him, and regarded him tenderly. There were many enquiries at the farm-house gate as to how he fared—and later, as to how he had passed the night, and whether the morning had brought any ray of hope to us. Farmer Jobling, I remember, was a frequent visitor, although he always refused to enter the house, lest his creaking boots should disturb the invalid. And he brought with him offerings of late fruit and flowers—for the garden at the Home Farm was more sheltered than our own. "It's but a poor time of year for nosegays, Master Duke," he said, subduing his sturdy voice to a husky whisper. "And there's main few flowers left. But we've a few asters still—and some late daisies and chrysanthemums—we'd rather a show of them this year—and one little bit of a rose. I never knew one blow so late—but the season was backward you know—it's only a poor thing, but the missus begged me bring it." The last rose my poor friend will ever see, I thought. Alas! For him every thing now seemed to be for the last time. "And here, Master Duke," continued the farmer "is a little basket of grapes I begged of Lady Rockbury's gardener—I met him at market, only Tuesday last. I call it a pretty bunch. If the poor lad don't care to taste 'em—though I'll warrant 'em sound and sweet—they used to be famous for their grapes at Hurlstone Castle—perhaps the sight of them may cheer him a bit. I wish the flowers were finer—but it's the best I could manage." Indeed there was no fault to find with the nosegay. The farmer, for all his roughness of speech, and of manner, had rare taste and skill as a gardener. I never knew anyone arrange flowers more adroitly. His cleverness in that way was as a natural gift. "It's a sad time for you all, Master Duke. How does the poor lad find himself this morning. No worse? Well that's something. We've all got fond of him somehow—the missus is quite in a way about him—for all he's a Londoner; though of course that don't count for anything at such a time. Our hearts are with you, Master Duke—and please God, the boy will get hearty again. That's all I can say."

The clergyman from Purrington often came over also, and Tony was prayed for in church amid the solemn stillness and deep sympathy of the congregation.

Among the labourers and servants of the farm much sorrow prevailed. Some even testified their regard by bringing indiscreet presents of mushrooms found upon the down. Others tendered gifts of plover's eggs and heather-scented honey. There was a general anxiety to discourage needless noise. Reube even muzzled his sheep dogs, so that they should not bark in the night.

Tony fought hard with the malady that was surely overcoming him. He declined to be regarded as an invalid. Though so weak as to be unable to stand alone, he insisted upon being dressed every day. He could no longer bear the fatigue of being carried down stairs. He was borne to an easy chair, placed at the window when the sun was shining, and wheeled afterwards to the fireside. Apparently, he did not yet know of his danger. At least, so we thought; and we consulted together as to whether he should or not be informed of his real condition. But on this head we were spared further anxiety.

He had spoken little of late of regaining his strength and getting well again. I was sitting alone with him. He had been silent for some time, and I forbore to address him, for I saw that conversation fatigued him. He was content with my being beside him; and as he watched the fire he had fallen into a musing state. He was in no pain; there was even a faint smile upon his wan face.

"Do you remember, Duke, drawing up my will?" he asked, at length; "and my executing it, and you and your uncle and mother attesting my signature? It was a right thing to do, and yet there seemed something absurd about it then. I don't know. Do we ever think of things without knowing that we're thinking of them? It would almost seem so. Certainly, I had little thought of dying then. But if I'd been dying, and knew it, I could have done no more. I'm very glad I made that will. For, you know, I have to think of dying now. It's not so much that I myself feel death to be near, for, indeed, it seems to me there's quite a store of life in my heart, Duke; but I read fear, and bad news, and hopelessness, somehow, in the faces about me. They are kind good faces too, and they break the bad news to me very tenderly. But still it's there. And so, I gather, I'm to die. Don't speak, Duke,

I please. I'm so wretchedly weak that I shall lose hold of what I want to say, which is clear to me now, or was a moment ago. I'm sorry, dear old boy, of course. For I'm so young, as you know, and life's been very pleasant to me, and seemed to promise so much more that would be pleasant in the future. It's hard to give it all up. There were so many things I wanted to do. I'd so many plans to carry out. I was always given to planning and looking forward, you know. It's really hard to think that all that's over, for ever. But so it must be, Duke. And my life—what a poor brief life it's been!—is to end almost before it's fairly begun. But I'm not complaining, old fellow. Things are all ordered for the best, I don't doubt. Very likely if I were to live I should only be a disappointment to myself, as well as to others. And by others, I mean you chiefly, Duke. I should fail the more, perhaps, the longer I lived. But it wasn't so much of myself I wanted to speak, though I know I shouldn't tire you—your're so good to me—even if I went on talking ever so on that subject. It was of Rachel. It's on her account I'm glad I made the will. An illness like mine, you see, Duke, makes one serious in spite of oneself. I've been thinking over many things that otherwise would very likely have escaped me altogether. Rachel—dear good sweet little soul that she is—has been occupying my attention a good deal of late. And last night we had a talk together over the fire, she and I, just as we used to do years ago, I remember, when we were little bits of children. What a while ago that seems! And yet it's not so very long since, either."

He stopped, and half closing his eyes, fell into a musing, dreamy state. I forbore to disturb him, and again we sat silent for some time.

"What was I saying, Duke?" he asked presently.

"You mentioned your cousin Rachel—Miss Monck."

"True. It's of her I wanted to speak to you."

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CHAPTER XXIX. IN NEED AND INDEED.

WHILE Evy was still pondering upon the terrible disclosure, which accident had thus revealed to her, there came a knock at the door, which not only startled her from her reflections, but accompanied as it was by the voice of one who had been the chief subject of them, had the effect of disturbing her conclusions. So long as she had been alone, she had weighed the whole matter with an impartiality that had astonished herself; but no sooner did she hear the voice of Judith, than all her old antipathy and repugnance to her seemed to return with tenfold force. She had been weighing her in the scale of justice, as a something apart from, and without any personal reference to herself; and now she suddenly awakened to the sense that this girl, on the other side of the panel, was to be her daily and only companion, perhaps for years. She had been making allowances for her, which had seemed reasonable enough, yet her very efforts to be just now appeared to have exhausted charity and patience alike, and to have made Judith's society intolerable.

"What is it?" answered she, with a strange reluctance even to address her by name.

"Mrs. Storks has come, and wishes particularly to see you."

"Where is my uncle?"

"In his room."

Evy hesitated a moment. She felt very unequal to the task of conversing with any one, even with a friend like Mrs. Storks. The idea of having once more to

repeat her tale of trouble, as it would be necessary to do, however briefly, and to have to listen to kindly but useless expressions of sympathy—"the vacant chaff well meant for grain"—or worse, as in Mr. De Coucy's case, to arguments in favour of what was now even more than ever out of the question, a reconciliation with Captain Heyton, positively appalled her. Yet it was certain that her uncle could still less endure such an interview; and was not this an opportunity to save him pain, and begin, as it were, that path of devotion to her unhappy benefactor which she had made up her mind to tread?

"Please to say that I will be with her directly." Evy felt that it was not civil of her to keep the door closed, and yet, at that moment, when she required all her calmness, she could not trust herself to meet Judith face to face. There was no reply; but, as though something more had been expected from her, Judith waited for a moment at the door, ere she turned to go down-stairs. She was annoyed, no doubt, and justly so; and with her retreating footsteps a feeling of contrition for her own coldness arose in Evy's heart; but also one of intense relief. She felt sorry, but yet more comfortable in her mind. Then she smoothed her hair, as all women do in preparation for an interview, whether with bridegroom at the altar, or executioner at the block—and went down into the drawing-room, where, as she expected, she found Mrs. Storks alone. Judith had always avoided her, when it was possible for her to do so, as vinegar declines to mix with the oil that is sure to get the upper hand of it.

"Evy, dear, I have seen Mr. De Coucy, and know all," were the visitor's first words,

spoken with singular tenderness and affection. "I am not come to ask painful questions, nor to seek to change a resolution, the grounds of which ought to be better understood by yourself than any other person. The only excuse I have for intruding on your sorrow is, that I wish to be of use if I can."

There was a simplicity and earnestness in the widow's tone that took Evy's gentle heart by storm. She had always liked Mrs. Storks, but had scarcely given her credit for the depth of feeling which her handsome face as it bent down to kiss her cheek, and her arm as it clung in loving protection round her waist, now manifestly displayed. She not only felt grateful for it, as in Mr. De Coucy's case, but comforted exceedingly, for the sympathy of one of her own sex was what her heart had sorely yearned for.

"I take it for granted, my darling Evy," continued the widow, "that all that old gentleman has told me is true; that he has in no way exaggerated the calamity that has befallen you, but that your uncle's affairs are in as bad a state as they well can be."

"I am afraid they are," answered Evy, sighing. "What has happened to us is, I believe, no less than utter ruin."

"Still, I should like to be quite sure, dear, before making the proposition I have in my mind. In my country, some people are said to be ruined when they haven't a cent, and others when they have saved fifty thousand dollars out of the fire."

"My uncle has saved nothing, he tells me; what he may get from the furniture of the cottage"—and Evy could not help casting a forlorn glance around the pretty little drawing-room, almost every object in which had come from Dunwich, and reminded her of that happy home—"is absolutely all that he will have to look to."

"It ought to sell well," was the widow's rather unexpected reply. "That's a duck of a piano; and the carpet is a three-pile one—Kidderminster, don't you call it? It's a pity the sale can't take place at New York, instead of Balcombe."

Mrs. Storks was always abrupt in manner; but on the present occasion she turned out her sentences like wood from a chopping machine. A stranger would, under the circumstances, have pronounced her rude and unfeeling, but one who knew her well would have perceived that she was only nervous and embarrassed.

"I am afraid that all these pretty things

together won't realise very much," observed she, after a little pause.

"I am afraid not," returned Evy, quietly. "But it is no use repining at what can't be helped."

"Just so; and besides, we must remember, Evy, that pecuniary loss is not, after all, the greatest misfortune that can befall us."

"I have reason to know that," answered the girl, slowly. It was the first bitter speech that her sorrows had wrung from her, but, she could not refrain from uttering it. There is nothing so provoking to a wounded spirit as the platitudes which others would fain apply to heal it.

"Oh, I didn't mean that, Evy," cried Mrs. Storks, reproachfully; "how could you have supposed I did? I was thinking of myself when I spoke of greater losses than that of money—oh, I don't allude to the general, my dear"—for Evy had looked up at once with a sympathising glance—"though I was very sorry to part with him; time has healed that, as it heals everything, except the eyes."

"Except the eyes?" ejaculated the wondering Evy; "why the eyes?"

"Because the older we grow the weaker they get—you don't know, probably, my dear, how very weak and bad my eyes are getting."

"Indeed, I did not," said Evy, regarding the bright orbs of the widow with compassionate curiosity. "I should never have thought that yours were failing."

"But they are, my dear; they're failing fast. My doctor tells me, I mustn't see them a bit more than I can help; mustn't write nor read, but must look about to engage at once some sort of amanuensis and companion. Don't think me selfish, my dear girl, but directly I heard of the change in your circumstances, my first idea was, 'Why perhaps Evy Carthew will be persuaded to come and fill this very place, and how nice it would be if she would.'"

Evy looked up with a grave smile, and took the widow's hand in hers.

"No, dear friend," said she. "I do not think you selfish—certainly not that—not, to be frank—in any danger of going blind. You would establish a sinecure in your household with the generous intention of inviting me to fill it."

"No, no, no," insisted the widow eagerly, though flushing at the discovery of her pious fraud, "it would not be a sinecure, I do assure you, although I may have made

my eyes out to be a little less serviceable than they really are. The fact is, I do want a companion; some nice lady-like young person—yes, that's the phrase, 'lady-like young person'—such as Evy Carthew, to make me feel less lonely and wake me up a bit. I've got a little house of my own which would be very pleasant to me, if I could persuade you to share it, whereas, as it is, I spend half the year in hotels, and such like, to avoid being bored to death by my own society. I should set you lots of things to do, I promise you; to put out the flowers, for instance, for I love flowers in my rooms, and servants have never any notion of arranging them, and to make the tea of a morning when I happen to be a little late; and—and——"

"And as many more onerous tasks as your imagination can suggest," interrupted Evy, with a smile more bright than she could have believed her lips could ever again have formed. This unexpected kindness and consideration fell on her heart as rain on the parched grass, which before seems dead. "No, my dear Mrs. Storks," answered she, gravely; "it is impossible for me to accept your generous offer. I appreciate it, believe me, to the full, and shall never, never forget it; but I cannot leave my uncle. For all that has made my life hitherto a happy one I have to thank him alone, and in the future I intend to do my best to render his misfortunes tolerable."

"I was afraid you would say that," said the widow, heaving a deep sigh. "I really don't see how I could get on with poor Mr. Hulet; I mean, that is, for a constancy; he does take such a deal of medicine."

Mrs. Storks looked so perplexed at this consideration that Evy could not repress a smile. "Indeed," said she, "since all these misfortunes have happened to us, I do believe that my dear uncle has never once sought relief in drugs or restoratives. He has locked them all away in a cupboard, as though the very sight of them was hateful to him. But still it is very certain that *he* cannot come to reside with you, dear friend, either as amanuensis or companion."

"You bear yourself like a true heroine, my darling," answered the other admiringly. "I always said that you had as much of real courage as that crocodile Judith has of impudence. How is she, by-the-bye, Evy?"

As she put the question, the widow's

tone changed suddenly to one of carelessness and contempt, but there was something of interest too in her listening face, and she waited for the reply.

"Judith is much as usual," answered Evy, evasively.

"Ah, not incoarsably depressed I dare say. That young woman's capabilities of enduring the misfortunes that happen to other people are doubtless very considerable. She has been enriched, I hear, by Mrs. Hulet's death; is that the case?"

"I believe so," said Evy, quietly.

"But she has not offered to help your uncle out of his difficulties, I conclude, and I am equally sure that he will never ask her to do so."

Evy bowed her head. She could not trust herself to say how utterly out of the question was either supposition.

"Well, well, my darling, such being the position of affairs, and my little offer of assistance having proved of no avail, there is nothing for me but to hand you this epistle;" she took from her pocket a sealed envelope, directed to Mr. Hulet, and held it out for her companion to take. "This concerns yourself, Evy, quite as much as your uncle, and comes from an honest and genuine friend of both."

But Evy drew back her hand; the idea that Mr. De Coney had made the widow the bearer of his benevolence in the shape of some pecuniary aid suddenly occurred to her, and called the colour into her pale cheeks.

"It isn't—it isn't money, Mrs. Storks, I hope."

"No, my darling, it is not money. The person who sends it is as well aware as myself that we have to do with a very proud and independent young lady, by whom nothing so reasonable as the offer of a banker's cheque would be tolerated for an instant. If you had been a more sensible girl we should have had no difficulty in the matter. As it is, my plan is foiled, and according to promise, I therefore bring Mrs. Hodlin Barmby's under your consideration."

"Has good Mrs. Barmby, then, been thinking, like yourself, of how she can be of use to us?" cried Evy, letting fall a grateful tear or two; "if our misfortune was less, we might almost welcome it, since it shows us such noble friends."

"Thinking of you! of course she has been thinking of you, and talking of you too, like every one else in Balcombe." The smile faded out of Evy's face, at those

careless words. If every one was talking of them, what must some of those who were not their friends have said about her uncle, and Mrs. Hulet's death. The widow perceived her change of colour, though she could not guess its cause; and added hastily: "But I must not detain you longer, Evy, since I am sure you must have enough to do and think about. Mrs. Barmby would herself have come, you may be sure, if it had not been for that consideration. She is a good sensible woman, such as one feels one could get on with if it were necessary to live with her for ever under the same roof—a conviction which is the great test of one's liking for a fellow-creature. As for living with Judith, for example, I for my part, couldn't have done it. You have the patience of an angel, Evy, but for my part I should have pitched her over the cliff—oh, dear, dear, what am I saying? Forgive me, my darling, I quite forgot. Well, you'll show that letter to Mr. Hulet at once, and when you have both made up your minds as to the answer, you will let her know. Remember me most kindly to your uncle, will you, and give my most earnest wishes to Judith, that—yes—that she may be as happy as she deserves."

For an instant the widow's handsome face lit up with a roguish smile, then melted into eager tenderness as she clasped Evy in her arms and bade her farewell.

Her mission had failed in its object, but it had not been useless, since it had left the sense of kindness, consideration, sympathy—of all in short that is best in friendship—behind it. For it is not the making use of friends that renders them a comfort to the unfortunate, but the knowledge that they possess them to make use of if they please.

CHAPTER XXX. "WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A GOD-BE-WITH-YOU."

MR. HULET received Evy's account of her interview with Mrs. Storks with mingled feelings; he was distressed that she had given up what promised to be a happy home, but he could not conceal from her his joy that she had refused it.

"Not but that it would have been better on the whole, Evy, that you should have left me," sighed he, "for then my troubles would have been the sooner over."

"The sooner over! How so, uncle?" she had asked with unfeigned surprise.

"Because, without you, my darling, I should die," was his calm reply; and to see his face and hear his tone, was to be-

lieve his words. It was, in truth, almost impossible to recognise the fretful, but by no means infirm invalid of ten days ago, in the broken, woe-worn old man, who looked, whenever his heavy eyes fell anywhere save on his niece, as though death was indeed beckoning to him. When he heard that there was a letter for him from Mrs. Hodlin Barmby, he only said, "indeed;" then fell back into the fit of melancholy musing from which his niece's coming had but half aroused him.

"Shall I read it to you, uncle?" asked Evy.

"No, no; I do not need that," was his strange rejoinder; "every word is burnt in on my brain."

"But, my dear uncle, you have not seen it," exclaimed Evy, her apprehensions once more excited for the old man's wits. "It is here in my hand unopened."

His eyes slowly wandered towards it, then to her; when the consciousness of her meaning seemed to flash upon him for the first time. "Yes, yes; from Mrs. Hodlin Barmby," he murmured. "Let us hear what the good lady has to say."

Evy drew her chair closer to his, and laid her hand upon his knee, to insure his attention as much as to express her love, then read as follows.

"Lucullus Mansion, Balcombe.

"MY DEAR MR. HULET,—My husband and myself have heard with great regret that a severe pecuniary misfortune has happened to you, in addition to that domestic one which has been such a source of sorrow to us all. He and I both know what it is to lose one's money, and may therefore claim to have some sympathy with you upon the matter, without offence; moreover we hope that you consider us as your sincere friends. This is all very stiff and formal, a circumstance which probably arises from my literary experience being so much confined to informing our would-be visitors that there is no room for them at the Mansion, but you must take it for granted that we feel all the kindness I may fail to express. I am a woman of business, and it is my way to come to the point. We want you and your dear niece to come and stay with us—to live with us—not as guests (for we know that that would be distressing to you), but quite in another sort of way. The fact is, my dear sir, that, though I wouldn't let my husband know it (who thinks I am Cocker himself) for fifty pounds, I have never made my accounts

exactly right, for a week together, ever since I have had the management of this establishment :

Multiplication is vexation,
Addition is as bad,
Each little bill does trouble me,
And practice drives me mad.

That last line is the truest part of the proverb, which, after all, I believe I have not quoted quite correctly. It is the practice—the continually having to work at those odious figures, which is intolerable to me; instead of making me perfect it makes me wretched. Now, dear Miss Evy, as I have happened to observe, is a first-rate arithmetician. I have asked her sometimes to check an account for me, and the way in which her eye has run up and down the columns, without even putting what you carry down on the right-hand so as not to forget it, always filled me with admiration. Then she always found out where the mistake was, which I never can do, for the oftener I go over the thing the more errors I make; just as when mending a hole in very delicate lace, I have known folks to make half a dozen new ones. Now my proposition is that dear Miss Evy should come to Lucullus Mansion—there's a nice sitting-room on the ground-floor next the garden, with a couple of bedrooms opening into it, which would just suit you two—and keep our accounts. It would not only be an immense satisfaction to me, and saving of wear and tear in the way of remorse, to see the item, 'Lucifers and Sundries,' in our expenditure sensibly diminished, but it would be a very considerable pecuniary saving. You would live, of course, as you have been wont to do, here—pray excuse me for mentioning these details, but use is second nature, and besides, it is so much better, I always think, that people should have a thorough mutual understanding upon business matters; none of that 'I leave it to you, ma'am,' as the cabman says to us ladies, and which always ends in our being cheated; and I would also pay Miss Evy a salary, not according to her personal merits, indeed, for it would take Mrs. Bullion to give that, but in proportion to the advantage I derive from her assistance. I write all this, my dear Mr. Hulet, upon the assumption that your pecuniary losses have been such as to render this suggestion worth your attention, and in case your dear niece may not have thought fit to accept an offer of another kind, which Mrs. Storks will make in the first instance. I

dare not say she would be so happy with me as with the excellent widow; but we will do our very best to make her thoroughly at home with us, and at home I don't think she would ever feel herself to be except with her uncle. Above all, do not fear that she will find it incompatible to keep accounts and also her position as a lady; for though I have not succeeded in the former, the degradation, if any, of course lies in the attempt to do so, and I have myself tried it these many years, without, as I hope and believe, losing that respect and consideration to which I was accustomed before I became a landlady. There is a piece of 'proper pride' for you, which will make dear Miss Evy smile; I hope it will, I am sure. To win her for a moment from her sorrows would be a pleasure to me; to be able to lighten them for the future is what, next to my husband's happiness, I may honestly say, I have most at heart. And now for a piece of private information. Captain Heyton—"

"I think Mrs. Barmby means this for your private ear, not mine," said Evy, quietly, and handing the letter over to her uncle. Taking her hand in his, and retaining it with a tender clasp, Mr. Hulet read on to himself:

"Captain Heyton has suddenly left us, and will certainly not return again; there is therefore no fear of your darling Evy being distressed by meeting with him, in case you may wish to exchange your quarters at the cottage during the sale (as you will probably do) for our roof at once. I had some talk with him, though not upon that subject, upon which I cannot think without tears of regret; and he told me, to my surprise, that it is not his intention to return to Dunwich. It seems he has made up his mind for the future to reside in town. His manner was forced, and distract to a degree which, notwithstanding my knowledge of what had happened, was most surprising and inexplicable. I take it for granted, of course, that Miss Judith is no longer to be a resident with you; and have consequently not contemplated her in the above arrangements.

"With our united kindest regards to yourself, and my best love to dear Evy,

"I am your sincere friend,

"CATHERINE HODLIN BARMBY."

"There was no great secret to be told, after all, Evy," observed Mr. Hulet, slowly, as he folded up the epistle. "Well, what

do you think of our good friend Mrs. Barmby's offer?"

"It is a most kind and thoughtful one, dear uncle, and I am sure merits our best thanks," answered Evy, simply; the idea of Mr. Hulet living at Balcombe, the very place of all others where he would be most exposed to the breath of scandal, seemed so utterly impossible to herself, that she did not understand that he was seriously putting the question to her as to whether they should accept the offer or not.

"Yes, we ought to be thankful," continued Mr. Hulet, wistfully; "for though I would much have preferred to be the bread-winner for you, my darling, than that you should work for me——"

"Oh, that is not what I was thinking of, uncle dear," interrupted Evy; "indeed, the idea of doing something, however slight, for you, is the strongest recommendation in my eyes that the proposal possesses; Mrs. Barmby would, I am sure, be a most lenient taskmistress, and I have no doubt that I could please her, but——"

She stopped, and looked at her companion, who had once more apparently sunk into despondent musing, with pitiful eyes. How could she tell him what was her real objection?

"Captain Heyton has left Balcombe for London, where he has resolved to live in future," observed Mr. Hulet, slowly, and checking off each sentence on his fingers. "We shall be poorer, Evy dear, even than you imagine, and this offer of a home and an income, however small, is as opportune as it is unlooked for. It is the only plan that seems to admit of our living together, and I confess that in my selfish eyes that consideration is paramount. Then as to the account-keeping, that is just the sort of thing for which I am still fit, and you need never write a figure with your own pretty fingers unless you please."

"But uncle," reasoned Evy, driven to her wit's-end for an objection, and wondering beyond measure that the one in her own mind did not also strike her companion, "there is Judith; she is not a favourite with Mrs. Barmby, and——"

"I know, I know; but there will be no difficulty about that, Judith leaves us at once, for London."

"For London? But to whom is she going?"

"To Mrs. Bullion's. She had a general invitation from her, it seems, and she wrote yesterday to accept it. She will have her reply to-morrow, and if it is in the affirm-

ative she will start forthwith. Then we shall be alone, my darling."

Pained as Evy was at Mr. Hulet's evident determination to accept Mrs. Barmby's offer, the unexpected news of Judith's departure almost counterbalanced her distress. After all, it seemed they had nowhere else to go; nor the means of living anywhere else. If her uncle confined himself to their own apartments—very retired ones she remembered, though with a most cheerful outlook—and did not mix with the general company at the table d'hôte, he might possibly avoid hearing the ill-natured talk of which, for his sake, she stood in such fear. And as for herself, she would try not to mind what was said by anybody—but to attend to her duties whatever they might be, and help kind Mrs. Barmby as much as she could. Seeing, therefore, that her uncle had once more sunk into meditation, she made no further remonstrance about the matter.

At breakfast, the next morning (of which meal the two girls now partook alone) when the letters came, and one of them for Judith, Evy could hardly keep her eyes off her as she read it, seeking to gather the nature of its contents from her countenance. That it was from Mrs. Bullion, she felt sure; the question was, had that lady expressed willingness to receive her self-invited guest? Evy was not long kept in suspense.

"I am going to town, to Mrs. Bullion's," observed Judith, quietly, as she poured out her second cup of tea. "I suppose Mr. Hulet told you that it might be so."

"Yes," answered Evy, "he did hint at something of that sort." She scarcely knew what else to say. She could not affect sorrow at her companion's departure upon her own account, and still less on that of her uncle, who had absented himself from the common meals, as she could not but conclude, from sheer disinclination to meet her companion.

What an unhappy state of things it is when the time for separation comes, and it is impossible to say, "How I shall miss you," to one of our own blood or household! Nay, when our secret thought is, "Well, I trust, we two here part for good and all!"

"Yes," repeated Evy, since Judith remained silent; "uncle said you might be going. Do you make any long stay with Mrs. Bullion?"

"That is doubtful—it depends on circumstances. But one thing is certain, I

shall not return hither; nor to your uncle's roof again."

Judith's tone was harsh, so much so, that it seemed designed to provoke a question; but Evy took no notice. She was apprehensive that her companion wished to lead her into a discussion about her uncle, which she was resolved to avoid.

"And when are you thinking of leaving us, Judith?"

"This morning; at once," answered the other. "I ordered a fly from Balcombe to take me to the railway, expecting this note would come, and—hark, I think I hear its wheels!"

There was certainly some wheeled carriage coming slowly down the lane that led from the high road.

"What, have you then packed and all, Judith?"

"Yes, I am quite ready. I have even made my adieux to your uncle! There is nothing to be done save to wish you good-bye, Evy."

There was a little tremor in her voice; something of tenderness or pity, very alien to it, and which softened Evy towards her. They had lived six months together, under the same roof; and they were about to part, perhaps for ever.

"I wish you all happiness, Judith; and especially where it has been denied to me, as you may have guessed or heard."

Judith bowed assent. Evy was glad she did not speak; the breaking off of her engagement with her lover was a subject even more to be avoided with Judith than that of her uncle; and it was only because she felt assured that her companion knew of that matter, that she had even alluded to it.

"I suppose we shall soon hear, Judith, of your own marriage, now that you are independent, and there is no necessity for further delay?"

"I suppose so; yes," answered Judith, mechanically. She seemed to be thinking of something else, though her face—on which that pitying expression still lingered—was fixed upon her interlocutor.

"How long is it, Judith, since you have seen Mr. — I mean your Augustus?" It struck Evy not for the first time, of course, but with greater force than it had ever done before, how singular it was that she had never been told his surname.

"Well, I don't know; it must be many months." That was strange, too, thought Evy, for this girl not to know for certain when last she saw her lover. For her own

part she remembered the very day and hour when she had parted from Captain Heyton in Dirleton Park—and as for that interview of yesterday—it seemed to her that though her days should be unhappily prolonged to the extreme limit of human existence, that its exact date would never be erased from her recollection.

"He will have a beautiful bride, whenever it may be, Judith," observed Evy. She had a genuine admiration of her companion's good looks, and to speak of them was almost the only means she had of making herself pleasant to her with sincerity. Flattery was always welcome to her companion, yet she did not acknowledge this little compliment even by a smile. After an uncomfortable silence, "Well, I will go and put on my things," said Judith; and she rose and left the room to do so, while the servants brought her boxes down the stairs. Evy remained in the drawing-room, listening at first to the tread of footsteps, but presently falling into a melancholy reverie, from which she awakened with the sense of having indulged in it for some minutes. This could scarcely have been, however, since Judith, who was generally very quick with her toilette, had not yet come down-stairs. All was quiet now. There was the sound once more of a vehicle in the lane, only it seemed to grow fainter and fainter, leaving the cottage instead of approaching it. What could it mean? She opened the door; the stairs and passage were empty; and on the gravel sweep in front, which was visible from where she stood, there was no vehicle, as she had expected to see.

"Jane, Jane," cried she, "where is Miss Judith?"

"Gone, miss," was that domestic's sententious reply.

"Gone! But she never said 'Good-bye' to me," exclaimed Evy, too astonished at this proceeding to consider the prudence of commenting upon it before the parlour-maid, with whom Miss Judith was no favourite.

"Perhaps she didn't wish to, miss," was Jane's cynical rejoinder, "that is, if (as I've heard said) good-bye means 'God-bewith you.'"

Evy did not reply, but the words of the serving-maid struck a responsive chord within her own bosom, of the existence of which she had been hitherto unconscious. Perhaps Judith was indeed her enemy, albeit, she had done nothing to deserve her hate—and had felt disinclined to make

that show of affection which might have seemed incumbent upon her, at parting. Or, on the other hand, had Judith done her some wrong, the consciousness of which forbade her to receive her own good wishes? And if so, what wrong? Evy asked herself this question in vain. The materials for the true reply were happily not to be found in her own guileless nature.

IN TWO ACTS.

ACT THE FIRST.

THE curtain rises on a scene that is common-place enough, perhaps, but still very pretty. The library of a substantial country house.

It is evening; but the shutters are not closed yet. The leaping fire, burning on the old-fashioned hearth, gives sufficient light for the purposes of the women who are the sole occupants of the room. One of these sits in a low chair; another is lounging on the hearth-rug, supporting herself against the knees of the lady in the chair. And the third lies on a sofa opposite, contemplating with a great air of satisfaction the pretty red-slippered feet which she has elevated on a cushion, in order that she may see them. She is Mrs. Byrne, the popular fascinating wife of one of the keenest sportsmen in this sporting county. And she is the guest of the lady in the low chair, Mrs. Tressilian, and the great friend of that lady's only daughter, Lina, the girl on the hearth-rug.

They are lounging away the dark hours here, hoping that the hunt will come home before they go up to dress, for Mr. Tressilian is master of the hounds, and these three ladies take a keen interest in the runs, and triumphs, and failures of the day. Moreover, they feel as if they could gossip more freely in the dim light, for Mrs. Byrne is here as a married woman for the first time, and she appears to Lina to be endowed with some fresh attributes.

"They must have left off a long way from home, for it's been dark for an hour and a half," Mrs. Tressilian says presently. She has been married more than twenty years, and still her heart palpitates with anxiety if her husband is behind his time. "I always conjure up visions of something having happened if they don't come when I expect them, don't you?" the elder matron continues, addressing the younger one. And Mrs. Byrne rises from the sofa with a laugh, and says, "Oh, no," and comes full into the light of the fire.

She stands clearly revealed now, a woman of about five-and-twenty, of middle height and slender graceful figure. Her dark hair is wrapped closely round her shapely little head. Her steady clever eyes are well fringed with long dark lashes. Her brow is straight, her small face delicately rounded, her mouth well-formed and flexible, betokening sensibility. Altogether she is a very pretty woman, and her dress of dark blue cloth fitting like a habit becomes her well.

"It's like a dream," Lina says, after looking at her friend for a moment or two. "When I left you six months ago, you didn't know Tom Byrne, and now you're married to him, and so accustomed to it all, that you're not anxious when he's late; how quickly you must have fallen in love?"

"Almost as quickly as I fell out of—" she begins, but checks herself, as something like horrified amazement spreads itself over Mrs. Tressilian's face. "Never mind me, Lina," she answers, "tell me about yourself; haven't you found any one to fall in love with yet?"

The girl looks at her mother, the mother looks at her girl, and Mrs. Byrne's quick eyes detect an expression of happy consciousness on Lina's face, and of proud satisfaction on the face of Mrs. Tressilian. "There is a man in the case," the sagacious young matron thinks; and she thinks also. "I hope he is here."

"If I'm ever engaged, you shall be the first to know it, Trixy," Lina says, rising up, fair and tall, by her friend's side. And Mrs. Byrne takes the girl's two white hands in her own tiny ones, and looks up into the sweet, proud, pure face that is crowned with an aureole of chestnut hair. and says—

"My dear, I was speaking of love, not of engagements; of course Miss Tressilian will be engaged, and will marry; but I want to know when the icicle thaws and loves."

The pretty married woman throws a good deal of meaning into her last words, but just then there comes the sound of the horn, and the tramp of the horses, and the sound of men's voices, raised in jolly discussion about the day's sport. And Mrs. Tressilian has only time to answer for her daughter—"O Trixy! I'm sure Lina will never do one without the other; you must know Lina well enough for that"—before three men came tramping into the room, splashed, tired, hungry and

happy, for they have had a long run, and have killed. The master advances to the bride, Mrs. Byrne, who has arrived during the day, and welcomes her almost like a second daughter. And Tom Byrne falls a prey to the hearty loving congratulations of Mrs. and Miss Tressilian.

"To have Trixy here again, oh! you don't know what it is" Lina says with effusion, "I'm sure I shall make you jealous, Mr. Byrne, for I shall monopolise so much of her time."

Mrs. Byrne releases her hand from the clasp of her elderly host, and comes forward at the word. Her quick eyes have discerned a "goodly youth" in the background, and—well! Tressilian Place will not be so dull as she feared it might be, if that goodly youth is to be one of her fellow guests.

"Glad you've had a good day, Tom," she says, in passing, to her husband; and then she whispers to Mrs. Tressilian, "One of your sons? introduce him."

"No—a friend of ours, Mr. Carruthers," and then Mr. Carruthers comes forward, and bows to the pretty Mrs. Byrne, and turns from her—turns from her almost without a glance, to tell the tale of the day to Lina Tressilian!

In truth, he is a "goodly youth," there is no denying it. Standing six feet at least, lightly built, lissom in movement, with rings of dark brown hair covering a head that might have been modelled from the Greek; with dark brows and lashes shadowing large green hazel eyes; with a delicately-featured face, that is at the same time strong and sensitive, vivacious and charming. What wonder that Mrs. Byrne determines at once that Lina loves this young Apollo, and that this young Apollo is worth loving. And, thinking this, pretty Mrs. Byrne goes away to dress for dinner without delay. The lounge on the sofa has disordered her hair and crumpled her collar; and, pretty woman as she is, she never commits the folly of too severely testing the power of unadorned charms.

Lina Tressilian and Mr. Carruthers loiter for a minute or two in the library after the others go up to dress. The tale of the chase, apparently, has a very thralling spell for her when told by him; and he seems to like telling it to the graceful, warm-coloured blonde. When, at last, she is leaving the room, she turns round and looks up into the handsome, vivacious face of the man who is following her, and says—

"What do you think of my friend, Mrs. Byrne? Isn't she pretty?"

His eyes are fixed on the face of the girl who is speaking. His heart is full of her. He has not told his love yet in so many words; but he is quite ready to tell it, and she knows this and is satisfied. At present his tones, and the silent, eloquent speech of his eyes, are all-sufficient for her. And she is justified in trusting him as largely as she loves him; for Bertram Carruthers' intentions are strictly honourable, and he is resolved that Lina's love-path shall be a safe and flowery one.

"What do you think of Mrs. Byrne? Isn't she pretty?" she repeats as, in the ardour of his gaze, he forgets to answer her question. And his answer does not annoy her, though Mrs. Byrne is her friend, when he says—

"'Pon my word, I didn't notice her."

At which Lina shakes her head in happy reproof, and says—

"Ah! but you must; she is my friend, remember."

He fails to remember this fact; but he does not fail to notice Mrs. Byrne when the latter sails into the drawing-room before the other ladies, and singles him out dexterously from the other men. Her figure is beautiful; not with the beauty of statuesque proportions and white marble-looking flesh, but with the beauty of grace and suppleness. As she crosses the room from the door to the fireplace, where he is standing, her steady, quiet gaze taking him in all the time, he is reminded of the advance a beautiful black snake made upon him once—Mrs. Byrne is in black velvet, with folds of white tulle about her neck and arms, and she knows that she looks well in it.

She talks to him a little about the event of the day—the run; is interested when he is led on to narrate the feats of his own mare, "the best fencer in the field, who has never been known to refuse anything." "Horses never do refuse anything, if the riders throw their hearts over first," she responds in a way that leads him to believe that she has a profound admiration for pluck, and that she thinks him plucky.

"You'll come to the next meet, won't you?" he asks, quickly. "It's on Wednesday—a lawn meet at Beveril Court."

"If Lina will drive me."

"Why not ride? You do ride."

"Yes" (with a smile), "I do ride."

"And jolly well, too, with that figure;

she's just the build for it," the young man thinks, flashing a quick glance of admiration at her.

"Then ride on Wednesday. I don't suppose it will be much of a run; but it will be a regular ladies' day."

"I don't think I care for 'regular ladies' days,'" she says in a low tone. And her perfectly feminine accents rob the remark of anything like fastness or an assumption of masculine tastes. Yet, from those same daintily-modulated accents, more than from her words, he gathers that she can do more than sit upon a horse—that she can ride as well as she looks.

"Let me lend you a mount," he says, eagerly. "I have a little mare, nearly thorough-bred, that will carry you over anything. Do let me lend her to you."

She pauses for half a second, watching him the while with her quiet, steady hazel eyes. Then she says softly—

"Shall you be out that day?"

And, as Mrs. and Miss Tressilian come into the room, he tells her "Yes."

ACT THE SECOND.

It does not promise very much sport, but it is a pretty, lively, amusing scene this lawn-meet at Beveril Court. Half the county is there. There has been a breakfast going on for the last two hours, to which all the hunt have been invited, and now, at one o'clock, they are coming out and mounting, or waiting about for their horses. Mr. Tressilian and the whipper-in are gone off with the hounds to the nearest cover, and the hunt is preparing to follow him across broad pasture lands that are thickly dotted with "tors," as the small rocks which bulge out all around are called in the vernacular.

Lina Tressilian is there, driving her mother in a little Victoria. Pretty, lively, and amusing as the scene is, Lina does not look very well pleased with it, as she sits there watching the skilful way in which Mrs. Byrne is being mounted by Bertram Carruthers on Bertram Carruthers' mare.

The mare is fidgetty, excited by the sound of the horn and the cry of the hounds, and eager to be off. The lady is calm, interested in the conversation of her attendant cavalier, and perfectly satisfied to remain where she is. She has improved the shining hours that have intervened between her introduction to Mr. Carruthers and the present moment, and takes the sort of interest in him that a woman does

take in a man of whom she has rather an intimate knowledge.

Mrs. Byrne has a low monotonously sweet voice, and in this voice she has asked many questions, and uttered many pleasantly flattering little speeches to the Antinous by her side, even when other people have been close at hand. But her share in the conversations have never been heard. It is only his answers that have fallen upon two or three pairs of anxious ears, and his answers have been to the full as flattering as her remarks. Lina is beginning to wish that her unavowed lover would be a little less demonstrative in his thorough appreciation of her dearest friend.

"I know you won't want any looking after," he is saying now admiringly to Mrs. Byrne, who is rather more perfect in her light blue habit than in anything else; "but the mare will go easier if she's with her stable companion, so, with your permission, I'll keep close to you, and show you the way, as it's a strange country to you. May I?"

She gives a low, gracious, pleased assent. "Of course you may," she says; "do you ever pilot Lina?"

He has talked to her about Lina, confided to her (this was just at first), that he is quite ready to surrender his liberty to Miss Tressilian. He has expatiated to Mrs. Byrne on her friend's charms and talents, and general womanly delightfulness. And, having done this, he is astonished to find that he has exhausted his interest in his topic and developed a stronger one in his listener. A quiet hour with Lina now would be like going back to a milk diet after a course of champagne. Therefore he eschews these quiet hours, and devotes the whole of his time to the sparkling married woman. In answer to her question now, "Do you ever pilot Lina," he gives a half curious laugh, and says—

"I have done so, but she isn't at home in the saddle as you are," and then he gets on his horse, and rides away by the side of the lustrous faced brunette, with the soft grey velvet manner, without a glance at the fair, handsome girl in the pony-carriage, who had been his heart's queen only the other day.

He has been "Bertie" in the Tressilian household for a long time, and his views about Lina are pretty well understood in the Tressilian set. It is only natural therefore that a number of intimate friends

speaking of him freely, as they hang about Miss Tressilian's pony-carriage. And Lina, with a face grown heavy, and almost plain with the pangs of a gnawing, quickly growing, jealousy, has to listen to these remarks, and answer them, and call him "Bertie," too. Many of them hurt her feelings by their sagacious remarks, but the one who sends the dagger well home to her heart is one of those admirable people who always "speak their minds," and "dislike beating about the bush." A good-hearted, loud-voiced, popular woman, who has known Lina from the cradle.

She rides up to the little Victoria now, with a broad beaming smile on her face, and begins, without noticing the cloud that is hovering over Lina—

"My dear child, I'm quite relieved to find that the lady who is monopolising Bertie Carruthers is a married woman, and your great friend; I began to be afraid there was something wrong between you and Bertie."

"How should there be anything wrong between me and Bertie, Mrs. Lennox," Lina asks, almost sharply, for she is sore stricken, "we're too old and good friends to quarrel idly, aren't we, mamma?"

"Yes," Mrs. Tressilian says, hopelessly. Out of her own consciousness she would not have evolved distrust of Bertie and Mrs. Byrne. But she has caught the reflection of her daughter, and is very unhappy and much perplexed.

"I should like to know Mrs. Byrne," Mrs. Lennox goes on carelessly. "Stays with you some time, I suppose? Everyone tells me how fascinating she is."

Lina makes a strong effort to resuscitate her feelings of loyal friendship for her disloyal friend.

"She is very fascinating," she says, emphatically. Then, as Mrs. Lennox rides off, she adds with an abrupt descent into the muffled tones of misery, "Mamma, we may as well go home; there's nothing more to see," and with one lingering glance at the "goodly youth" and the graceful woman in the distance, she turns her ponies' heads and drives home as fast as she can.

They do not have a quick find this day. By far the greater portion of the time is spent in loitering about in wooded glens, and on the outskirts of covers in the sunny, crisp weather. Keen sportsmen rage against the want of scent and the rarefaction of the atmosphere. Bertie Carruthers is a keen sportsman, but he does not

rage against the fortune which permits him to stand still for half-an-hour at a time by Mrs. Byrne's side.

She has infused a faint savour of bitterness into the tones of the fancy philosophy she is talking to the young man whose splendid beauty has attracted her fickle admiration for the time: a faint savour of bitterness against things as they are and ever have been with herself, and of indifference to the majority of things, and of unbelief in the majority of people. And through all her remarks an undercurrent runs of there being something sweet in the bitterness of the present, and of her interest being aroused by something now, and of her heart doing battle against the unbelief of her mind. And Bertie is fascinated by her misty metaphysics and her fancy philosophy, and wishes (when he thinks of her at all) that Lina had the art of wording her thoughts and feelings as entrancingly as does this woman, who is going away soon, and without whom he will find Tressilian very dull.

As they ride home in the gathering evening gloom, still together, he finds himself the principal talker, rather to his surprise. The fact leads him to suppose that Mrs. Byrne is much interested in his topic, which happens to be himself. The truth being that Mrs. Byrne is tired, and perfectly aware that men like to be listened to. So she listens with flattering attention, makes her manner more like a piece of exquisitely toned grey velvet than ever, and pets his favourite mare, calling her darling!

She "means no harm" she tells herself when she allows her hand to remain in his, when he clasps it at length as it caresses his mare's mane. He "has seen many small hands," he tells her, "but her's is something unique in size." And Mrs. Byrne laughs and says, "Yes; but hasn't dear Lina nice, comfortable, useful-looking hands."

She "means no harm," and the young fellow by her side means absolutely nothing. His neighbour's wife would be a very sacred personage in his eyes, if he could only remember the fact of her being his neighbour's wife! But Mrs. Byrne has the art of making men forget this. So he goes on with his sentimental fooling until they reach Tressilian Place, and then they saunter in together to the library and find it vacant.

A warm low

pleasant, after she is burning there, as the fatigues of the day

down on the sofa in the glow, and have the tea which Lina's forethought had ordered, brought to her; and Mrs. Byrne, who likes pleasant things, becomes more velvety than ever under the subtle, soothing influence of comfort. She takes her hat off, and bends her graceful figure forward towards the fire which gleams up now and again, lighting up the slender grace of that figure.

Her dusky hair, her courage in the saddle, and her slow, soft, tender ways, her subtle little half hints of having been hardened by Fate, are one and all revelations to him. "In all his experience," he tells himself (it may be mentioned that his experience is not very wide) he "has met with nothing like Mrs. Byrne." It seems to him quite a right and natural thing to do, as he does presently, kneel down before her, and chafe her little cold hands into warmth.

She bending above him, smiling into his eyes half sadly the while, "means no harm," of course, but can't help wondering, half maliciously, "what Lina would think of it all," as he bends his head down and kisses her hands and mutters, "I am falling in love with you." She releases one hand, and places it on his brow, brushing back his rings of dark brown hair, and they are both of them utterly oblivious that Lina has opened the door, and is standing there paralysed.

It is a pretty little bit of acting to the cool-headed, cooler-hearted, married woman. It is a piece of excitement which he cannot resist to the young man. To the watching girl it is the death-blow of every hope she holds dear in life.

Mrs. Byrne goes away in a few days, and finds fresh hearers for her mock metaphysics and fancy philosophy. Bertie Carruthers allows himself to be bored, distraught and irritable, for a week without her, and then remembers that "Lina is really a very nice girl." But the vital spark has fled from his love for her, and Lina knows it, and the love drama of her life ends with the second act of Mrs. Byrne's romantic comedy.

LONDON STREET CRIES.

As the great macadamising steam roller of civilisation passes over us, we become daily smoother and flatter. The great city is less picturesque than it used to be. Street sights lack the old charm. May-day

and its dancing votaries, with the genius of spring personified by Jack-in-the-Green, is almost a thing of the past. Poor old Guy Fawkes ekes out a miserable existence, and is frowned on by the High Church clergy. The grotto of St. James at Compostella is no longer quaintly typified by a beehive of oyster shells, with a farthing candle burning inside. True, there are strange utterances in our streets that remind us of the changes of the seasons, as pleasant recallers of old memories as the cry of the cuckoo, or the twitter of the April swallow. What Londoner is there who, from his open window in June, does not feel a certain charm in the gleam of bright colour, as the itinerant flower-seller's truck comes in sight, and the cheery shout goes up of "Here ye'are—all a-growing and a-blowing?" or, on a warm spring morning, when fires have been a week or two disused, who does not like to see the female street seller waving cascades of many-coloured papers as she chants forth to a plaintive rhythm, "Any ornaments for your fire-stoves?"

Let us, then, run over a few of the London street cries which we find recorded in old books, recalling some of the quaintest, and showing the changes they have from time to time undergone.

The first we hear of London street cries is in the earlier poems of that intolerable dull old monk of Bury, Lydgate, a successor of Chaucer, who wrote most of his wearisome poems in the reign of Henry VI. In his "London Lackpenny" he describes his first greetings in London:—

Then unto London I dyd me hye,
Of all the land it beareth the pryse;
"Hot pescodes," one began to crye,
"Strabery rype," and "cherries on the ryse."
One bad me come nere and by some pryce,
Peper and safforne they gang me bede,
But for lack of money I myght not spede.

The men who offered Lydgate pepper and saffron (the latter used to colour soup in those ages) were not itinerant salesmen, but the 'prentice boys standing at their masters' stalls, like the "Buy-buy-buy" butchers of Clare Market and Whitechapel of the present day. "The cherries on the ryse" were cherries tied to a stick, as they are often sold now, the stick being meant to represent a real bough of the tree.

The chap-books and pamphlets of Elizabeth's reign, often written by poor poets of genius, and needy dramatists like Decker, Nash, and Greene, abound with allusions to the street cries of the period. Promi-

ment among these were those of the poor prisoners begging at the dungeon grates of Ludgate and the City Compters—melancholy voices, all day doling out—

“Bread and—meat—bread—and meat—for the—ten—der—mercy of God to the poor pris—ners of Newgate—four score and ten—poor—pris—ners!”

Or, at another—

“Here lies a company of very poor women in the dark dungeon—hungry, cold, and comfortless, night and day. Pity the poor women in the dark dungeon!”

Another common Elizabethan street cry was—

“Round and sound, all of a colour; buy a very fine marking stone, marking stone; round and sound, all of a colour; buy a very fine marking stone; very fine!”

With these alternated—

“Salt—salt—white—Wor—ster—spice salt.” “Buy a very fine mousetrap, or a tormenter for your fleas.” “Kitchen-stuff, maids.” “I have white moist, white hard lettuce; white young onions.” “I have rock samfire, rock samfire.” “Buy a mat, a mil mat—a hassock for your pew; or a pouch to thrust your feet in.” “Whiting, maids—whiting.” “Hot fine oatcakes—hot.” “Small coals here.” “Will you buy any milk to-day?” “Lantern, candle, light ho! maid ho! light here!”

But the itinerant broom man was the most distinguished of all the Elizabethan street sellers by his songs and his loud cry of “New brooms, green brooms; will you buy any? Come, maidens, come quickly, let me take a penny.” His song is too characteristic to neglect:—

My brooms are not steep'd,
But very well bound,
My brooms be not crooked,
But smooth cut and round.
I wish it should please you
To buy of my broom,
Then it would ease me
If market were done.

Have you any old boots,
Or any old shoes,
Pouchings or buskins
To cope with new brooms?
If so you have, maidens,
I pray you bring hither,
That you and I, friendly,
May bargain together.

In the reign of James I. we find in a curious old music-book, full of rounds and catches, entitled—“Melismata. Musically Phansies. Fitting the Court, Citie, and Countrey Hymovrs. To three, four, and five Voyces.”

To all delightfull, except to the spitefull,
To none offensive, except to the penive.

London. Printed by William Stanley, for Thomas Adams. 1611,” an old city round, which ran thus:—

“Broomes for old shoes, pouchings, bootes and buskings, will yee buy a-ny new broome?” And another which clubs together some street cries of Shakespeare's time:—“New oysters, new oysters, new new cockels, cockels nye, fresh herrings. Will yee buy any straw? Hay yee any kitchin-stuffe, maids? Pippins fine. Cherrie ripe, ripe, ripe; Cherrie ripe, ripe, ripe.”

On the cry of “Cherry ripe,” Ben Jonson composed his charming song of that name, which is only surpassed by his still more beautiful song, “Drink to me only with thine eyes.”

We also find in a play of the reign of James I. the following curious street cries enumerated. “Lanthonne and a whole candell light; hang out your lights heare!” “I have fresh cheese and creame.” “Buy a brush or a table booke.” “Fine oranges, fine lemons.” “Ells or yeards; by yeards or ells.” “I have ripe strawburyes, ripe—straw—buryes.” “I have screenes, if you desier, to keep your butey from ye fire.” “Codlinges hot, hot codlinges.” “Buy a steele or a tinder-box.” “Quicke paravinkells, quicke, quicke.” “Worke for a cooper, worke for a cooper.” “Bandestrings, or hankercher buttons.” “A tanker bearer.” “Macarell new; maca—rell.” “Buy a hone, or a whetstone, or a marking ston.” “White unions, whitt St. Thomas unions.” “Mat for a bed, buy a doore mat.” “Radishes or lettis, tow bunches a peny.” “Have you any worke for a tinker?” “Buy my harti-chokes, mistris.” “Maribones, maides, maribones.” “I ha' ripe coucumber, ripe coucumber.” “Chimney sweepe.” “New flounders, new.” “Some broken breade and meate for ye poore prisoners; for the Lord's sake pittie the poore.” “Buy my dish of great smelts.” “Have you any chairs to mend?” “Old showes or bootes.” “Will you buy some broome.” “Mussels, lilly white mussels.” “Small cole a penny a peake.” “What kitchen-stuffe have you, maides?” “A fresh cheary and cream.” “Have you any wood to cleave?” “Potatoes—ripe potatoes!” “Knives to grind.” “Old chairs to mend.” “Pears to bake.” “Milk a penny a quart.” “Grey peas and bacon.” “Fresh herrings.” “Shrews-

bury puddings." "The waterman." "The blacking man." "The pedlar." "Cherry ripe." "Buy a mousetrap."

Many of the street salesmen of the old times were well-known characters. Two of these, Tiddy Doll, the musical pieman, and Doll, the pippin-seller, lost their lives on the Thames at the great Frost Fair of 1739, and the pippin-woman's death is thus noticed by Mr. Gay, in the eleventh book of his "Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London":—

Ah, Doll! all mortals must resign their breath,
And Industry itself submit to death!
The cracking crystal yields—she sinks—she dies—
Her head chopt off from her lost shoulders flies.
"Pippins," she cry'd, but death her voice confounds,
And "Pip, Pip, Pip," along the ice resounds.

The Holborn flying pieman's cry of "Hot, Hot, Hot," was punctually echoed in later years by a needy Liquorpond-street flying barber, with his cry of "Hot Water." His stand was a Fleet-Market pudding-stool, upon which he actually shaved many hundreds of persons.

Another celebrated gingerbread-nut seller of the end of the last century was a man who officiated as Merry Andrew to one of the quack doctors at Bartholomew Fair. He surpassed all his brethren in wit and gesture. At other times he sold gingerbread about Covent Garden, and to keep up his rank at fairs, where he earned a guinea a day, besides presents, he made a point of never laughing at or even noticing a joke when plying his trade, though he was polite to all customers.

As early as 1810 it was the custom during a severe frost for parties of fishermen to parade London streets, carrying oars or boat-hooks, from which nets and fish were suspended. Their dolorous cry was, "Pray remember the fishermen—the poor frozen-out fishermen," and they sometimes dragged about a sailing-boat upon wheels. The grimy frozen-out gardeners (who never handled a spade in their lives) are often now to be seen in frost time, though they do not, as formerly, carry bunches of greens hoisted upon pitchforks.

"I once," says old "Rainy-day" Smith, "met a party of Battersea women of this tribe, who certainly are a distinct set of beings. They were warmly differing from each other as to the street they were in, some contending that they had not been there before, when they were all at once convinced by one of the bearded hags merely pointing her finger to the ginshap at the corner."

Another well-known London street cry of about 1808 was, "Hard metal spoons to sell or change!" The utterer of this cry was a man named Conway, who had eleven London districts which he perambulated, and who used to boast that he had never had a day's illness in his life, and never slept out of his bed. "He walks," says a contemporary, "on an average twenty-five miles a day, and this he has done for nearly forty-four years." His shoes were made from old boots, and a pair would last him about six weeks. In his walks he frequently found small pieces of money, but never more than a one pound note. He recollected a windmill standing near Moorfields, and remembered Old Vinegar, a surly old fellow, so called from his brutal habits. This man provided sticks for the cudgel-players, whose sports commenced on Easter Monday, and were much enjoyed by the Bridewell School boys.

Vinegar was the maker of the rings for the boxers in Moorfields; and would cry out, after he had arranged the spectators, by beating their shins, "Mind your pockets all round." The name of Vinegar has frequently been given to crabbed ring-makers and boxers. Ward, in his London Spy, thus introduces a Vinegar champion:—

Bred up i' th' fields of Lincoln's Inn,
Where Vinegar reigns master;
The forward youth doth thence begin
A broken head to lose or win,
For shouts, or for a plaster.

A very scarce song, in the British Museum, on the Cries of London, to the tune of the Merry Christchurch Bells, gives us a curious list of the London street cries about 1793. How strangely they differ from those of the present day! Here are a few of the most quaint:—

Come buy my gudgeons fine and new,
Old clothes to change for earthenware;
Come, taste and try, before you buy,
Here's dainty Poplin pears.
Diddle, diddle, diddle dumplings so!
Any old clothes, suits or coats;
Come buy my singing birds,
Oranges or lemons, Newcastle salmon,
Come buy my ropes of onions, ho!
Come buy my sand, fine silver sand,
Two bunches a penny turnips, ho!
I'll change your pins for coney skins,
Maids do you want any milk below?
Maids have ye any kitchen stuff?
Will you buy my fine artichokes?
Come buy my brooms.
Will you buy my white heart cabbages, ho!
Come buy my nuts, my fine small nuts,
Two cans a penny, crack and try;
Here's cherries round and very sound,
Here's fine herrings eight a great,
Hot codlins, pies, and tarts,
New mackerel I have to sell,
Come buy my Well fleet oysters, ho!

Come buy my whittings fine and new.
 Maids have ye any hair to sell,
 Either flaxen, black, or brown?
 Work for a cooper,
 I'll hoop your tubs and pails.
 Maids have you any chairs to sell?
 Here's hot spice gingerbread of the best,
 Come, taste and try before you buy;
 Here's elder buds to purge your blood,
 Here's hot rice milk and barley broth;
 Plum pudding a groat-a pound.
 Here's fine rosemary, sage, and thyme.
 Come buy my ground ivy;
 Here's featherfew, jilliflowers, and rue,
 Come buy my knotted marjorem, ho!
 Come buy my mint, my fine green mint,
 Here's fine lavender for your clothes.

An allusion to Admiral Warren, whose great victory over the French took place in 1796, pretty well establishes the date of this song, the details of which are worthy of some comment. The "diddle, diddle, dampkins, ho!" is evidently an imitation of Tiddy Doll's facetiousness. Poplin pears are no longer known; and the sale of mint, featherfew, and rue shows that simples were still much used for medicine by the poor. Lavender is still often sold in the street; and "taste and try before you buy" is still a cry of ginger-bread-nut sellers at country fairs.

Some details of prices can be gathered from other verses of this singular song, such as, "Come, buy my shrimps, fine new shrimps, two pots a penny.—Yorkshire muffins.—Barrel figs, threepence a pound.—New laid eggs, ten for a groat.—Twopence a hundred, cockles, ho!—Butter, sixpence a pound."

Alas, for the glories of progress! For the price of everything has nobly kept step with the march forward of civilisation!

"Maids, do you want any small coal?" reminds us of the simple days of itinerant coal merchants, like the celebrated musical small-coal man, who used, in the last century, to carry coal about in the morning, and in the evening to tune his violoncello and mix with our first musicians. "New rice, twopence a pound," seems to have been a street cry, or a cry at the grocers' doors in 1798. We had, also, the long-since obsolete one of, "Buy my pike, my fine live pike." The herbs sold in the street were far more numerous than now; and we find among those mentioned many for which there are now, we should think, few customers, indeed. Among these we may particularise pennyroyal, marygold, scurvy grass, wormwood, mugwort, house leek, wood sorrel, bear's foot, balm, hyssop, and cinquefoil.

And all this was in the day when there were women barbers in St. Giles's, old clothes-men who collected old wigs, and flying barbers who ran about to customers with pots of hot water and metal basins; when London streets were narrow, pent houses and gable ends were common, when highwaymen were still common, and thieves were strung up by the dozen on Monday mornings at Newgate: and London life, altogether, was simpler, rougher, quicker, and more characteristic. The street beggars and street vendors who uttered the cries we have enumerated at the beginning of the century were of a different race from those of the present day. Where have we now any one to compare with the *terzo* on a go-cart, whom Charles Lamb sketches so admirably?

The man with "young lambs to sell," also mentioned by Lamb, has passed away and given place to dirty urchins who sell fuses. Ann Seggs, the malicious beggar, who dressed with care, and represented herself as the sister of Mrs. Siddons, is no more. "Old Rusty," the dealer in old iron, immortalised in old books of London characters, has left us. The Welsh dwarf, three feet high, who performed feats of strength, has vanished. Mr. Creuse, who never begged of any one, yet never refused a penny, and who, eventually, left a considerable sum behind him, and had two mourning coaches at his Drury-lane funeral, has long ceased his perambulations. All is growing flat, stale, and unprofitable. Even Joseph Church, the bow-legged ballad singer, is forgotten; and, when Church is forgotten, how can meaner men expect to be remembered? There is no street humour or original invention left, no individual character, no oddity.

Yet we take comfort, for, as we write, a shrill, fantastic voice cries at our ears, the following quaint appeal, "Any old coats or umbrellas to sell to-day, ladies? Never mind how old they are, ladies; look 'em up, look 'em up!"

STEEL RAIL MAKING.

LIKE railway servants, the rails themselves are now compelled to do a great deal of work. Old-fashioned wrought iron rails did well enough in their day, but the enormous weight they have recently been called upon to carry has proved too much for them, and the substitution of the material known as Bessemer steel offers

so many advantages that its adoption is becoming daily more general. When the importance of the destinies committed hourly to these slender metallic bars is taken into consideration, it at once becomes apparent that their durability, rigidity, and toughness are matters which concern not only the interests of railway companies, but the safety and well-being of the whole body politic. In addition to toughness and almost everlasting resistance to friction, the new steel possesses the great merit of cheapness. Lasting at least ten times as long as ordinary wrought iron, steel made by the Bessemer method from pig iron requires but one ton and five hundred-weight of fuel, while common wrought iron requires two tons, and Sheffield cast steel ten tons eight hundred-weight. Costing but little more than the best iron rails to begin with, the new-fashioned rails are practically indestructible. Of the popularity of Bessemer steel some idea may be formed from the fact that last spring Europe contained one hundred and sixty-five "converters," producing annually seven hundred thousand tons of steel, and that since then an enormous number of "converters" have been set to work, while the demand for this peculiar kind of iron manufacture—even at the present moment—far outruns the supply.

Regard being had to the enormous requirements of the world for railway material, and the probable usurpation of the entire railway work of the world by one peculiar metal, it may perhaps be worth while to trace the rise and progress of a steel rail until it forms part of a railway track enduring without flinching the weight of thousands of the children of men speeding on through sunshine and darkness, across the icy steppes of Russia and the seething delta of the Ganges, over mighty rivers and towering Cordilleras, across wide estuaries and through the heart of mighty mountains, on their daily errands of business or pleasure, joy or sorrow, weal and woe.

Cradled in the lap of old mother earth the promising infant appears in the shape of that peculiar species of iron ore known to the learned as hæmatite. This variety of ore is remarkable for its richness, and is found in great abundance in Northamptonshire—whose "kidney" ore is highly celebrated—in Cornwall, in Antrim, in Somersetshire, North Lancashire, West Cumberland, Spain, and Southern Virginia. At a certain stage of its existence

it requires to be dosed with spiegeleisen—a peculiar metal made from spicular hæmatite, and containing a large proportion of manganese; but for the present it will be as well to confine our observations to the reduction of iron ore to the condition known by the homely name of pig iron.

In a period of arbitrary and fanciful classification, it was customary to speak of the world as having passed successively through the stone, and bronze, and having lastly attained the iron age. It was assumed—and with sufficient plausibility—that because objects of bronze, and no objects of iron had been found in ancient tombs and monuments, that therefore the manufacture of bronze preceded that of iron. It was urged, that because virgin copper was frequently found, and pure metallic iron hardly at all, that therefore the industry of early ages was devoted to the production of copper, while iron was entirely neglected. Recent researches have completely dissipated these fanciful theories. The wonder so often expressed that the Egyptians should have graven their wondrous hieroglyphics without the aid of iron tools, has completely disappeared. A fiction of the imagination that the ancients possessed some lost art of hardening bronze, has faded away before the discovery of the iron-works of the Pharaohs, and the very simple conclusion that ancient iron tools have long since disappeared through the agency of oxidation or rust, a power to which iron is peculiarly subject. Assyrian relics demonstrate that iron not only was known at Nineveh, but that it was probably common and cheap, as compared with bronze. In the British Museum is a small casting, in the shape of the foreleg of a bull. The core is of iron, and the bronze was evidently cast around it, either to save expenditure of bronze, or to give greater strength to the ring of a tripod.

Keenly alive to the advantage of strength, combined with lightness and graceful outline, the Assyrians frequently bound copper wire over the iron skeletons of their tripods, and in these cases the iron has remained undestroyed—even to this day. In the later days of Greece and Rome, the manufacture of iron and steel was well understood, and it is worthy of remark that the process of steel making, used by the Romans, prevailed in Germany as late as the sixteenth century. In the far East, the art of iron making has been understood for thousands of years. China has

known the art of casting iron for countless ages; while in Japan, and especially in India, evidence—in the shape of gigantic wrought iron columns and beams—exists to prove that at remote periods the natives of those countries produced huge masses of malleable iron, hardly exceeded by the achievements of modern forge machinery.

From causes which it would be foreign to our purpose to discuss, the production of iron, in India, has dwindled to insignificant limits. No large works exist, and iron making is only pursued by people of very low caste, who wander about the country. Their apparatus is of the most primitive kind. In small clay furnaces, with charcoal for fuel, and a blast caused by foot or hand bellows, smelting goes on for eight or ten hours, at the end of which time from ten to twenty pounds of iron are found at the bottom of the furnace, and after being purified, by reheating and hammering, the outcome of the operation is a lump of iron of excellent quality.

Without doubt this method represents the primeval production of iron. In Europe systems but little improved from this prevailed for many centuries—charcoal being the only fuel employed. The result was malleable iron—the great impetus to iron production given by the use of the blast furnace being comparatively modern, while the making of cast iron in the West arose not more than four hundred years ago.

From the hand furnace of the Hindoo, through the low furnaces of the middle ages, the idea of the modern blast furnace was, by degrees, arrived at. Even now many different notions prevail as to the proper height for a blast furnace—those of Cleveland towering majestically over their competitors.

The huge edifice, constructed of masonry and fire-brick, and sometimes attaining the height of seventy-five feet—known as the modern blast furnace—may be not inaptly compared, especially as regards its internal shape, to a huge pipe bowl, with this important difference in its application, that, whereas the oxygen necessary to ensure combustion is supplied by the atmospheric air at the top of the pipe bowl, and the smoke is forced downwards by the pressure of the air into the vacuum created by the inspiration of the smoker, the necessary air is forced into the bottom of the blast furnace by a powerful blowing engine through tubes technically called "tuyeres."

It may be observed that the influence of what is loosely called "draught" on a fire is simply that of a rapidly renewed supply of oxygen, and it is also remarkable that only a small proportion of the oxygen contained in the air is available for the purposes of combustion. Generally containing oxygen to the extent of twenty-one per hundred volumes, air demands at least seventeen volumes for itself, as in air reduced to seventeen per cent. of oxygen a candle will not burn. The surplus four per cent. is, therefore, all that avails for the purpose of feeding a flame; and in the course of performing that operation, only two or at most three per cent. are really burnt. It follows, therefore, that to supply a tall furnace with sufficient atmospheric fuel, an enormous quantity of air is required. The smith's bellows, the hand or foot bellows of the Hindoo, and the blowing engine therefore represent only various applications of one simple natural truth.

The bowl of our pipe then is to be "blown" into instead of "drawn," and having established this fact, our next duty is to charge it. Iron ore—having in most cases been previously "roasted" or calcined, to expel water, and, as far as possible sulphur—is thrown into the top of the huge pipe alternately, or sandwich-wise, with fuel. This may consist of wood or peat charcoal, coke, or coal. An important addition to the "charge" is a certain quantity of limestone as "flux," but the proportions of the charge vary immensely according to the nature of the raw, calcined, or mixed ores employed. At the Bowling works five-and-a-half tons of raw and calcined ore, nearly a ton of limestone and two-and-a-quarter tons of coke are required to produce one ton of pig iron; but it is impossible to lay down any iron rule in these matters.

The ores and "flux" having been properly mixed, fuel is first "tipped" into the huge pipe bowl, then a layer of ore, then another layer of fuel, till the bowl is nearly full, when the pipe is lighted, and the furnace is "blown in," a great event in an iron district. While in work, the huge bowl or shaft of the blast furnace is kept nearly filled with solid materials. These are from time to time "tipped" into the upper end, and gradually sink down as the work of smelting progresses. Meanwhile, a continuous supply of air is forced into the lower end, through the "tuyeres" under heavy pressure, and so proportioned in quantity as to maintain a

rapid rate of combustion. From time to time the furnace is "tapped" and the molten iron run off into moulds, when it becomes the "pig iron" of commerce. Like a steadily working volcano, the blast furnace never halts in its labours. Burnt away and "tapped" below, and constantly replenished from above, the huge machine consumes charge after charge; and except in cases where the gases are utilised, illumines the night with its ruddy glare.

In many huge iron and steel works, the molten iron is not allowed to cool, but is at once conducted to the "converters" to be made into steel. The two processes, however, are more frequently carried on in distinct establishments. One of these has recently been founded on the banks of the Thames, and as its arrangements comprise all recent improvements, it may fairly serve as a type of the present state of the manufacture of Bessemer steel rails.

On the shore, opposite to the Isle of Dogs, in the dreary and unpicturesque district known as "the marsh," East Greenwich, among docks, damp, and ditches, but not dulness, the Bessemer Steel and Ordnance Works have their being. A somewhat steep climb over water-washed stones, brings the visitor to the wharf, where ships, laden with cooke or Cumberland hematite pig—or iron made from the choice ores of Cumberland—discharge their cargoes. From the ship's side a tramway runs to an hydraulic lift, fitted with a turntable, whereon the trucks are lifted to a sufficient height to be tilted into the "cupolas" wherein the first process of converting a pig of raw iron into a finished rail takes place. The cupola is simply a small species of blast furnace, the metal and fuel being disposed in layers on each other, and a "blast" applied in the usual way. Melting goes on rapidly, and while the raw iron is melting in one cupola, a small charge of spiegeleisen, or iron containing a large per centage of manganese, is melting in a baby cupola near at hand. Suspended by massive machinery, over a huge pit, are the "converters"—vast iron decanters, lined with "ganister," a stone dug from beneath the Yorkshire moors. These receptacles are now ready for the molten iron, and bend their huge mouths greedily towards the narrow channel destined to convey the molten "pig." The cupola is tapped, and the burning, yet distinctly rippling stream flows encircled by a shower of sparks, into the converter, where again it is subjected

to a powerful blast. The reason of this proceeding is that iron is so unequally charged with carbon, that it is found preferable to get rid of what there is, and then add as much as is wanted, instead of attempting to make up the variable balance. Air then is forced through the molten mass, wherein the oxygen of the air combines with the carbon of the iron, and passes off in flames of surpassing brilliancy as carbonic acid gas. This beautiful part of the process lasts about twenty minutes, during which the chief of the converting department watches the flame pouring out of the mouth of the converter, through a spectroscope, carefully noting the increase and diminution of the dark bands that reveal carbonic acid gas. When these disappear, the iron is thoroughly decarbonised, and is fit to receive the charge of about ten or twelve per cent. of spiegeleisen. Once more the huge converter, containing four tons of metal, bows its flaming head, and receives through a tiny conduit the liquid complement of spiegeleisen. Amalgamation is rapid and complete. The moulds are ready. Stooping once more, the docile "converter" pours the liquid steel into a vast ladle, which, travelling round the pit, bestows on each mould its proper quantum. Without being allowed to cool, the moulds are hoisted out of the cavity, and compelled—off by mighty hammers wielded by muscular arms—to disgorge their already solidified but still glowing contents. Not a moment is lost. Carbon, at the present price of fuel, is too precious to be wasted. Whirled away on a truck, the ingot is seized and projected into a gas furnace. Reheated to a glow the ingot is torn from its fiery den, and wheeled rapidly towards an instrument of torture, called a cogging mill. A stalwart man is lying in wait. Pouncing upon the ingot, he seizes it with a pair of tongs, and turns the smaller end towards the jaws of the mill. Slowly the monster turns the resistless wheels, as if licking his lips at the prospect of his prey. The smaller end is presented to his jaws, and the huge ingot is gradually sucked in. On the other side busy workmen seize upon the steely mass, now squeezed out of all recognition, and the heavy "reversing" jaws again and again close upon it, till it emerges from the torment a lengthy, oblong mass, called a "bloom."

During this preliminary torture, the ingot has not only been pressed out of its

own likeness, but has lost a considerable quantity of heat. The worried pig, transformed into a "bloom" is, therefore, at once reconducted to the ingenious "regenerating gas furnace"—in itself a marvel of construction—wherein it is allowed a short period of fiery repose. Drazed forth once more, the bloom is wheeled to the railing mill, a monster possessing many mouths of decreasing dimensions. Passed through the largest set of jaws, the bloom acquires the rough semblance of a rail, and is then run through the others, gaining by each successive process in length what it loses in bulk, till, at last, it emerges from the trial a perfect rail.

Falling into the hands of another band of tormentors, the rail, still incandescent, is now sawed to the proper length, allowed to cool, exactly gauged, punched into holes, to admit of its being fastened to the "fish-plates," and straightened.

The rail is now complete, and is deposited in a barge, ultimately to be laid down in a, perhaps, distant country, where, let us hope, it will truly and faithfully bear the burdens imposed upon it.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LXI. "GOOD BYE!"

"POOR Rachel came and sat with me last night. She couldn't sleep, she said, and, as you know, I don't sleep very well. So we had a long chat together. She'd been wanting for some time, it seems, to talk to me about her father's affairs. I knew he did not leave them in a very flourishing condition, but I wasn't quite prepared, I own, to hear all she had to tell me. Naturally it distressed her very much, poor child. My uncle died a ruined man. It's a chance if there's anything left for Rachel, though Vickery, I believe, like a good old fellow, as he is, means to try and save something for her out of the wreck. But that isn't all. My will, which we thought to be rather a joke at the time, proves even now to have had a suspicion of absurdity about it. I fancied I'd really something to leave, you know. It seems I hadn't. My little property has gone. It stood in my uncle's name as surviving trustee, and—well, he was quite welcome to it. I wish it had been of more help to him than it seems to have been. But it pained Rachel very much to tell me this, as you may suppose. She thought I had

been unfairly used; and yet how could she reproach her father, whom she loved so dearly? She couldn't in words, you know; and yet to accuse him even in thought, and perhaps she couldn't altogether avoid doing that, troubled her sorely. It seemed a wrong done to his memory. There was something sacrilegious about it. One can't blame the dead, they're so helpless: they can't answer or explain—and she loved him so! Then she talked of working hard, and at some distant date, far distant of course, paying me back—making good, she called it—the money that's gone. Well, I wouldn't listen to that; and I said and did all I could to comfort her. I told her of the will I'd made—thanks to you, old fellow—leaving her all I possessed, or thought I possessed. I explained to her, or tried to, that the money was therefore really her own, all along—to do what she liked with, to hand to my uncle, if she had so pleased. And that there was nobody to be blamed in the matter; that my intentions had been anticipated, that was all. I couldn't quite get her to see it as I wanted her to; but I think she was relieved in some measure. I dwelt expressly upon her poor father's unvarying kindness to me, and how grateful I felt for it. And I assured her again and again that the money was quite at his service, and that at the merest hint that he had needed it, I would cheerfully have made it all over to him. I added that it wasn't likely I should feel the want of it now. But that didn't cheer her much. She's very tender-hearted—we've always been like brother and sister together—and she regards me most affectionately. I'm sure I've done little enough to deserve it. The thought of my death troubled her extremely."

"It's a pity, too," he added, after a pause. "I had looked forward to that money being a little provision for her. It's hard to go and leave her so poorly off as she must be. I do wish now that I'd settled down and been more industrious, and so had a little money of my own earning, to leave behind me. But it's vain wishing that. Poor Rachel! What's to become of her? I don't like to think. It seemed so cruel to leave her quite penniless and friendless. Of course old Vickery will stand by her to the last, but he's getting on in years is Vickery. What's to happen—what's to become of her when he's gone?"

I begged him to be at ease on that head. While I lived, I assured him, Rachel should lack for nothing. So far as I might, I would constitute myself her guardian and protector. I would devote myself to promoting her welfare. Then, lest I had betrayed myself by speaking too warmly, I promised also my mother's interest on her behalf. If need should arise, I said, the Down Farm should always be her home in the future.

"How very good of you, Duke—and your mother! I'm sure a kinder soul never breathed. Do you know—this is but idle talk, yet I'll mention it, for it's on the tip of my tongue—I sometimes thought that you might take a fancy to Rachel. She's not beautiful, and she's led such a trying life, poor thing, that most likely, she wouldn't be considered very attractive by people generally. Her manner's so staid and subdued, and she hasn't the winning, lively airs and ways that girls of her age usually have. Yet she's so good and pure-minded, and affectionate. A man couldn't choose for a wife one nobler, or better, really. But I know it's useless my talking like this. You esteem and respect Rachel, of course, no one that knows her could do otherwise, but your heart, as you told me long since, is possessed by another. It can't be helped; and yet it seems a pity too."

I longed to tell him of his error, to avow to him the love I cherished for Rachel. How I despised myself for my old unlucky passion! Yet I had been proud of it once, and had revealed it very fully to him with boyish effusiveness. He had even envied me in regard to its romantic nature. It seemed a poor and paltry thing enough now; yet he still held fast to this old Rosetta episode in my story, and could not be convinced that it was ended for ever; that it had been but a fatuous, feverish business while it lasted; and that now I was quit of it altogether.

But I could not but be silent, however. If he were to know of my love, I felt that he would speak of it to Rachel, would, perhaps, intercede with her on my behalf, urging my suit upon her. And she, out of her love for him, able to deny him nothing, might be tempted to yield me her hand. I could not accept it on such terms. It was the free gift of her heart I sought. Her love, won by mine; not given me for another's sake. This might be hopeless; but it was this I sighed for.

So I held my peace; the while I felt

I was denying him what he would have counted real comfort. I charged selfishly with cruelty to him. I was acting selfishly, with a duplicity and want of consideration for him opposed to the friendship I professed. And at such a time of all others! But I satisfied myself that it was best so; that, indeed, it must be so. I could not tell him that I loved Rachel as deeply and fervently as he could wish.

"It can't be helped," he repeated. "And, perhaps, one does wrong to be occupied with so many plans, and to be looking so far forward. Why need I busy myself about a future in which there can be no share for me? Yet, poor Rachel! She has had so little happiness. I should like to think that she would be well-cared for by-and-by, with time for peace and rest, and with some good, honest man for her husband, who'd know her real worth, and would prize her, and do all he might to make her happy. That can't be you, Duke, old friend, it seems. I was wrong to think it could. One can't dispose of other people's hearts, or indulge in cut-and-dried schemes for their future."

It never once occurred to him, apparently, that Rachel did not love me: possibly could not be brought to love me. Nor did he, I think, suspect that her heart was wholly in his own keeping. Once it had seemed to me that he entertained suspicion of this. But it was clear that he did not now.

"For another reason," he said, presently, "I regret the loss of my small property. I wanted to make a few little presents to the folks here who've been so good to me. Kem and Reube, and the rest of them. There's no one on the farm that hasn't shown kindness to me in some way or other. God bless them for it! I wish I could repay them in however trifling a degree. Somehow, it's only by giving them money that one's able to show what one really feels in such case. And the light purse I brought down here with me is very light indeed now. There's but a very few shillings left in it. Still, I should not like them to think I'd forgotten them or was close-fisted with my money. I've never been that, as you know, Duke, though I'm well assured that they didn't do what they did, poor souls, for money, or in any thought of getting it, but out of simple kindness and goodness of heart. God bless them for it! I say again. And, Duke, dear old fellow, you must let me be your debtor once more. Give them each

a little present, will you? What you think fit, and say it comes from me, and that I hadn't forgotten them. The lie won't be reckoned against you; it will be charged to me. But we should both, in any case, be forgiven for it. And say something kind to them all in my name. I'd something more to tell you; but I grow too weak. I must rest a while, I think. My voice is so faint, too; I'm sure you can hardly make out what I say. There's a drink of some sort on the mantelpiece, isn't there? Thank you; That's better. And don't take away your hand, please, Duke, even if I doze for a little. I should like to be sure that you are still beside me when I wake up again. My time's so short now. I must make the most of it—though it's a shame, I feel, to tie you to my bedside like this. But you won't mind. I know there's no end to your kindness to me."

He had nothing of an invalid's querulousness, though now and then he was somewhat fanciful. He was especially anxious that the light should fall fully upon those about him, so that he might see their faces well. Yet he had to be sheltered from any glare, for his eyes had grown weak, and were soon wearied. And a nervous sensitiveness oppressed him. Any sudden sound jarred painfully upon his ear, and agitated him extremely. His voice was now very faint and hollow; his breathing was difficult; and, in speaking, he had often to stop and rest for a few moments. In this way, sometimes, his ideas became disconnected, and he was unable to express all he had designed to say. Late at night his mind wandered a good deal, and he spoke unintelligibly. He was usually composed again in the morning, however.

In this state he lingered some days.

"I grow more and more sad, Duke, do you know, that I've so little to leave behind me, to give away, I mean. I shouldn't like to be forgotten all at once—yet I can leave nothing for those who are dear to me, to remember me by. And they'll need help to remember me. My life has been so brief, and so useless. But—I've spoken to Rachel about it—you must have my sketch-books, Duke, and that easel of mine—the mahogany one I mean—I left in my chambers—my poor dear old chambers! I didn't think when I shut the door on them, to come down here, that I was never to see them again! My paint box, too, Duke, that must be yours. It's only rubbish I'm giving you,

or little better; yet I know you'll care to have it, for my sake. There's a desk standing on the small round table, beside the fire-place—I should like old Vickery to have that. I often plagued him, and laughed at him, but he's a good old fellow really—and has been kind to Rachel. Then, for that queer friend of yours, who came one night and amused us so much—Mole—wasn't his name? I wish you'd see that he has my Shakespeare. It's odd how I cling to being remembered even by people I've scarcely known, and who've forgotten me already, perhaps. But so it is. Doctor Turton must have my watch and chain—you'll mind that. Dear me, I've little else left, I fear. Your uncle, Mr. Orme, wouldn't wear a ring, perhaps—no—but he'll accept kindly my little gold pencil-case, I dare say—and the ring must be for your mother, Duke. God bless her! I know she'll prize it on my account. I wish with all my heart it was a priceless diamond, and not the trumpery thing it really is. And that's all, I think. Or there may be a trifle or two more. I should like something to be found for any friend who'll care to have a souvenir of me. I owe a few pounds, I think. But the furniture in my chambers will fetch enough to pay my debts with. They can be but few, and of small amount. And Rachel—have I nothing left for her? But she'll not forget me, there's no fear of that."

This was the night before he died. The end came almost suddenly at last.

Rachel had been reading to him. A stream of wintry sunshine fell upon his bed, but the curtains were so arranged as to shade his face. He was lying very still, his hand lightly holding mine as I sat beside him. He was in no pain apparently; but his weakness was extreme.

He could scarcely heed, I think, what Rachel read; but her soft, musical tones seemed to soothe him.

I noted that his gaze was slowly turned now upon Rachel, now upon me. He had been silent for some time. All at once, as he watched us by turns, he gave a little start, and smiled brightly. I fancied, but I could not be sure, that he had for himself discovered my heart's secret, and learnt my love for Rachel.

He uttered a faint cry. Rachel closed her book—it was the New Testament—and hurried towards him.

"Good-bye," he murmured, very softly and tenderly. A little pressure of my hand, and then his fingers relaxed their

grasp. His eyes were closed, as though in sleep; there was still a smile upon his parted lips. All was over.

We were speechless; we could do nothing. We stood linked together by the poor dead boy, not yet able to credit that he had really gone from us. It seemed more reasonable to believe that life would yet stir within him, and gleam again from his eyes; that he would speak to us, if but once more, if it was but a word.

Softly my mother entered the room. She knelt down and tenderly rested her hand upon his heart. She rose with tearful eyes, stooped again to kiss him, and then lightly covered his face.

Presently she strewed flowers upon the bed and drew us from the room.

My poor boy-friend!

CHAPTER LXII. A DISCLOSURE.

THE shadow of death had fallen upon the old farm-house. Such deep sadness it had not known before, in all my memory of it. We moved about its darkened rooms as silently as we might, subduing our voices, when there was imperative need to speak, as though we deemed that poor Tony could hear us yet, and that his rest—his everlasting rest!—could be disturbed by stir or discourse of ours. We were numbed and stilled by our great sorrow. There was little attempt on the part of any one to offer consolation to the rest. It would have seemed an assumption of superior fortitude. But we drew together, supporting our grief by sharing it, deriving comfort from the sense of common sympathy and affection. My mother was perhaps the bravest of us. It was not her first experience of affliction. And I noted that more and more she took my poor suffering Rachel to her heart, as though she had been some wounded or half-frozen bird, that could only be cherished back to life by warm tenderness and unremitting solicitude. My uncle was grave and very silent. In a sort of shamefaced way he stole out, now and then, to see to the welfare of his farm. For the demands of the life about us could not be denied or overlooked; although just then in the immediate presence of our great trouble it seemed hard that the world should be moving on so regardlessly, busied as ever, time flying, clocks striking, the birds singing, the sun shining, just as though nothing had happened, and no cruel weight of woe had fallen with crushing violence upon our hearts. This was of course

in the first freshness of our grief. Time would prove, as ever, the true and sure nepenthe; the passing days, dark and cruel as they seemed, would yet leave with us resignation and relief, force to endure, and, at last, almost forgetfulness of our sorrow. Our burthen would grow perceptibly lighter; or would seem to do so, as increase of strength and courage came to us, and we learnt how strenuously nature fights against affliction, and interdicts despair.

My mother found among her treasure two little lockets of old-fashioned device; she gave one to me, to Rachel the other. Each enclosed a light lock of the dead boy's hair.

He was buried in the sunniest corner of Purrington churchyard, away from the shadow of the cold grey tower, and the gloomy ghostly old yew tree, with the sweet, fresh, down breezes blowing freely upon his grave. The funeral was of a simple, almost of a homely sort; but it was not the less touching on that score. The coffin was borne to the church, along the rude road across the down, upon the shoulders of our farm servants, in accordance with their earnest request. They carried a light burthen enough, but they relieved each other at intervals on the way, so that all might join in this tribute of regard for the departed. Rachel, her hand clasped in my mother's, followed the funeral. She was almost overwhelmed with grief, blanched, and very tremulous, but she had nerved herself for the effort, and she found courage to accomplish it. Of the little crowd assembled round the grave, there were none, even to the poorest, that had not contrived somehow to exhibit a scrap of crape or black ribbon in evidence of sympathy and regret. Nor were tears and sobs lacking. When the service concluded, Rachel stood at the brink of the grave and let some few wintry flowers fall upon the coffin-lid—my mother had thoughtfully provided them with that object—all, I noted, drew back a pace or two, as though recognising her superior right to mourn, in that she alone was kindred to the dead. A moment, and then, as her figure seemed to sway and a faint cry broke from her, my mother advanced and gently drew her away. One by one we took our last look at the open grave, and then sadly and slowly wended our way homewards again.

I had written to Sir George, informing him of the loss I had sustained in the death of my friend, and requesting permission to

remain some days longer in the country. I received no reply to my letter.

I had no desire to indulge morbidly in sorrow. I was conscious that occupation would yield comfort; that hard work and the resumption of my ordinary method of life would be best for me. Still my distress was very great; the sense of my bereavement was new and most keen. I had not been disciplined in suffering of this kind. Grief seemed to me, at this time, the rightful tenant of my heart, not to be ousted without grave injustice and ingratitude to Tony's claims upon my love and my remembrance. Any effort to turn my thoughts from him seemed a violence done to our friendship—an outrage of his memory. He was surely entitled to my sorrow now, seeing how completely he had been possessed of my affection in the past. The while I recognised a certain unwisdom in my melancholy, I yet clung to it. The thought of returning to London became odious to me. I had lost heart and appetite for work.

So I lingered some weeks in the country, then gleaming under the fond, yet somewhat desponding smiles of a St. Martin's summer. The garden was a litter of leaves. The woods and coverts about Overbury Hall, as the declining sun-rays touched them, awoke from sombre browns and greys into rich tints of golden bronze, bright orange, and rich purple. The heavy dews of night and morning lent lustre to the meadows. The fields were bare, but their ribbed surfaces wore not as yet winter's look of bleakness and desolation, but were flushed with warm colour and pleasant diversities of light and shade. Something in the pensive tender aspect of the landscape and of the season harmonised with my mood, soothing and relieving me.

Rachel had been anxious to quit the farm-house and journey back to London, her home, as she called it, poor child! She feared lest she should seem to tax our hospitality unduly; her sense of gratitude was so earnest and intense that she almost recoiled from receiving further kindness at our hands. She felt, perhaps, that the debt she had incurred was more than she could repay; there was a guileless kind of pride contained in her deep and touching humility. Something, too, she may have been moved by a desire to depart, so that she might hide her wounds even from our reverent eyes. She longed for the solitude to be secured in a crowded city. Suffering had made her so nervously

sensitive that it pained her to think that she was thought of. But my mother would not hear of her quitting us, and interposed kindly but firmly to prevent it. Indeed it was clear that she had not strength for the journey. She was very weak and ailing, almost worn out with sorrow and suffering.

Let me state honestly that it was not Rachel's presence in the farm-house that kept me there. I loved her with tender devotion; but it was not a time to think of love—still less to speak of it. I saw her but rarely. I was never alone with her. For days she was confined to her room. And it was piteous to look upon her white wasted face; to hear her faint broken tones. Her distress was extreme, and it was the more affecting in that she bore it so meekly and uncomplainingly, striving, indeed, so far as she might, to bear up against and overcome it. But her heart seemed to have perished within her; it was dead and buried in her cousin's grave. My only comfort was in noting my mother's exquisite tenderness for the suffering girl. In this way, it seemed to me, my own love for her found indirect expression.

The days passed, I scarcely know how. A simple cross of white marble, bearing a brief inscription, was erected over Tony's grave. I wandered to and fro, pausing at various points associated with his memory. Here—resting his book upon the gate—he had stood to make a drawing of the farm-house. There he had sketched the old barn, with Overbury Park and the church tower in the distance. And so on. He had never completed the drawings. They were slight and unequal—yet full of pleasant promise and suggestiveness. How like his own life! What had that been but a graceful sketch?

My uncle was growing uneasy, I perceived, by his mute contemplation of me, and his embarrassed way of toying with his snuff-box.

"I've been wanting to speak to you for some days past, Duke," he said at length. "But I've deferred it from time to time. I may as well say it now perhaps as at any other time."

He had met me on the steps leading into the garden.

"We're glad that you should be here, Duke, of course; that I need not tell you; though God knows the cause of your coming has been sad enough to us all. The poor boy's death has been a shock to you, such as you'll feel for a long while,

and you'll need time to get over it. I can well understand that. I wouldn't interfere with your sorrow in any way. But is it well to be idle, do you think? I leave it to your own good sense. You're young, and this should be your working time, you know, if you're ever to do any work in the world. And work's a wholesome and a necessary thing, let me tell you. I wouldn't speak to you rudely or harshly, be sure of that, my boy. But wouldn't it be as well for you to pluck up heart and be busy again? Wouldn't that be the best for your own comfort and well-doing, don't you think?"

I felt that he was right, and that I was fairly chargeable with my old offence of "going lopping about with my hands in my pockets," to adopt Reube's framing of the indictment.

"I'll go back to London to-morrow, uncle," I said.

"No, no, I wouldn't have you be in such a hurry, neither. I only want you to think over it a bit." He was moving away. Then he appeared to hesitate. With an air of sudden resolution, he said—

"There's something more I had to say. Come into the house for a minute or two."

I followed him into the little parlour, looking on to the pathway leading to the farm-yard. He carefully closed the door after me.

"Do you know how much your education as a lawyer and your living in London has cost altogether?"

"No. I have not calculated."

He told me the amount. It took me by surprise; it was much more than I had thought possible.

"I fear I have seemed very extravagant."

"It's not that. The money's gone, and it's no use fretting over it. The law's an expensive profession, and what with premium and stamps, the sum is soon made up. I don't charge you with extravagance. It's a pity, of course, that you didn't know your own mind better. You liked the notion of becoming a lawyer well enough when it was first proposed to you. Well, you were but a lad at the time. And you were anxious to get away from home, and see something of the world. It was natural, no doubt, though it pressed hard upon us—upon your mother, I should say. I'll not speak of myself. And you didn't care for farming. Well, you had

your way. But now it seems you don't care for the law. And you've taken up with another calling."

I said that art would be my profession in the future—that I meant to become a painter.

"Yes, I've understood that. But are you sure you're right this time, Duke? Because you're no longer a boy. There should be an end now of these mistakes—'false starts' as they call them in the racing world. They waste time, and strength, and money. I'm not miserly, as you know; and all I have will be yours one day, most likely, after your poor mother's gone. I'm not thinking of sparing my purse. But it's time that you worked for your own living, and were independent of help from me. A man, and you're a man now, owes that duty to himself."

I answered rather proudly that I was already practically independent, that I secured the means of living by my services in the studio of Sir George Nightingale.

"Yes, I was coming to that," he said. His voice had become hoarse, and he was much agitated, the while he seemed striving to appear calm. I noticed that his fingers were nervously twitching at the lappets of his coat. And now, unconsciously, I think, he had buttoned it up almost to his throat, as though the action was somehow bracing to his resolution.

"There are certain things that have long been kept from you, properly, I think. There was no good telling you of them, while you were not of an age to understand them. But the time has come when you should know them. When, indeed, you must know them. For it seems to me you have a choice to make."

"A choice?"

"Yes. A choice that will greatly affect your future life—and our lives here, too."

"I do not understand."

"You have to choose between your mother and Sir George Nightingale."

"Sir George Nightingale! Again I must say I do not understand."

"*Sir George Nightingale is your father!* Now do you understand?"

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AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MANSINGHEAD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXI. THE DRAINING OF THE CUP.

It was well for Mr. Hulet, in those days of trouble, that the details of the approaching sale at the cottage perforce occupied his thoughts. Happy for those whom a supreme sorrow oppresses, when they have no leisure to brood upon it; when want urges them to action; when helpless mouths, which look to them to be filled, cry aloud for bread. For once, Lazarus has then the better of Dives; for it is only the rich who can afford to indulge in the luxury of grief.

Even the removal to Lucullus Mansion, which he had left as a guest, and was now re-entering as a dependent, did not seem seriously to affect him. He was even more cheerful on that occasion than he had been for days. His last act on leaving the cottage had been a singular one; he had cleared his cupboard of all its potions and medicaments, and emptied them into the sea. Evy had ventured a remonstrance upon this proceeding, upon the ground that some of the medicines were very costly.

"That is true, my dear," said he. "But as I shall not be able to afford to lay in any new supplies, I may as well get out of my extravagant habits at once."

Actuated by the same motive, Mr. Hulet would have abandoned at his meals the use of wine, but for the manifest offence which his attempt to do so gave to the Barmbys, who loaded his private table with dainties both of food and drink. It was surprising to Evy that he gave way in this with such cheerful readiness, although she well perceived it was for her own sake that her uncle made it his study to

conform in all things to the wishes of their patrons. As for her own part, it would not have been a difficult one to fill, even if her employer had not made it easy for her, with all the tender delicacy of a woman's friendship. Whatever of work she had to do was accomplished in her own room; and it was there, whenever it was necessary to confer with Mrs. Barmby, that their conferences were held. If Evy's position at the Mansion was, as some of her own sex did not scruple to describe it, that of "a barmaid," she was a very glorified sort of a barmaid indeed. The chief drawback to it indeed was the opportunity it afforded persons to make ill-natured speeches which Evy did not hear, and which, if she had heard, so long as they referred to herself alone, she would have disregarded. Detraction would never have embarrassed her, as did the generous solicitude of her friends; but when after the sale of Mr. Hulet's effects she found their already well-furnished parlour crowded with knick-knacks that had once adorned their little drawing-room, all presents from good Mrs. Barmby, who had gone down to the cottage, note-book and pencil in hand, to "bid for bargains" professedly upon her own account; and when, as a climax, Evy's own pet piano was wheeled in, "with the kind regards of Mrs. General Storcks," appended to the address, her heart was full indeed. Not the least welcome of their gifts was one which arrived with this characteristic note from Mr. De Coucy:—

"MY DEAR MISS EVY,—Lest I should run the risk of seeming to put you and your good uncle under an obligation, from which I know you both shrink as the sea anemone from the finger, let me inform

you that the total cost of this superficially magnificent present was exactly six-and-twenty shillings and sixpence. No larger sum did your respected ancestor, the executioner of his most sacred Majesty, Charles I., fetch from an indiscriminating public, frame and all. Yours ever faithfully,
T. DE COUCY."

This piece of salvage from the wreck of their household gods pleased Evy exceedingly upon her uncle's account, and indeed he received it in her presence with every show of satisfaction; yet, happening to look in upon him unexpectedly a few minutes afterwards, she found him with his head buried in his hand, and sobbing like a child. He did not observe her, and she withdrew with precipitation, but that unhappy spectacle was a revelation to her. The philosophic contentment which he had exhibited, was, it was now only too evident, assumed but for her sake. Her uncle was as wretched as herself; and how should it not be so? how could she have imagined it to be otherwise, since, like herself, he had lost his all? That "all," it was true, had different significations; but if she had lost her lover, had he not exchanged wealth and ease for a position the most sad conceivable—dependence upon the exertions of one whom it should have been his task to shield from the least breath of adversity and trouble? The reflection troubled her, yet strengthened her all the more in her resolve to fulfil her novel duties; a salary had been attached to them, small indeed, yet out of which in time it might be possible to save sufficient to enable them to live elsewhere, alone together, and away from scenes rendered painful by association or the sense of contrast; and in that meagre hope lay what remained to her of comfort.

Of old, when at Lucullus Mansion, it had appeared quite natural to Evy to have what she required for the asking, or even before it; to take no thought for the morrow, to welcome her pleasures, as they came, without surprise. But now she wondered at herself for having been so unconscious of prosperity and so unthankful for it. Her duties, as we have said, were light and by no means degrading or even distasteful. She had true-hearted friends, in whose conduct towards her could be discerned no change, save an increased kindness of manner—a more delicate solicitude to please and not to hurt; yet companionship with them had

lost its ease for them, its charm for her. Her life seemed to be cut off from theirs; and to have nothing in common with it. She had hitherto had no conception of the immense chasm which lies between the Rich and the Poor. She had prepared to herself, if any of her own acquaintances should suffer from loss of fortune, how she would in all relations with herself, at least, compel ~~them~~ to forget it. But she now perceived that that would have been impossible. She examined the matter with some interest, for her own sorrow was far too deep upon another account to permit this change to affect her very poignantly, and noticed with a melancholy surprise that so it was. Her friends had not withdrawn from her, nor was she conscious of having shrunk from them; there was an affectionate esteem on both sides, even stronger than before, and, on one side, a most heartfelt gratitude. But friendship, in the social acceptation of the term, had vanished altogether. With persons not her friends, and yet who perhaps desired to be so, Evy now began to open a new relation; for the first time in her life she learnt what it is to be patronised. Some of the female visitors at Lucullus Mansion having experienced considerable interest in the very lady-like and modest young person who seemed to assist Mrs. Barnby, but whose position in the establishment they could not exactly understand, they were good enough to express it. This was not very pleasant, but it was endurable, except where curiosity concerning "that sad affair of your poor aunt" mingled with their sympathies. The questions that some of these people put to Evy were wonderful in their impertinence. One good lady broke into Evy's sitting-room one morning, when Mr. Hulet happened to have gone out for a solitary walk, with the avowed purpose of cross-examining the poor girl, and "hearing the whole story of that inquest from beginning to end;" and she even gave her reasons for so doing. "I go about a good deal, my dear, and wish, for your own sakes, to have the true version of the affair as it really took place; people are so scandalous and so reckless in their assertions that I should like to feel myself in a position to give them a positive contradiction."

"A contradiction to what, may I ask, madam?" inquired Evy, with indignation in her eyes and voice.

"Nay, I can't state what, my dear Miss Carthew, for it wouldn't be good manners;

but they do say all kinds of things about your uncle—a most respectable old gentleman he looks, I'm sure, and apparently quite incapable of driving any one to drown herself, far less of mur—"

"Pardon me, madam," broke in the steady tones of Mrs. Hodlin Barmby, who happened most opportunely to step in at that moment; "but this apartment is Miss Carthew's own. I believe you are one of our table d'hôte boarders, for whom accommodation is provided in the public reception rooms. May I beg you in future to confine yourself to them?"

Whereupon the enemy had gathered up her skirts and fled in panic.

"Oh, Mrs. Barmby," sobbed poor Evy, "is it true that people say—say what that dreadful woman hinted at about my uncle?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, my darling. What does it signify?" she answered, caressingly.

"Nay; but that is too terrible," returned Evy, with a shudder. "And fancy her coming here to ask of me, of all people—"

"My dear Evy, if you had kept a boarding-house as long as I have, you would be astonished at nothing that folks either say or do. If your uncle had been here instead of yourself, that woman would have doubtless directed her inquiries to him, and plumed herself upon going to the fountain-head in order to get at the rights of the story. But don't you mind her, my dear; don't you mind her, nor, as Mr. Paragon would say, 'the likes of her.'"

For herself, Evy strove "not to mind;" but the idea of such horrible scandals floating, as it were, in the very atmosphere of what was now their home, made her tremble for her uncle. Could nothing be done to remove him out of the reach of such evil tongues, and yet not separate him from her. Could they not live in town, for instance? Captain Heyton had taken up his residence there, it was true, and to meet him would have been agony indeed; but London was a large place. Could they not live there, and she go out as a daily governess and earn their bread? She knew something beside arithmetic; for she had been fond of study even at school, and had gone on educating herself in a small way since she had left it. Mr. De Coucy, who had lived so much abroad, had complimented her once upon her French accent. She had a good touch

on the piano. Could not these little gifts of hers be utilised? She would write to kind Mrs. Mellish, who had sent her such a sympathising letter upon her aunt's decease, and ask her advice upon the matter. The Rector's wife had a large acquaintance, and might know of some lady in want of such a person as herself to teach her little children for an hour or so daily.

If she once got a situation of that sort it might lead to others. It was indeed but a straw of hope, but then she had nothing but straws to cling to. At all events, she would write to Mrs. Mellish; and accordingly, without acquainting Mr. Hulet with her resolve, she did so. It would be easy enough to persuade him to leave Balcombe, since she had but to hint to him that her position at Lucullus Mansion was an unpleasant one.

It was only when the letter had gone, that the hopelessness of anything coming of her application struck her with full force. How difficult such a situation as she sought would be to get! How unfit she might herself be found for it! What wretched remuneration was paid for such services, and how great was the cost of living in London! Such reflections had often been uttered in her presence, when there had been nothing more interesting to talk about—and what she could remember of them was not encouraging.

No answer came from Dunwich, as indeed was to have been expected, since Evy had begged Mrs. Mellish not to write in case she had asked what was out of her power; and the days and weeks went slowly by. One day was the counterpart of its predecessor, and the burden of each was still the dread she entertained lest some such insolent intrusion as had happened to herself, some chance enquiry, or significant hint dropped in his presence, might cause that wound to rankle in her uncle's breast, which she was well convinced was far indeed from having healed. While thus observant and sensitive of all that took place upon her relative's account, she suddenly became conscious of a change in the behaviour of those about her as respected herself. There was no intermission in the little kindnesses which Mrs. Barmby and the widow were for ever doing her, but they ceased to seek her society; their words were as friendly as ever, but they grew few and far between, and when they met it was plain that both ladies felt under some embarrassment, which she was utterly

at a loss to understand. She was accustomed to the pitying glances of those visitors at the Mansion with whom she was occasionally brought into contact; but instead of this unwelcome compassion wearing out, as she had hoped it would do, it now appeared to increase. Was her uncle dying? was the idea that first occurred to her, and sent an icy thrill to her very heart. That he was ill, and weak, and wretched, she was well aware, but did these comparatively uninterested spectators see some change in him, which had escaped her accustomed eyes, and compassionate her beforehand upon the bereavement that was awaiting her? She dared not ask if this was so of any one of them, but she questioned her uncle cautiously upon his health, and received what, so far as that was concerned, was a satisfactory reply. Yet still her friends forbore to importune her, as heretofore, with their well-intentioned courtesies, or even company, and still the eyes of those less intimate rested on her for a moment, and then turned away as from one in grief too sacred for their intrusion.

To these latter, however, there was one exception, in the person of Mr. Paragon. This gentleman, who, since Evy's return to Lucullus Mansion, had respected her sorrow and fallen fortunes with a quite unlooked-for delicacy, declining, as it seemed, to press his society upon her, even so much as their previous acquaintance might have excused, now sought every opportunity to address her; ventured timidly to ask after her health and that of Mr. Hulet; and once even went so far as to place a pony carriage, which he had recently purchased—for what purpose not even the shrewd gossips of the Mansion could guess—at her uncle's disposal. To Evy all this seemed inexplicable, save on the supposition that this unhappy gentleman, who had been certainly most shamefully used, was perhaps paving the way to make inquiries about his lost love, of whom Evy had heard nothing since her departure. And, indeed, it was of Judith that he did speak to her, when an opportunity chanced to offer for a private conversation between them, which took place, as it happened, in the garden where she had once listened to the confidences of Judith herself.

"Dear Miss Carthew," said he, in a complaining voice, which he in vain endeavoured to render touching and pathetic, "I want to say something to you

that is to me of great importance, and yet so conscious am I of past weakness and shortcoming, that I hardly dare to do so."

"Pray say anything you wish, Mr. Paragon," answered Evy, with a smile of encouragement; "though I can scarcely hope to be of any service to you in the matter which, as I guess, you have in your mind."

"Oh, don't say that; oh, pray don't say that," answered Mr. Paragon, precipitately, "but only try and have patience to listen to me. You are not happy here, Miss Evy; it is impossible under the circumstances that you should be so; well, that is exactly my case. They say a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind; so I trust you will be kind to me."

Here he stopped, and gazed at Evy in the most imploring manner.

"If you and I were on the Morrumbidgee, in the free air of my native plains, I could address you easily enough," he continued; "but here, among these fashionable, heartless people—so different from yourself—I feel so flurried and put out; it is such a very delicate matter I want to talk about. Oh, Miss Evy, if you were only on the Morrumbidgee!"

"I think I know what it is that embarrasses you, Mr. Paragon," said Evy, who, notwithstanding her pity for this poor awkward gentleman, found it somewhat difficult to be serious. "You wish to speak to me of Judith Mercer."

"Yes, Miss Evy, that's right; give me a helping hand like that every now and then, and then I shall get on. Well, you know how that girl kept me off and on dangling on her hook, to be pulled up and landed, or put back in the river, just as it might seem most convenient to her, don't you?"

Evy bowed and looked as grave as she could. She did not venture to speak, nor indeed was there any need to do so, since Mr. Paragon had stated the case with perfect accuracy.

"And now only think of that little villain—vixen I should say, being in love with somebody else, Miss Evy, all the while!"

"I am afraid it was so, Mr. Paragon, though at the same time it did not appear to me that she gave you such very great encouragement."

"She made up for it, however, let me tell you," answered the other, peevishly, "when it did not appear to you, nor to anybody else. Encouragement, indeed! I'm not blushing on my own account, I do

assure you. Why, when we were alone together, she made nothing of calling me her Duck of Diamonds. What right has any girl to call a man a Duck of Diamonds, and then to leave him in the lurch like this?" and Mr. Paragon spread out his hands, and threw into his face the expression of one utterly deserted and forlorn.

"Her conduct would have hurt my feelings very much, Miss Evy—I might have been a blighted man—but for one thing:" here he dropped his voice to an earnest whisper, "and now comes the point of what I have to say to you: in my heart of hearts I never cared for Judith Mercer, for the simple reason that I was in love with somebody else."

"Then it seems to me, Mr. Paragon," observed Edith, drily, "that you were as much to blame as she."

"Not a bit of it," argued Mr. Paragon, naively; "for if she would have had me, she would never have known a word about it; while the person on whom I had set my affections seemed wholly out of my reach. You might say, indeed, that that was Judith's case also; but, then, I didn't plot and plan to marry the other, as she did, or behave treacherously to the person for whom I pretended the most affectionate friendship."

"I am quite unable to follow you in all this, Mr. Paragon," said Evy, wearily. "If I can help you in anything, tell me what it is. But sorrow is apt to make us selfish, and, to speak the honest truth, I have just now so many and serious troubles of my own that my attention is not easily won from them."

"That is only to be expected, Miss Evy. Yes, yes. Well, then, I will make my story as short as I can. Six months ago I came over from Australia with a pocketful of money and the intention of finding some honest English girl, who would be willing to share it as my wife. I found two such ones. No, no; I don't mean that. I found one who would have been the very thing: beautiful as an angel and as good; lady-like, accomplished—the adoration of all who had the happiness of her friendship; only the misfortune was that she was engaged to somebody else. I found another—let us call her No. 2—who was, also, not without attractions, and whom, upon the principle of half a loaf being better than no bread, I asked to become Mrs. Paragon. You know who No. 2 was. Dear Miss Evy, can you not guess who was and is No. 1?"

Now don't, pray, don't be angry" (for Evy had risen hastily from her seat with crimson face and angry eyes); "but listen to half a dozen words of reason. I knew that in thus addressing you I was risking what little regard you might entertain for me; but, indeed, I mean no affront. It is very close on what has happened, I own. You have had very much to trouble you of late; but, then, I have no time to lose. Another man might step in at any moment, while I kept silence out of delicacy, and rob me of the prize which I value highest in the whole lottery of life. That prize, dear Miss Evy, is your hand."

"I cannot listen to this, Mr. Paragon," replied Evy, firmly; "it is most distasteful to me. You observed, just now, that the person of whom you spoke was out of your reach. Without repeating those words in an offensive sense—that of being above you in any way, which is far enough, Heaven knows, from being the case—I must needs say that the mutual relation between us has by no means altered in that respect."

"Not altered!" exclaimed Mr. Paragon. "Not when the man who was to have been your husband is going to be married to another girl, and that girl—Judith Mercer!"

"It is false!" cried Evy, with vehemence, but with a sickness at her heart against which she strove in vain to struggle.

"Indeed, Miss Carthew, it is true. All the house here know, it; the news came down from town ten days ago. I am a plain man, with no lord for my uncle; but I would scorn to act as Captain Heyton has done—he will suffer for it, however, that's one comfort; Judith will comb his hair for him—and I love you, dear Miss Evy, with all my heart, and I have five-and-twenty thousand pounds— Hi! Mrs. Barmby! Hi! help here! Mrs. Storke, water! water! Miss Carthew has fainted right away in the garden."

OLD FIGHTING SHIPS.

THE FORMIDABLE AND THE MAES.

ON an early day in December, 1781, Sir George Rodney, having an audience of George III., the king expressed much anxiety about the safety of the West India Islands, as reports had come that Count de Grasse, the French admiral, after a decisive battle with the British fleet, off the Chesapeake, and the surrender

of the army of Lord Cornwallis, had sailed with his whole fleet to the windward station. Rodney's patriotism was fired by this appeal, and he at once promised the king not to wait for the ships under repair, but to sail at once with the force then ready at Portsmouth. Driven into Torbay, however, and imprisoned there by contrary winds, Rodney eventually sailed with a squadron of twelve, and, in spite of tremendous gales, weathered Ushant on the 17th of January, 1782. While anchoring at the back of the Isle of Wight, he heard that Admiral Kempenfelt (who afterwards sank in the Royal George), with only twelve sail of the line, had attacked nineteen French sail, and cut off fifteen of the convoy, capturing one thousand and sixty soldiers and five hundred and forty-eight seamen.

Rodney's great desire was to reach the West Indies before Count de Grasse, and through storms, tempests, and contrary winds the admiral forced his way to Barbadoes in five weeks. He found, to his chagrin, that St. Christopher's had already surrendered, and that the Count de Grasse, fearing the junction between Sir Samuel Hood and Rodney, had moved off to Martinique with thirty-one sail of the line and ten frigates to face Rodney's thirty-six sail of the line. The French had on board their fleet five thousand four hundred soldiers, with a train of heavy cannon, intended for the reduction of Jamaica. De Grasse had no wish to fight, his object being to reach Hispaniola and join the sea and land forces of the Spaniards waiting near Cape Francois. Then, with fifty ships of the line and twenty thousand land troops, he hoped to sweep the English from the West Indies and annex all our sugar colonies. Rodney's whole aim, on the other hand, was to force his adversary's hand and tempt him to engage.

Early on the morning of the 8th of April, 1782, Captain Byron, of the *Andromache*, signalled, through a chain of frigates stationed between St. Lucia and Martinique, that the enemy's fleet was unmoored, and was starting to sea. Upon this signal the British fleet took up their anchors, and, in little more than two hours, were all under weigh, standing towards the enemy with all the sail they could crowd.

The chase was soon successful. The next morning the van and centre of the English fleet, including the flag-ship, the *Formidable*, had got within cannon-shot of the enemy's rear, and a sharp but in-

decisive cannonade ensued, from a great part of our fleet being becalmed under the high lands of Dominique. During the next two days the French, by dint of great exertions, kept far to windward, and might have made their escape had they not been brought down. On the 11th, Rodney saw a French ship which had run foul of its companion, and had, in consequence, dropped to leeward. On the 12th, Rodney, to his delight, reached a large part of the enemy's fleet, now reduced to thirty ships.

About half an hour before the engagement on the 12th, Lord Cranston, volunteer post-captain, observed to Rodney that our fleet, steering the same course, close hauled, on the opposite tack to the enemy, must necessarily pierce and cut in two unequal pieces the French line in running along, and closing with it for action. This was the very scheme projected in 1780 by Rodney, when he broke through the French line in the *sea* with *De Guiche*, but was not then supported by his other ships.

To plan and to act were the same thing with Rodney. The *Formidable* at once bore down on the enemy. Up went the signal for close action, and we rushed the *Formidable*, "tacking and returning the fire"—as Lieutenant-General Mundy (Rodney's biographer) says, with considerable spirit—"of one half the French force, under a general blaze and peal of thunder along both lines." In running this dreadful gauntlet the *Formidable*, in breaking through, passed within pistol shot of the *Glorieux*, a powerful French seventy-four, which was soon so cruelly mauled by Rodney's "merry men," that she lost all her masts, her bowsprit, and her ensign-staff; but, with the white flag of the Bourbons nailed to the stump of a mast, she still, like a dying dragon, breathed out fire and slaughter against her enemies, till gradually the voice of her cannon grew lower, and she paralyzed into a motionless hulk.

Sir Gilbert Blane, a friend and companion of Rodney, who was by his side all through this battle, says, that while breaking the line in passing the *Glorieux*, he saw the French cannoniers throwing away their sponges and handspikes, in order to leave their guns and hide below, while our men were cheering with the utmost animation.

The French officers fought with gallantry.

but the serfs they called sailors were not worthy of their country. The Captain of the *Glorieux*, the *Vicomte d'Escars*, of the house of *Fitz-James*, proved as remarkable for his chivalrous courage as for his rooted hatred to the English nation. He was killed during the battle, and our officers, on boarding the *Glorieux*, was shown the red stains on the gunwale where his body had been thrown overboard. Among the captured officers of the *Glorieux* were the *Viscomte de Betisy*, and two of the illustrious house of *St. Simon*.

It was especially observed by *Sir Gilbert Blane* and others, that in this battle, the closer the English ships fought, the less injury the enemy's shot effected, the French shot cutting clear holes in the ship sides, with orifices even less than their own diameter, and without producing splinters, whereas, the distant shot, whose momentum was nearly spent, shivered whole planks, made enormous chasms in the ships' sides and scattered innumerable splinters among the men on deck, or those working the lower guns. In the same way at *Navarino*, in 1827, the English had far fewer wounded than either the French or the Russians, their allies, who kept at a more respectful distance from the Turks.

Immediately after cutting the French line in two, *Sir George Rodney* made signal for the van to tack, and the fleet by doing so at once gained the wind of the enemy. The action lasted during all the rest of the day. Every ship in our fleet pelted and annoyed the enemy as it judged best. Down went the French colours one after another, as if obedient to some predestination. Though the victory was really over when the *Formidable* chopped its way through the French line, the heart of our fleet did not beat with its full pride and joy till the enemy's piece de resistance, the great *Ville de Paris*, struck her colours. This huge vessel of one hundred guns, larger than any first-rate England possessed, had been a present from the city of *Paris* to *Louis XV.* She was reported to have cost, in building and fitting out to sea, one hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds. She had suffered frightfully, having lost nearly three hundred men killed and wounded, for she was crowded with troops, making with sailors one thousand three hundred men. She bore the marks of innumerable English shot in her sides; her rigging was torn, and she had not a sail left or a mast capable of sustaining one. Unable to keep up with

the highflyers of her fleet, she stumbled into the very centre of *Rodney's* hungry wolf-hounds.

The *Glorieux* (seventy-four), when boarded, was a scene of butchery; so many Frenchmen had been killed that the survivors, from fear and hurry, had been unable to throw the bodies overboard, and the decks were covered with shattered and dying wretches. It is supposed that the French, in this great victory of ours, lost fourteen thousand men taken, killed, or put hors de combat. We captured in this hot and bloody fight the *Ville de Paris*, the *Glorieux*, the *Cæsar* (seventy-four), the *Hector* (seventy-four), the *Ardent* (forty-four), a ship previously taken from us by the French, afterwards re-christened the *Tiger*, the *Cato* (forty-four), the *Jason* (sixty-four), afterwards rechristened the *Argonaut*, the *Annille* (thirty-two), and the *Ceres* (eighteen), retaken. The *Cæsar* was destroyed by fire the night of the action; an English marine having let a candle drop among the spirit casks.

In this battle we lost three officers of reputation and rank—*Captain Bayne* of the *Alfred*, *Captain Blair* of the *Anson*, and *Lord Robert Manners*, *Captain* of the *Resolution*. This last-named officer, aged only twenty-four years, lost his leg, and was also wounded in the arm and breast. He died of lock-jaw on his voyage home. Of our vessels the *Formidable*, *Yarmonth*, *Monarch*, the *Duke*, and *Agamemnon*, suffered most, the *Duke* having thirteen killed and sixty-one wounded. Altogether we lost two hundred and thirty men, and had seven hundred and fifty-nine wounded. The captive French officers would not at first believe that the English return of killed and wounded was honestly made. *Sir Gilbert Blane* walked them round the decks of the *Formidable* and made them observe how little the rigging had suffered, the damage certainly not pointing to the loss of more than the fourteen men who really fell, and yet the *Formidable* suffered more than any vessel in the fleet, except the *Royal Oak* and the *Monarch*. They at first refused to believe our returns, and said we always gave the world a false version of our loss. They were gentlemen, however, and men of sense, and they soon began to appear visibly mortified to see how little the *Formidable* had suffered, though, at one time, every one of the thirty-three French sail of the line had attacked her in turn, and finally owned that our fire

must have been much better kept up and directed than their own, although they had on board their ships a corps of artillerymen expressly trained for sea fighting.

As for Count de Grasse, who was a man of honour, he allowed that his nation was a hundred years behind us, and was charmed with the strict discipline, neatness, and order of our English men-of-war. He, however, insisted on it that he should have taken Jamaica, at the close of 1781, had the French court kept their word to send him the twelve ships of the line they had promised. His officers, he said, had basely deserted him when he made the signal to them to rally, and even hailed them to stand firm by his side.

Rodney's sensible reasons for not pressing the pursuit that night were found among his papers after his death, and were afterwards published by his able biographer, Lieutenant-General Mundy.

"First, the length of the battle was such as to cripple the greatest part of the van and centre, and some ships of the rear, that to have pursued all night would have been highly improper, as the prisoners on board the prizes could not have been shifted, and those with the much-crippled ships of the British fleet might have been exposed to a recapture, as the night was extremely dark, and the enemy going off in a close connected body, might have defeated, by rotation, the ships that had come up with them, and thereby exposed the British fleet, after a victory, to a defeat. More especially as some of the British fleet were dispersed and at a very considerable distance from each other, and I had reason to conclude that they would have done more damage to each other than to the enemy during a night action, and considering the very great fatigue they had undergone during the battle of a whole day.

"If I had inconsiderately bore away in the night, and left the two ninety-gun ships, the Prince George and Duke, and several others greatly damaged, with the Ville de Paris and the captured ships, without shifting the prisoners, the enemy, who went off in a body of twenty-six ships of the line, might, by ordering two or three of their best sailing ships or frigates to have shown lights at times, and by changing their course, have induced the British fleet to have followed them, while the main of their fleet, by hiding their lights, might have hauled their wind, and have been far to windward before daylight, and inter-

cepted the captured ships, and the most crippled ships of the English; as likewise have had it in their power, while the British fleet had during the night gone so far to leeward, and thereby rendered themselves incapable of gaining their station to windward, to have anchored in their own ports, and from thence have conquered the British islands of Antigua, Barbadoes, and St. Lucia, while the British fleet must, from the damages they had received, have repaired to Jamaica, as the condition of all their masts would not have permitted their return to St. Lucia; though Jamaica might have been saved, the Windward Islands might have been lost."

Very soon after this great and crushing victory, Rodney was recalled by the new administration, which had yielded to party feeling. At Kingston, however, Rodney was received with rapture as the saviour of the British West Indies, and a thousand pounds was voted by the House of Assembly for a marble statue. As for De Grasse he was treated with respect and sympathy and received at St James's, his sword being returned to him by Sir Peter Parker. De Grasse was the first French commander-in-chief who had been brought prisoner to England since the Duke of Marlborough brought Marshal Tallard. The thanks of both Houses of Parliament were voted to Rodney for his brilliant and decisive victory over the French fleet in the West Indies, and Mr. Secretary Fox moved the Commons address. The hero was made a peer of Great Britain by the title of Baron Rodney, of Rodney Stoke, Somersetshire, and a perpetual annuity of two thousand pounds was annexed to the title. In 1806 a pension of one thousand pounds per annum was granted to his grandson for his life.

It was natural at first sight to attribute this victory to the numerical superiority of our ships; but it was computed by Sir Charles Douglas that the sum total of the weight of a broadside of the French fleet exceeded that of the British fleet by four thousand three hundred and ninety-six pounds; and although the number of our guns exceeded that of theirs by one hundred and fifty-six, their lower-deck batteries, in ships of seventy-four guns and upwards, consist of thirty-six pounders, which, according to the difference of the pound of the two nations, are equal to our forty-two pounders, and gave the enemy the above mentioned preponderance of metal on the whole amount.

The difference in the number of men was still more considerable; for besides that the French have a much greater complement of men to the same tonnage, they had the assistance of a large body of land forces. "Comte De Grasse," said Rodney, in a private letter to his family, "who is at this moment sitting in my stern gallery, tells me that he thought his fleet superior to mine, and does so still, though I had two more in number; and I am of this opinion, as his was composed of large ships, and ten of mine were only sixty-fours.

"The battle began at seven in the morning, and continued till sunset, nearly eleven hours; and by persons appointed to observe, there never was seven minutes respite during the engagement, which, I believe, was the severest that ever was fought at sea, and the most glorious for England. We have taken five, and sunk another. Among the prizes the *Ville de Paris*, and the French Admiral, grace our victory. He (the French Admiral) had sent me a message that he could not meet me in March, but that he certainly would attack us in April. He did not keep his promise, for I attacked him. In the first day's action, when the *Formidable* came abreast of the *Ville de Paris*, I ordered the main-topsail to be laid aback.

"De Grasse, who was about three miles to windward, did not accept the challenge, but kept his wind, and did not fire one shot the whole day.

"I hope this joyful news will raise the spirits at home, and I do not doubt but you will meet with a glorious reception at St James's. Do not forget to go. Adieu. I have had no sleep these four nights, and am at this moment looking out for their shattered fleet, though mine has suffered not a little. It is odd, but within two little years I have taken two Spanish, one French, and one Dutch Admiral. Providence does it all, or how should I escape the shot of thirty-three sail of the line, every one of which I believe attacked me? but the *Formidable* proved herself worthy of her name.

"John was not with me; he had sprung his bowsprit and was at Barbadoes. I am extremely sorry for it, for if he lives a hundred years he never may have such another opportunity."

In a subsequent letter, "I trust," said he, "the good people of England will now be pleased, and opposition hide her head. I own to you I think that the sort of

promise made to me will now be performed, and that I shall have a seat in the Upper House. It is the highest ambition a subject can aspire to, and the greatest honour to one's family. Oh! France, what joy does it give me to humble thy pride, and to lower thy haughty insolence!"

"It happened to me," says Mr. Cumberland, "to be present and sitting next to Admiral Rodney at table, when the thought seemed first to occur to him of breaking the French line by passing through it in the heat of action. It was at Lord George Germaine's house at Stoneland, after dinner, when, having asked a number of questions about manœuvring of columns, and the effect of charging with them in a line of infantry, he proceeded to arrange a parcel of cherry stones, which he had collected from the table, and forming them as two fleets, drawn up and opposed to each other, he at once arrested our attention, which had not been very generally engaged by his preparatory inquiries, by declaring he was determined so to pierce the enemy's line of battle (arranging his manœuvre at the same time on the table), if ever it was his fortune to bring them to action.

"I dare say this passed with some as mere rhapsody, and all seemed to regard it as a very perilous and doubtful experiment, but landsmen's doubts and difficulties made no impression on the admiral, who, having seized the idea, held it fast, and, in his eager animated way, went on manœuvring his cherry stones, and throwing the enemy's representatives into such utter confusion, that already in possession of that victory in imagination, which in reality he lived to gain, he concluded his process by swearing he would lay the French admiral's flag at his sovereign's feet—a promise which he actually made His Majesty in his closet, and faithfully and gloriously performed.

"That he carried this projected manœuvre into operation, and that the effect of it was successfully decisive, all the world knows. My friend, Sir Charles Douglas, Captain of the Fleet, confessed to me, that he himself had been adverse to the experiment, and, in discussing it with the admiral, had stated his objections; to these he got no other answer but that his counsel was not called for; he required obedience only—he did not want advice.

"Sir Charles also told me, that whilst

this project was in operation (the battle then raging), his own attention being occupied by the gallant defence made by the Glorieux against the ships that were pouring their fire into her, upon his crying out, 'Behold, Sir George, the Greeks and Trojans contending for the body of Patroclus!' the admiral then pacing the deck in great agitation, finding the experiment of the manœuvre, which, in the instance of one ship, had unavoidably miscarried, peevishly exclaimed, 'D—n the Greeks and d—n the Trojans! I have other things to think of.' When, in a few minutes after, the supporting ship having led through the French line in a gallant style, turning with a smile of joy to Sir Charles Douglas, he cried out, 'Now, my dear friend, I am at the service of your Greeks and Trojans, and the whole of Homer's Iliad, or as much of it as you please; for the enemy is in confusion, and our victory is secure.'

Being not only a great sea officer, but a man of highly polished manners, Rodney had always young men of family who walked his quarter-deck. When his dinner was going aft, he has often, he says, seen the hungry mids cast over the dishes a wistful eye, with a watery mouth; upon seeing which, he has instantly ordered the whole of his dinner, save one dish, to be carried to the midshipmen's mess.

When a woman who had, contrary to the rules of the navy, secreted herself in her husband's cabin, and fought a quarter-deck gun in the room of her wounded husband, who was down in the cock-pit, was discovered, Lord Rodney severely reprimanded her for breach of orders, but gave her, immediately afterwards, ten guineas, for so valiantly sustaining the post of her wounded husband.

A little bantam cock which, in the action of the twelfth of April, perched himself upon the poop, and, at every broadside poured into the Ville de Paris, cheered the crew with his "shrill clarion," and clapped his wings, as if in approbation, was ordered by the admiral to be pampered and protected during life.

In the memorable engagement, Lord Robert Manners, son of the great Marquis of Granby, received so dangerous a wound that he died on his passage to England, in the twenty-fifth year of his age; he was a young officer of distinguished abilities, and universally lamented in the navy.

With one more story of English courage at sea, we close our series.

In 1798, the year of the battle of the Nile, while Lord Bridport and our Channel fleet were cruising off Brest, on the eager out-look for French ships, the admiral suddenly hoisted a signal for the Mars to chase a strange ship in shore of our fleet. The Mars was a fine seventy-four, with six hundred and eighty men aboard, and a capital antagonist for the French ship, which proved to be L'Hercule, a seventy-four, with a crew of seven hundred men. The Hercule tried very hard by every shift and artful wile to escape through the Passage de Raz, but the tide proved English in its sympathies, and the wind blowing east, she was obliged to anchor at the mouth of the Race. Captain Hood of the Mars was no lingerer about the skirts of enterprise, and went straight in at the embarrassed Frenchman, running the Mars so close to the Hercules as to unhang some of our lower deck ports. A bloody contest followed, which lasted for an hour and a half, when the enemy struck.

The prize was a valuable one. L'Hercule was a quite new and well-finished ship, and had sailed but a very short time before from L'Orient to join the Brest fleet. Her loss was dreadful; upwards of four hundred men were killed or wounded; and on the side where, from being at anchor, she was exposed to the fire of the Mars, her hull was burnt and almost torn to pieces.

The loss on board the Mars was trifling, if the mere number of men killed and wounded is taken into account; but heavy and lamentable indeed, from the circumstance that the gallant Captain Hood fell in this well-fought action. Just before it terminated, he received a wound in the thigh that proved mortal. He lived long enough, however, to be gratified by the news of the enemy's surrender, which he received with a smile, and expired as a Briton ought to die, whose life is devoted to his country, in the arms of that victory which had been won by his courage. He had previously called for pen, ink, and paper, and made a short will. Besides her captain, the Mars had seventeen men killed, sixty-five wounded, five of whom died of their wounds, and eight missing. It is probable that the last had fallen overboard during the heat and bustle of the engagement.

This, though a single action, was one of great importance. The meeting of two ships of the line is a circumstance of rare occurrence, and its decision in our favour a brilliant ornament to our naval history. The Bellona and Courageux, the Fou-

droyant and Pegasse, the Mars and Hercules, the Victorious and the Rivoli, will be recorded as the finest memorials of our naval prowess, and a decided proof of our superiority on the ocean.

Such were the deeds of our old sailors; nor will their descendants be slow to match them if occasion requires—though oak has now turned to iron, and iron has forgotten how to sink.

A DUMB POET.

Oh, to sing one mighty strain,
One prophetic burst of song,
Full of an immortal pain,
Deep, and tremulous, and strong;
Quivering with the bitter cry,
With the yearning agony,
Breaking forth for evermore
From men's wounded hearts and sore!
That should travel through the years,
Blend its music with the spheres,
Live for aye, and have its part
In the throbbings of the heart!

Even in the voiceless grave,
That sad grave to which I go,
Though the wintry winds should rave,
And the air be thick with snow;
Though the boughs should sigh above,
And the hearts of those I love
Be beginning to forget
Any lingering regret,
Should the music of that strain
Warm my frozen heart again.

But, ah me! it may not be—
Still the mocking music slips,
And the soul's deep melody
Dies in sobe upon the lips.
In the grim grave shall I lie,
With shut lips and sightless eye,
And the world will laugh to scorn
That sweet hymn that died unborn.

THE THREE CROWNS.

ONCE upon a time Bothnia was ruled by a mighty king, of the Finnish race, whose realm included not only the eastern, but the northern and western coasts of the Gulf. He had three daughters, whom he tenderly loved, and the magicians, with whom his kingdom abounded, were summoned to predict their future destiny. The unanimous reply was to the effect that something dreadful would happen, if the Princesses were allowed to go out into the open air for twenty years. They were therefore kept close in the castle, a garden covered with glass being laid out for their especial recreation. As they grew up they likewise grew melancholy, finding life monotonous, at which their father, considering that the youngest had attained the age of fifteen, did not at all wonder. So one day, being in an easy mood, he allowed them to take a stroll in his palace

garden, accompanied by his body-guard, under the command of his favourite giant, Koljumi. This precaution proved altogether useless. The Princesses roamed about at liberty for a little while, delighted with the fresh air, and charmed with every thing, till they chanced to climb up a moss-covered rock, which suddenly opened, swallowed them all three, and as suddenly shut again, to the great consternation of the guard. The giant alone retained his presence of mind, as he proved by briskly tearing the rock open, but the only result of this brilliant feat of strength was a fiery sword, which issued from the crevice he had made, and killed him on the spot.

The rest could only take home the bad tidings to the King, who, as might have been expected, sank into deep melancholy. He was somewhat cheered when three Heimdaller, or wise men, offered to set out in search of the Princesses. The offer was, of course, accepted, and the wise men were allowed to take with them as many servants as they pleased; but although they largely availed themselves of this permission, they distinctly refused the proffered services of Gylpho, a groom of the royal household.

A long time passed, and as the wise men did not return, the melancholy of the King returned. One day, observing that his royal master was even more sad than usual, a courtier named Dumb, who was deeply versed in Finnish lore, whereof the King was profoundly ignorant, offered to amuse him with a tale.

"Though" said the monarch, "we have a proverb, which tells us that he who mourns does not think of honey-cakes, and though thy story may possibly be dull, still thy offer is kindly, and we accept it with as much cheerfulness as we have at our command."

"I know, as our proverb has it, that a smith is not fitted for a schoolmaster, and that my skill as a narrator is small. As another proverb has it, no bird can fly higher than his wings can carry him. Nevertheless, I will do my best."

The King wiped his eyes and the courtier proceeded:—

"In ancient days, a certain man and woman were blessed with a very handsome son, who tended the king's flocks—"

"What king was that?" asked the Sovereign of Bothnia.

"The record is not precise on that head," answered Dumb; "he was pos-

sibly one of your ancestors, sire, possibly not. Where was I?"

"Tended the king's flocks," said the royal prompter.

"Also," proceeded Dumbr, "they had a daughter who was even more handsome, and who remained at home; but her brother, who was clever with his knife, cut out her portrait on the bark of a tree, and the king's son, who happened to pass that way, was so struck with its beauty, that he said to the artist with great dignity, 'If your sister is anything like that, all you have to do is to bring her to the palace. I will marry her, and you shall be the second man in the kingdom.'"

"And his father still living!" exclaimed the royal listener. "They had strange notions of matrimonial alliances in those times. Thanks to Ukko, we have advanced a little, at least in one respect."

"The brother told the good news to his sister, of course, expecting that she would be delighted," continued the courtier; "but, as you are doubtless aware, sire, young ladies have their tempers."

"And old ones, too," said the King. "As the proverb has it, he who argues with a woman should not have his tongue burned with hot groats."

"The perverse damsel," proceeded the courtier, "although her delight exactly corresponded to the expectations of her brother, declared that she would not cross the threshold of her house until a heap of stones that lay hard by was reduced to a powder fine as meal. The brother, inwardly chafing, did his best to arrive at the desired result; but with all his efforts, he could only break up the stones into little bits. The sister, therefore, put her own hands to the work; and, in a short time, the powder fine as meal was produced."

"As the proverb hath it," said the King, "sharp is the knife of the industrious, blunt that of the lazy. Now, of course, all was settled."

"Not at all," said Dumbr. "After imposing another task—on which I need not dwell—and which she herself performed, she vowed with her habitual perversity that she would not quit her home until she had worn out the threshold by crossing it backwards and forwards." This time the brother used his knife to some purpose, and secretly shaved away the wooden threshold. The sister was convinced, put on her best attire, and followed her brother, carrying under her arm

her pet dog Pilka. To reach the palace they had to cross the sea in a boat, which they both rowed."

"Or gulf," interposed the King.

"As you please, sire," said the courtier.

"When they had proceeded a short distance they came to a tongue of land, where they saw a horrible female fiend, Syoyatar, who begged to be admitted into their boat. By the advice of his sister, the brother refused to comply with this request; but he again encountered the fiend at a second and afterwards at a third point, and then, in spite of his sister's remonstrances, he took her into the boat."

"No doubt she spoke well," observed the King. "As the proverb has it, a good tongue is better than ten measures of corn."

"Maybe, sire," retorted Dumbr. "At all events, the act of courtesy was ill repaid, for Syoyatar, seating herself between the brother and the sister, began by making them both deaf to each other, while perfectly capable of hearing anything which she herself might say. Consequently, all the words uttered by the brother were misinterpreted; and when the foolish youth told his sister that they were close to the King's palace, and that she had better adjust her dress, the crafty Syoyatar explained that he enjoined her to divest herself of all her attire, poke out her own eyes, break her own arms, and leap into the sea. The poor girl executed the last of these supposed orders, without regarding the rest, and jumped into the waves accordingly."

"She was wiser than we had a right to expect," remarked the king. "As the proverb has it, we admire a bird for its song, a maiden for her good sense; and if my three poor girls had not had that foolish fancy for climbing up a rock—"

At this moment the conversation was cut short by a loud shout outside the palace. The three wise men had returned, having exhausted their stock of provisions; but they had not discovered the lost Princesses, so asked leave to seek for them a second time, which was readily granted, and they again refused the services of Gylpho, who wished to join them.

When they had departed, the King was deeply grieved, but not so deeply as when his loss was new, having grown somewhat used to his sorrow. Of his own accord, he sent for Dumbr, and, reminding him of the proverb, which says that joyless even-

ings are long, told him that he might as well continue his story.

The courtier took up the thread accordingly:—

“The unhappy girl, when she leaped into the sea, left all her fine clothes in the possession of Syoyatar.”

“Was not the brother greatly shocked?” inquired the King.

“He was,” replied Dumber, “but he was not so much grieved at the loss of his sister, as he was terrified to think that he would get into sad trouble by coming to the palace without the promised bride. Syoyatar readily solved the difficulty, observing that she was exceedingly like the lost girl, and dressed in her clothes, could easily be presented in her stead. The brother did not exactly perceive the resemblance to which she referred, but as there was no other expedient than the one recommended, he kept his opinion to himself. So Syoyatar put on the fine clothes, and they both proceeded together to the palace. The Prince, on whose memory the portrait of the lost girl was deeply impressed, perceived the dissimilarity which had been noticed by the brother, and asked him, somewhat sternly, if that lady was really his sister. That he had been cheated somehow, he saw plainly enough, but he thought that the imposture lay in the incorrectness of the portrait. He therefore honourably kept his word by marrying the supposed sister, and ordered the brother to be flung into a pit filled with snakes. The order was executed, but on the following morning, to the Prince’s astonishment, the culprit was found alive. It was resolved, nevertheless, that he should remain where he was for another night.

In the meanwhile the lost sister was living in great luxury. The King of the Sea had built her a moveable glass palace, which kept out the water, and round which all sorts of mermaids, sea snakes and fishes, assembled to gaze at her with admiration.”

“They must have been quick workmen under the sea,” remarked the King.

“They were,” assented the courtier. “The son of the sea-king fell in love with the fair stranger, and flung at her feet not only coral and pearls, and such like marine treasures, but gold and jewels of all sorts, obtained through a long series of shipwrecks. However, she sighed after her brother, of whose miserable condition she was informed by a very intelligent sea-snake, cousin to one of the land-snakes in

the pit, and embroidering a neckerchief of gold and silver thread, she asked permission to go on shore and present it to the Prince, which was granted, but only on the condition that she should wear round her a silver chain reaching to the bottom of the sea. It should be stated that the little dog, Pilka—”

“Ah, we had forgotten all about him,” said the King.

Just at this point a shout, as before, announced the return of the three wise men, who, as before, came to announce a failure. But, during their absence, a change, unknown to anybody, had taken place in the fortune of the groom Gylpho. Greatly disgusted at the rejection of his services by the wise men, he had strayed into the nearest wood, with an axe in his hand, and vented his spite on a thick oak, at which he began to hack with all his might. An old man, of gigantic stature, immediately stood before him, laughed at him as a bungler, and told him, that if he would lend him his axe, he would teach him what wood-cutting was. Convinced that his new acquaintance was a spirit of some kind or other, but not being certain whether that kind was good or bad, the astute Gylpho, instead of parting with the axe, struck it as deep as he could into the oak, and pretending that he was not able to draw it out, begged the giant to assist him by widening the split. The good-humoured giant complied with the modest request, and Gylpho, suddenly withdrawing the axe, caused the closing tree to catch him and hold him fast by the fingers. In piteous tones he began to sue for deliverance, but Gylpho told him that he might remain where he was till the end of the world, if he didn’t tell what had become of the three Princesses.

The required information was readily given. All the Princesses were in the power of Kammo, king of a certain rock. The eldest was confined in an iron room, situated a hundred fathoms beneath the base of the rock, wearing an iron crown on her head, and an iron ring on one of her fingers. The second was in a silver room fifty fathoms deeper, the third in a golden room a hundred fathoms deeper still, and both, like the eldest, wore crowns and rings corresponding to their respective apartments.

Gylpho was thankful for the information, but observed that it would be of small practical value, unless he was pro-

vided with the means of liberating the Princesses from their captivity.

"Release me," exclaimed the captive spirit, "and I'll let you have what you want, as sure as my name is Pellerwoinen."

Without a moment's hesitation, Gylpho widened the crevice with his axe and freed the giant; for Pellerwoinen was a spirit of exceedingly good repute. On this occasion he was as good as his word; for he produced a marvellous sword, a bottle of mineral water, a fife, and a thick rope, one hundred fathoms long. These things were to be used for the liberation of the Princesses; and, in the case of any extraordinary emergency, the fife was to be sounded.

Armed with these valuable tools, Gylpho hurried back to the palace, and made his appearance just when the three wise men had recounted their second failure. They had talked of their adventures by land and sea; described much that they had seen, and much that they had not seen; and gave no end of geographical information, more curious than accurate: but the Princesses had not been found. Gylpho, therefore, had hit the right moment when he asked leave to set out, unassisted, on the discovery of the lost darlings. Gloomily, but readily, the King granted his petition. Three professedly wise men had turned out to be fools; and if a man, who had no pretensions to wisdom, proved to be a fool likewise, the pain of disappointment in the latter case would be less acute than in the former.

When Gylpho had made his bow, the King relapsed into his habitual melancholy, and, reflecting on the quantity of obvious untruths told by the wise men, bethought himself of the proverb which teaches us that the guest discovers the faults of his host's daughters, and that travellers see wonders. After sulking for some days, he sent for the courtier, Dumb, and somewhat crossly said,—

"Get on with the story about the she-fiend and the sea-snake. I think we left off with something about a little dog."

"We did, sire," said the courtier, and spake as follows:—

"The little dog, Pilka, disconsolate at the loss of his mistress, would not enter the palace, but preferred to remain on the beach, miserably running up and down, and eating nothing. When evening came, he merely refreshed himself with some

fresh water that flowed from a spring, and then went to sleep in the empty boat. Now, it happened that by the sea-side a remarkably shrewd widow lived in a small hut, in front of which was a stone bridge that reached the water. Close to this bridge one night came the palace of glass, borne by mermen and followed by a retinue of sea-snakes and mermaids, who sang merrily, while the links of the silver chain tinkled by way of accompaniment. The Princess crossed the bridge, sat down, and, seeing the little dog, gave him the kerchief, with the commission that he was privily to place it under the Prince's pillow and meet her on the same spot on the two following nights. The task was duly executed. The Prince, when he awoke in the morning, was surprised to find his new acquisition, and when his wife declared that she had embroidered the kerchief during the night while he was sleeping, he did not give the slightest credit to her assertion, though he kept his opinion to himself. He was again surprised, when, on causing inquiries to be made, he learned that the man among the snakes was still alive, nay, that the snakes seemed to be rather fond of him than otherwise. The punishment was very common, and no one had ever been known to live in the pit through as much as a single night. Yet now two had passed, and the criminal was as well as ever."

"Two!" cried the King, in amazement; "only two! In the name of Ukko, am I to believe that all that befel the lucky or unlucky girl, since she leaped into the sea, only occupied about a day and a half?"

"Precisely so, sire," was the response.

"Then I can only say that if there be any truth in the proverb, which tells us that he who gains time gains much, the prosperity of those times ought to have been enormous."

"Under such singular circumstances," continued Dumb, after a bow of reverential assent, "the Prince thought it expedient to visit the wise widow, who, on hearing the particulars of the case, said that his hideous wife was no other than the hateful fiend Syoyatar, and that the lady he ought to have married was in the sea, and had sent him the kerchief by way of inducing him to show mercy to her brother. The third night brought with it an embroidered shirt, sent by the same means as the kerchief, and the following morning a repetition of the same falsehood on the part of Syoyatar, a renewal of the

tidings that the man in the pit and the snakes were all happy and comfortable, and another visit to the sage widow on the part of the Prince, who now learned in further detail the manner in which the mysterious gifts reached him, and was moreover informed that on the coming night she would make her appearance for the last time, and that if she were allowed to return to the sea, she would be forced to marry the daughter of the water king. The Prince could only express his fervent hope that matters would not take such a dismal turn, and his desire to see the lovely stranger, and was counselled by his sage adviser to provide himself with an iron chain and a sickle of the same material, and following her directions, to act in the manner presently to be described."

"Short is the song of the wood-pigeon, as the proverb has it," interposed the king, "and I thank you for not telling the same thing twice over."

"When night approached," proceeded the courtier, "the Prince concealed himself behind a rock near the sea, and at the hour of midnight, a strange tinkling was heard, and a beautiful maiden arose from the waters, and calling the dog, intrusted him with the third gift. As she was about to depart, the Prince rushed from his place of concealment, broke the silver chain with his sickle, and cast the iron one round her. She endeavoured to escape; she turned herself into a lizard, a fly, a snake, a crow, and what not besides, but he destroyed the assumed forms one after another till she had resumed her own."

When the courtier had proceeded thus far, a shout of joy was heard, and, to the King's amazement and delight, the three wise men made their appearance, each leading by the hand one of the lost Princesses. The embracings and the tears of joy that ensued, we need not describe. The festivities that took place in honour of the happy event lasted several days, and the King was naturally too much occupied with his own happiness to think about the beautiful maiden of the sea.

To account for the joyous event that thus occurred we must go back a little in our voracious narrative. Gylpho, when he had received permission to seek the Princesses, had, according to appointment, gone to the wood on the night of the full moon, bearing his instruments, and with a sound of his fife, brought Pellerwoinen into his

presence. They went their way towards the enchanted rock, the spirit acting as guide, not perceiving that they were followed by three men, namely, the three bunglers who were falsely considered wise, and had kept Gylpho steadily in their eye from the moment when he had left the Palace. By means of the rope, Gylpho and his friend, when the rock was reached, let themselves down through a cavity to the iron-room, where they saw the youngest Princess with the crown and ring, as above described, guarded by the spirit of the rock, Kammo, a hideous monster, who had a horn on his head and an eye in the middle of his forehead, which had been greatly dimmed by age.* Gylpho lost no time in blinding him with a red-hot bar of iron, which happened to be close at hand, and then dispatched him with his sword. The liberation of the younger sister was easily followed by that of the others, who were confined to the lower rooms, and they all joyfully resolved to go home at once, Gylpho, by the advice of Pellerwoinen, breaking each of the rings into halves, one of which he kept for himself, while he gave the other half to the Princess who had worn it, and leaving all the three crowns behind. But when Pellerwoinen, who had taken his station outside, had succeeded in drawing up the three sisters, and was proceeding to draw up Gylpho, the three wise men came forth from their hiding-place, cut the rope, and Pellerwoinen fled in terror. The ladies, left in the power of the Heimdaller, were compelled to bind themselves by oath that they would never reveal what had happened; and thus, when they were brought to the Palace, the King had no reason to doubt that they had been rescued by the three sages, whom he regarded as his greatest benefactors.

In the meanwhile poor Gylpho lay for a long time senseless, and when at last he came to himself, he thought every bone in his body was broken. Bethinking himself of the bottle of mineral water, which, through a great mercy, had not been damaged by the fall, he swallowed its contents, and became as well and as strong as ever. His mind had previously been altogether upset, but now he remembered his fife, and taking it out of his pocket, summoned Pellerwoinen, who suggested that he should return to the upper world on the back of a raven. So much had his

* In the mythology of all the Finnish countries a figure like that of Polyphemus is of frequent occurrence.

weight been lessened by a long fast, that not the slightest objection could be made to this mode of travelling, and the journey was performed.

He did not think it prudent in the first instance to visit the palace, inasmuch as he had no friend and three deadly enemies. So he engaged himself as apprentice to a smith of great repute, who lived in the neighbourhood, and after he had remained some time in the smithy, his master was summoned to the palace. The youngest Princess desired to have an iron crown, exactly like that which she had worn during her captivity, and although she gave a sort of rough pattern of the required article, the order was obviously not easy to execute. The poor smith hammered away and produced something which did not at all fit, whereupon, though he was not at all surprised, he went to bed in a very ill humour. While he was asleep, Gylpho, sounding his fife, summoned Pellerwoinen, who at his request, flew off to the rock, and was back in a trice with the real crown, which, on the following morning, he presented to his master, pretending that he had made it during the night. The smith wished him to take it to the Princess himself, but he modestly refused; so his master proceeded to the castle, and was richly rewarded by the King, while the Princess declared that the new crown (as she deemed it) was even better than the one she had lost. Now it was the turn for the second Princess to desire an exact copy of her silver crown; and this was produced exactly in the same manner as the more humble diadem. The eldest princess, struck with admiration, now bethought herself of the golden crown, and told the smith that if his apprentice could make another after the same model she would reward him with her hand. By the operation already described, the golden crown was produced and taken to the palace, thanks to his friend Pellerwoinen, by Gylpho himself, who arrived at the palace in a golden coach, drawn by three mouse-coloured horses. He could not help smiling when the Princess declared that the new crown was better than the old one; but, taking advantage of his position, he proved that he was the real deliverer of the captives, by displaying the halves of the three rings, which exactly fitted the other halves in the possession of the three ladies.

The marriage of Gylpho with the eldest Princess was celebrated with great splen-

dour. Growing rather tired of the festivities, and reflecting on the wickedness of the wise men, the good King, calling the courtier Dumb aside, said to him—

“By the way, we never got quite to the end of that story about the brother and sister and the little dog.”

“Oh, there is not much to be told, sire,” said the courtier. “The Prince married the sister, and the brother was liberated——”

“Yes, yes—that of course,” interrupted the King; “but what did they do to the she-fiend with the long name?”

“Oh,” was the reply, “they persuaded her to walk upon a blue cloth, which concealed a pit filled with burning pitch, into which she fell and was at once consumed.”

“Good!” exclaimed the King, “I was just thinking what ought to be done with those three scoundrels, whom we have so ridiculously looked upon as wise men. At all events, we will show that we are not so cruel as they were of old. We’ll have no burning pitch—nothing of that kind! One of them shall walk a league in very tight wooden shoes; another shall ride a league on the back of a bristly board—attired in very thin nether garments.”

“And the third, sire?” asked the courtier.

“Well,” said the King, after a pause, “we’ll let him off altogether, and hope that he will profit by the example of the other two. We are taught by the proverb that a good child will himself bring the rod, and that a bad one is not to be cured by any rod whatever.”

A CRY OF DISTRESS.

FRANCE is uttering a despondent wail, a groan apprehensive of future troubles, for reasons which few British heads of families would guess. She is lamenting not so much the millions transferred to German pockets as her own inadequate population. While every nation near her was obeying the law, “Increase and multiply,” France has done the contrary.

But if her area remain insufficiently peopled, while all around are doubling or tripling their numbers, it is evident that France must, in the end, be invaded and overflowed, like an island sunk below the level of the sea, by in-rushing waves of foreign population. And even if there be no immigration of strangers, her neighbours, increasing in strength and wealth while

she remains at best at a standstill, will attain a sensible superiority.

Some French authorities account for the deficiency of population by the desertion of the villages by agricultural labourers, who resort to large towns and industrial centres. But that tendency exists elsewhere besides in France—in countries whose population is rapidly on the increase. It is part of our common human nature. Town is the rustic's forbidden fruit, his tree of knowledge of good and evil. The attraction of towns for the rural population (the present writer believes) is, to a vast number, irresistible. In its constancy and its universal spread, it acts like a social force of gravity. Moralists and philosophers preach, to neutralise its power, in vain. To many individuals, it is fate, destiny, a thing laid down in their horoscope. Go up to town they must, to seek their fortune, or their pleasure. Once there, would they quit it and go back to their deserted fields, Bow bells sing to them "Turn again, Whittington." But the craving of country for town not being confined to France, the causes of France's decreasing population must be sought elsewhere.

Some very able men have supposed at first that the fault lay in the race. But they were soon convinced that it could not be so, by the rapid and continuous increase of the French Canadian population; while, on the other hand, the native American population, of Anglo-Saxon origin, believed to be one of the most expansive of races, is actually diminishing.

True, the change from country to town is unfavourable to robust health and length of life. Impure air, confinement in workshops and factories, close and crowded lodgings, with the abuse of indulgences, will have their inevitable effects, which are visited on the next and after generations. The Conseils de Révision (for the personal examination of recruits) prove that the number of exemptions on account of weakness or defective stature is about two out of seven in agricultural districts, two out of five in certain industrial centres, and two out of four, and even more, in certain others. The result is not surprising; but it is still more easily accounted for, when we remember that War sends the finest and strongest men to take their chance at Glory's butchery, leaving the weaklings and the cripples to replenish France and supply a posterity.

The health and life of the working classes

in towns and industrial districts are also compromised by strikes, commercial crises, artificial wants, the dearness of provisions; but, above all, by misconduct and improvidence. The workmen who earn the highest wages seem to be those who save the least money. But this again is even truer, generally, of the English than of the French workmen; and yet the population of the United Kingdom is not, on that account, beginning to taper off.

Official sources give the state of the case. A report addressed, on the 31st of December, 1872, to the President of the Republic, by the Minister of the Interior, informs us that the population of the area which is now the actual territory of France, is less, by nearly four hundred thousand souls, than it was in 1866. The diminution is principally caused (independent of the war) by the cruel epidemics which raged in many departments in 1870 and '71, by a certain slackening of the number of marriages, and also by an excess of deaths above the births. At the beginning of the present century, more births occurred in a population of twenty-seven millions than resulted, in 1866, from thirty-six millions and a half of people.

In some few departments, however, the population has increased since 1866. One of these is the Pas-de-Calais. Nevertheless the Conseil-Général of the Department, in its anxiety respecting the national welfare, has requested one of its members, Doctor Gody, Mayor of Guines, a man of large and enlightened views, to draw up a report on the depopulation of the rural districts,* coupling it with another subject, of which, at first sight, it would appear to be completely independent. The Doctor, though aware of other causes of depopulation, confines his report to that produced by the emigration from agricultural districts into towns. We are not necessarily so restricted here.

Recent philosophers have endeavoured to show that, without the occurrence of any grand catastrophe, apparently slight causes, acting for long-continued periods, are sufficient to produce important geological changes, and even to bring about the utter extinction of whole genera and species of animals. The moral world has its resemblances to the physical world; and it is possible to trace, amongst our Gallic neighbours, destructive influences

* "La Depopulation des Campagnes et Les Enfants Assistés." Par M. le Docteur Gody. Arras. De Sede et Cie, 1873.

arising out of institutions, from which their founders expected no more than the establishment of a social and financial equality which experience proves to be a baseless dream.

Human nature likes to keep whole and undivided whatever it has got together by the sweat of its brow—he it the farm, the flock, the business, or the factory—and to leave it entire to its successor. French legislation, hating aristocratic fortunes, and insisting that property (without reference to its kind or quality) should be parcelled out, at the death of the proprietor, into exactly as many parcels as he leaves children (without reckoning the widow's share), pitchforks human nature out at the door. Nature returns by the window; thus :

A married couple have an only son. They look out for, and unfortunately have no difficulty in finding another married couple of their own rank with an only daughter. They marry the only son to the only daughter; and the estate or the shop, instead of being split into fractions, is not only kept from falling into ruins, but is buttressed up by the acquisition of other property. The young couple follow their parents' example, for they are acted upon by exactly the same motives. They, too, have an only son. They give him to wife an only daughter, who presents them with an only grandchild. The young ladies, or the young gentlemen, need not be only children absolutely and in literal fact, if they are so virtually and in the practical result—circumstances which their prudent parents will ascertain and calculate beforehand. Each of them may have a couple of sisters, one of whom becomes a Sister of Charity or a nun, while the other is in bad health, or not likely to marry; they are eventually only sons or only daughters, as far as the family inheritance goes.

This system reduces the population amongst the middle classes at a rate fearful to think of, though easy to calculate. Were it universal in France, the population, like a pyramid, would finish off in a point or a single individual—the last only child of the last couple of only children. Sometimes the will of a Higher Power removes the cherished only child. The parents, left childless, find their projects baffled, and the property, which was to remain unbroken, has to be distributed amongst cousins, nephews, or still more distant relatives.

Happily for France, there are married pairs who, having little or nothing to divide after death, and not troubling themselves into how many atoms that nothing is splintered by the law, have, and rear, families of four or five children, to the great bewilderment of their wealthy neighbours, and so, in some measure, make up for the deficit.

Let not the reader suppose that the above description is imaginary or exaggerated. The principle is always at work, even when not fully carried out. There are cliques and circles of respectable people in France, by whom the having a large family is looked down upon as, if not a legalised sort of immorality, at least as an imprudent eccentricity of parental weakness, more to be honoured in the breach than in the observance. If a married couple leave two children behind them, a boy and a girl, to take their places, they think they have behaved very handsomely to the State, if not actually deserved the thanks of their country. But no margin is left for the premature consumption of human life by accident, disease, or war, and that in a country which has not yet learnt the folly of aggressive war.

It is not asserted that, with "marriages de convenance," as the rule, there are no happy marriages in France; but it is certain both that there are many marriages in which happiness is not superabundant and also that many marriages which might turn out happy are thereby prevented. Often the wife is quite as much her husband's commercial partner as his spouse. The Roman matron showed her sons as her greatest ornament. The French matron will show her cash-book and ledger; her lands, arable or pasture; her skillfully purchased shares in railways or loans; or her golden coins reposing without interest in stockings in the thatch or in pots in the cellar. She would consider a family of ten or twelve children a thing to blush for and conceal from the world.

But setting aside the inheritance question, the French laws and customs relating to marriage are singularly adverse to the spread of population. At no age, not even at threescore-and-ten, no matter whether bachelor or widower, if his parents (or only one of them) be alive, can a Frenchman marry without their consent. Up to twenty-five they have an absolute veto. After that age, in case of their refusal, he can send them, through a legal

and official channel, "respectful" stamped papers, which empower him, after a time, to act in opposition to their wishes.

It requires a very strong attachment to drive a young man or a young woman to this harsh measure—for single women sometimes employ it, as well as single men. Going to law with a parent is a repulsive idea, and is resorted to, mostly, with extreme unwillingness. But, besides the irritation and expense, it necessarily involves delay, during which may occur the proverbial slip between the cup and the lip, and the match be broken off by the objecting parties. No doubt many marriages that might be called imprudent are thus prevented; but the population—our immediate subject of consideration—is not thereby increased.

It is supposed that parents, in refusing consent to a marriage, are guided solely by their interest in their child's true welfare; but instances occur in which the only interest consulted is their own; where it suits their convenience to keep their child single—and even where they demand some sacrifice of money, or of responsibility (such as signing a lease or a bill), as the price of their consent.

French marriages are often openly and unblushingly interested, to a degree unknown in the United Kingdom, where a good and pretty girl, even if she be altogether portionless, need not despair of finding a husband. But, alas, for the portionless French girl, however good and pretty! The portion, not the girl, is too frequently looked at and estimated. Money-hunting beaux screen their moves behind the shelter of the law, and say, "It is not I who insist upon the dowry. My father refuses to let me get married, unless with a girl who has so much down." In the course of these venal negotiations, not a few marriages are broken off, by one party or the other, in disgust. They see that it is only a phase of horse or cattle dealing, and "they take their pigs to another market." But it is evident that—with reference to the matter in hand—the result cannot tend to increase the population. It rather accords with the poet's picture of wealth accumulating while men decay.

Many serious minds would gladly, were it possible, both reconsider the French laws of inheritance, and likewise relax, in some degree, the existing restrictions on marriage. But as that possibility seems deferred to an indefinite future, in conse-

quence of the self-interests of the vast majority of inheritors and the unwillingness of parents to yield the powers conferred by law, some statesmen accept the consequences as inevitable, sorrowfully believing, with the Baron Charles Dupin, that, although France is a brave and learned nation, that alone does not suffice to sustain her. If her population do not keep pace with the ascending progression of other countries, it is to be feared that she will eventually fall from the rank she once occupied amongst the nations. Others, more hopeful or more courageous, seek to remedy the evil, or at least to check its progress, by bestowing greater care and more effectual rearing on "assisted children."

Assisted children, in France, are those maintained by public or Government charity—foundlings, orphans, pauper illegitimates—who would otherwise fall victims to want, neglect, or infanticide. It is curious that the voids in a population which respectable and legitimate nurseries fail to fill, should have to be supplied from its uncultured growth, the offshoots of its wildings from desert spots. Place is thus provided for the children of the poor and the outcast to occupy, a hopeful opening made for those who otherwise had little hope. Two independent questions are brought into contact—the decrease of a nation's population, and the rearing and education of its infants who are absolutely or virtually orphans. National charity becomes one with national interest. Benevolence, by the simplest of consequences, leads to prosperity.

It was Christianity, Dr. Gody reminds us, which made of charity a virtue, and in the spirit of its Divine Founder, first originated schemes for succouring orphans and deserted children. Even in the nineteenth century, benevolent institutions for pauper infants exist only amongst peoples who follow the law of Christ. Other nations are nearly at the same point as when Moses was saved by Pharaoh's daughter.

In ancient Greece, it is true, the country adopted the children of warriors killed in battle; in Athens, they were presented to the people, in the theatre, at the feasts of Bacchus; but that was merely the price of blood, the payment of a debt, and not an institution of public charity for the maintenance of abandoned children. In Rome, where infants might be exposed and even killed, the infant became the absolute pro-

perty of the person who rescued him. Although, about the year 530, the Emperor Justinian forbade deserted children to be treated as slaves, the idea of taking charge of pauper deserted children from their birth, and providing them with a home, is an essentially Christian idea. In the eighth century, a Milanese priest, named Datheus, founded the first asylum for cast-off children, "where they might be brought up, taught a trade, and saved from servitude." In the eleventh century, a Hospital for Foundlings was erected at Montpellier.

Other isolated efforts, inspired by Christian charity, succeeded; but it was not till the end of Louis the Thirteenth's reign that the good work really became popular in France, through the exertions of Saint Vincent de Paul. Still it continued dependent on voluntary contributions, until Louis the Fourteenth, in 1670, by letters patent, adopted and definitely established that admirable project. The right of foundlings to assistance from public resources was thereby consecrated. Unhappily, sixty-six per cent. of these infants died before completing their first year.

In 1793, the Convention undertook to better the condition of foundling children; but it was the Empire that organised the institution on bases which still regulate, almost exclusively, the aid given them. Their number, in 1811, was sixty-nine thousand. It now amounts to one hundred and thirty-nine thousand, including all under twenty years of age; and the legion would be still more considerable, did not death thin its ranks in terrible proportions. In the Department of the Seine (Paris) the mortality of assisted children is fifty-two per cent. during their first year, and seventy-eight per cent. for the period of their first twelve years. The average, throughout France, is one-sixth for the first year and one-third up to fourteen years; but in a few departments the mortality reaches a figure which, having been disputed, we may be permitted to regard as incredible.

Doctor Gody glances at the means employed in England and in Russia for the maintenance of pauper orphans; but the grand question deliberated by himself and his colleagues is, where to place those who have survived their infancy, and whose age calls for some sort of education and requires a preparation for some definite line of life. Experience has proved that, in France, a great many assisted children,

both males and females, turn out badly. Legislators have striven to remedy this; but it is not for want of laws that the evil occurs. At the outset, a higher salary for and a severer choice of nurses, a stricter supervision and guardianship are called for, and would effect great good. Then, it is proposed to rescue orphans from death and from the demoralisation of towns by sending them into the country, where they will supply the hands so urgently demanded, and have a chance of remaining honest and hard-working agricultural labourers.

Doctor Gody's convictions evidently lead him to recommend a system already discussed in these pages.* The object is to make the child join the agricultural instead of the town population. He holds that the orphan, sent into the country to board and lodge with a small farmer or respectable farm-labourer, sharing the tasks and the hopes of his adopted family, will be inured to field-work, and will form a strong attachment to what may almost be called his native village.

Whether in town or country, we may believe that orphan children, after a certain age, are better dispersed amongst separate families, living with them on as nearly equal terms as possible, than collected together in "Orphelinats," "Asiles," Union Houses, District Schools, or other similar establishments. Consequently, the report concludes with a proposition to increase the monthly payments for the juvenile inmates, and to continue it up to fourteen years: also, at eighteen or twenty-one years of age, to give each foundling a complete trousseau or outfit.

It is desirable to record that French experience agrees with English, as to the superiority of the boarding-out system. But above all, the reader is requested to note the lament over the deficient population of France. It is a lesson for democratic and levelling reformers who would change our laws of inheritance and the existing power of bequeathing property, in the hope of bringing about great social equality. It is a consolation also to know that our redundant population is regarded with envy instead of with pity. Even pauper orphans are gladly economised in France; for what we are apt to consider an incumbrance and a superfluity, our neighbours are driven to look to as a resource.

* "Little Pauper Boarders." New Series, Vol. II., p. 301.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LXIII. THE DEAD PAST.

My amazement was extreme. The strange revelation came upon me like a blow. For the moment it fairly stunned me. I was speechless, almost senseless, with surprise. My first thought, when I could think at all, was that my uncle had gone mad. When I ventured to look at him—I could not immediately—in my feeling of stupefaction I had covered my eyes with my hands—he had turned away from me, and was leaning upon the window-sill, as though unwilling to witness my great trouble. He was much moved and distressed without doubt; but I could not question his perfect sanity. Next came the reflection, ludicrous in its incongruity just then—but yet not to be resisted—that I had unwittingly served a writ upon my own father! It was an unseemly recollection at such a moment; but my brain was in such a whirl, I was glad to make sure of any practical rational thought, however little importance it might in truth possess. We remained silent for some minutes.

"Sir George Nightingale is my father?" I demanded at length, in a gasping voice, that sounded strangely even to myself. I could not recognise it as my own. It was as the voice of some one I had never known.

"Yes!"

I had almost looked for his contradicting his former statement—for his assuring me that I had misunderstood him. The thing was still so incredible to me.

"You never suspected this?"

"Never."

"He breathed no word of it? Made no sign?"

"None."

"Yet, the opportunity was afforded him. Let him deny that, if he dare," said my uncle, with unusual warmth. "You bore from here a letter to him, which told him all. It was not written by my advice. It was written in spite of my advice. But your mother wished it to be: so you took the letter with you to London. You delivered it to him, the contents being unknown to you. It was thought right that you should know nothing of them. The result showed that we had judged correctly. You gave him the letter informing him

that you were his own only sc said—nothing!"

"He has been most kind to me pleadingly.

"Oh, he can be kind, most I speeches and sweet smiles cost him! Did he own you for his child take you to his heart as his son avow the wrongs done to the wife him—the wife he abandoned and starve, or worse? Did he speak of penitence, of remorse; did he at the sins he has committed, he has wrought! No! and you his kindness! I tell you that liar and a coward and a villain beginning. He remains so still

My uncle spoke vehemently, with passion the while, and spoke table noisily with his clenched hands had lent him words—even eloquently had never before known him excited.

"And now it is for you to choose your mother—what she has been your life, you know, I need not remind you—and this scoundrel been, as you say, so kind to you shrinks from owning you as his

"He is my father, you tell me to recollect that. Do not speak a way his son should not hear."

"What! I may not speak! What possesses you? Have you become infatuated about this man he so won you over by his fall and his glozing airs that you are his real nature? that you are not truth about him?"

"He is my father."

"A father who ignores you, who scarcely knew of your existence father who, for long years and troubled himself in no way of you, well content that you should so long as he was not plagued to for you!"

"He is my father. I am not. Still less is it for me to punish him

I scarcely knew what I said. I could not grasp the full significance of my uncle's words, of his charge against Sir George. Yet I felt that it was in my ears that such severe censures should be addressed.

"Oh, you lay stress upon you a son!" said my uncle, bitterly. "It is that due less to your mother this man? Are the wrongs she has tained at his hands nothing in you

"Does she ask me to avenge them?"

"No!" cried a voice behind me. My mother had entered the room.

"Hugh," she said, gently but firmly, as she laid her hand upon his shoulder, "you promised to be calm."

"I hope to be so. I have tried to be so, Mildred," he said, after a pause. With an effort he regained something of his ordinary composure. "I will be more patient in the future. Forgive me, Duke, if I have expressed myself too warmly. I desired only to set before you, plainly as I might, a very painful story. I have been hurried into passion and violence. But that is over now. I'm calm again, as you see. Of your duty as a son it is for you to judge. But the mention of your father's name—the thought of it even—fires my heart strangely. It has done so any time this score of years past. May I never be brought face to face with him! The trial—the temptation would be too great for me. For your mother's wrongs, they are not to be avenged by you or by me. So she has willed it; or, do you think I would have waited all this time and struck no blow on her behalf? I have yielded to her wishes—her commands in this matter; and she has good warrant for her decision. Vengeance is not for us, though it's hard, very hard, sometimes, to sit down meekly with one's hands before one and do nothing when cruel injury has been inflicted upon us, or upon those dear to us. And, then, to find sin prosperous, and the sinner great—honoured—famous; the world bowing down before him! But I'll not revile him more. He is your father, as you say, Duke—and he's Mildred's husband. I'll not forget that, and I'll bridle my tongue. I'll tell what I have to tell—for it must be told now—as simply as may be. Give me your keys, Mildred."

She gave them to him. He opened her desk and took from it a little packet of papers. There fell from these, as he placed them on to the table before him, the oval miniature in its washed leathern case I had seen but once before, when I was quite a child. Again I held it in my hands and examined it. I could trace little likeness in it to Sir George.

"He has much changed since this was painted," I observed.

"Changed?" said my mother, faintly. "No wonder. Yet it was done by his own hand, years since, before our marriage. It was like him once. At least I thought so. But he did not do himself justice. He was

very handsome then. He is handsome still, no doubt, however changed. And he is not the only one who has changed." She spoke with half-closed eyes, pressing her hand upon her forehead.

My thoughts went back to the old time, when I had first found the miniature in my mother's desk, after seeing the large portrait of Lord Overbury at the Hall. Had the fact that both pictures were the work of the same hand, and betrayed something of the same method of art, blended and confused them in my mind, even in its then unskilled and immature condition?

I remembered that I had then blamed myself, for viewing my father's portrait with a certain apathy I found almost unaccountable: It was different now. He lived; I had seen him, and knew him.

"You told me he was dead, mother," I said gently to her.

"Was he not dead then to both of us? Is he not dead still, to me, at least?" She took my hand in hers and held it while my uncle told the story of the past.

I cannot repeat it precisely in his words. I was still too much confused and disturbed to gather much more than the purport of his discourse. While I remember well his attitude and manner as he spoke—the dignity with which he had suddenly become invested, and the unaccustomed fluency of his speech—yet his exact phrases have escaped me. Moreover it will be convenient to engraft upon his story certain particulars which it did not embrace, and which came to my knowledge at a later date.

The packet contained only the certificate of my mother's marriage, and a few faded-looking letters.

Concisely stated, my uncle's story was to this effect:—

Hugh and Mildred Orme were the only children of old David Orme, of the Down Farm. Mildred had been christened after her aunt, her father's sister, an elderly maiden lady living at Bath, in fair circumstances, but whose property at her decease devolved upon David Orme. While on a visit to Miss Orme at Bath, Mildred, a girl of seventeen or so—high-spirited, and of remarkable beauty, had been sent to school to receive instruction in music and drawing, and other accomplishments. Miss Orme had desired that her niece should receive a rather more refined education than was usual with farmers' daughters at that period. David Orme had opposed

this step; but he had been overruled by his sister, who claimed a right to promote the education of her niece and god-daughter. At the school Mildred attended, she first met George Nightingale. He was there in the character of assistant to his father, the drawing-master of the establishment. Frequently the old man's failing health kept him from the school; at such times George would give the lessons in his father's stead.

Between the young drawing-master and his beautiful pupil an attachment sprung up. At least, he did not hesitate to avow his love for her, and he became possessed of her affections. It was said of him—for he was notoriously poor, and involved in debt—that he was tempted by a report that she was an heiress. She was known to be the daughter of a rich farmer, and it was believed that she would inherit the property of her aunt. That old Miss Orme's income would terminate with her life was not then generally understood. Still Mildred's prospects were of too modest a kind to be especially alluring to a fortune-hunter or a necessitous man. More probably he loved her truthfully for her beauty, and for herself. He formally proposed for her hand. David Orme would not hear of his suit, and ordered the discontinuance of Mildred's drawing-lessons. He addressed his sister on the subject in very peremptory terms, threatening to come to Bath to carry away his daughter. To the young man he wrote, it was admitted, most insultingly.

Then came a great scandal. Mildred escaped from her aunt's house, eloped with George Nightingale, and became his wife.

David Orme was furious. He never forgave his daughter. He commanded that she should not be mentioned again in his presence. He declared that his doors should be for ever closed against her. He struck her name out of the Family Bible, and made a new will, bequeathing all his property to his son Hugh. He died very soon afterwards, attributing his shortened life, and the sorrows of his closing days, to the ingratitude and misconduct of his daughter.

At this time Miss Orme was already dead. She had supplied such assistance as she could to the young couple. They were now left penniless—dependent only upon the exertions of young George Nightingale. These should have sufficed. His talents had been recognised; he had received much patronage and encourage-

ment. It was even said that he had been spoiled by the overpraise of Bath society.

But the marriage had not been a happy one. He was heard to avow that it had ruined him. It had entailed upon him cold looks and scandalous whisperings, and the loss of many friends. He had been so fêted as a bachelor. As a married man he was disregarded. He grew impatient, discontented, angry with himself, and with all about him. He repented his marriage. His creditors were threatening him.

Against his wife he could fairly bring no charge. Had she not suffered by her marriage not less than he had? But already his heart was cooling towards her. Poverty had stepped between them. It had not changed her love one whit—had intensified it rather—but it was destroying his. And then he was ambitious, self-seeking. His home had become miserable—unmendable to him. His indignation at what he held to be his unmerited misfortune, rankled and festered within him.

Still some friends remained to him—among them Lord Overbury and Lord and Lady Wycherley. When his child was born, Lord Overbury was sponsor to the infant, lending him his name of Marmaduke. His lordship was not very favourably regarded by the more refined society of Bath. A nobleman of sporting tastes, rude manners, reckless, extravagant, and it was said of somewhat vicious life. Still there was no very distinct accusation against him in those days; and he had certainly encouraged the young painter, rewarding him handsomely for his labours.

Lady Wycherley, too, had been kind to Mrs. Nightingale at a time when she much needed and greatly prized kindness. Her ladyship was a beauty then, with a husband much older than herself. She was light-hearted and somewhat light-headed; but her name was at this time free from the serious reproach her folly and sin brought upon it afterwards. My mother always spoke gently of the erring woman.

George Nightingale quitted Bath alone, suddenly, and secretly, to avoid arrest, it was said, and to seek fame and fortune in London. He had been furnished by Lord Overbury with a sufficient sum of money and with letters of introduction. His wife and child were to rejoin him at a future date, when he had been enabled to prepare for them something of a home in town. He left fifty pounds with his wife for her support meanwhile. After a week

or so he sent to her for twenty pounds of this fifty. She never heard from him again. She wrote to him repeatedly, but obtained no answer to her letters. She had never seen him since. His parting words had been most affectionate. His one letter from London was hurriedly written, but betrayed no lack of tenderness. Had he designed to abandon her for ever?

"He left her to the tender mercy of his friend, Lord Overbury," said my uncle, sternly. "There was a corrupt and infamous compact between them!"

His lordship had frequently seen Mildred Orme before her marriage. She was a daughter of one of the tenants upon the Overbury lands.

In Bath he had been the constant companion of her husband, his chief patron and friend. Something shocked by his uncouth bearing and speech, she had yet faith in his disinterestedness. With all his roughness, it seemed probable that he was really kind-hearted, generous, and honest. She was soon undeceived.

He persecuted her with the most shameful addresses.

She was almost friendless—her money was well nigh exhausted. Her alarm was extreme; but her courage did not desert her. Despair perhaps lent her strength. In an angry scene she braved and defied the villain, dismissing him from her presence. Then she fainted away, pressing to her heart her child, as though it had been a shield.

In proof of this dreadful passage in his narrative my uncle produced a letter addressed to her by Lord Overbury. It avowed his passion for her, his fixed determination to possess her. It pointed out that starvation was threatening both her and her child, and that her only hope of life and safety lay in her yielding to his suit. Moreover, it conveyed in the plainest terms that her husband had deserted her, wilfully, and with premeditation, conniving at his own shame and at her undoing. It was a brutal letter; horrible in its frankness.

With help from Lady Wycherley, carrying her child in her arms, Mrs. Nightingale fled from Bath, and took refuge with her brother, Hugh Orme. She had never since quitted the Down Farm. When her father had discarded her, scarcely less angry and indignant than he was, she had

vowed never to set foot in the old house again. Time had cancelled that rash pledge. David Orme was dead; her need and her trouble was most urgent; and Hugh would take no denial.

"I knew nothing of what was happening in Bath," he said, "or I should have been at her side to help her, long before. Be sure of that, Duke."

"I was proud, and I was punished," murmured my mother. "I wanted none to know of the misery that had followed upon my marriage. I wanted to endure alone. That could not be. I thank God for it now."

Poor Lady Wycherley suffered for her kindness to my mother. She drew upon herself the love of Lord Overbury.

What were the drugs, the charms, the conjuration, the mighty magic of this man? He had the repute of a successful lover—hideous, brutal as he was. But he possessed a certain force of character—an animal violence of disposition. He hurled himself against obstacles, and trampled them down. Thus, in many cases, he succeeded in attaining his ends.

Lady Wycherley fled with him, and subsequently, as the reader knows, became his wife. She wrote to inform my mother of her marriage—a strange, penitent, incoherent letter. Afterwards at intervals she wrote again—when she was separated from her husband—neither asking nor obtaining replies to her letters. It was as though she clung to the woman who had displayed a fortitude superior to her own.

In this wise only can I explain the distrust my mother had exhibited, when informed by Rosetta of her marriage with Lord Overbury. My mother was unconvinced that the real Lady Overbury did not still survive.

It was at this troubled period of my mother's life, as I gathered, that my uncle had first sought legal help from the late Mr. Monck. But whatever his advice had been, no action followed thereon. In this way, however, something of these early events had, no doubt, become known to Mr. Monck's clerk—Vickery.

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AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MANSFIELD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXII. A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE.

WHEN Evy came to herself it was on the sofa in her own little sitting-room; not a sound was heard save the steady fall of summer rain upon the window, and at first she thought herself quite alone; but presently her eyes fell on a bowed figure in the chair beside her, and she recognized Mr. Hulet. All others, whoever they had been who had answered Mr. Paragon's cry for assistance, had left her. She awoke with a confused sense of wrong and woe, but without recalling what had happened, till her gaze fixed itself upon her uncle's face, and read it there.

"Bear up, my brave girl," whispered he, "he was never worthy of you."

"Hush, hush," said she, softly. "He was not to blame. I had behaved ill to him, as he thought, and he was piqued and angry. It was no one's fault."

"Yes it was, Evy; God forgive me, it was mine."

"What can you mean, uncle?"

Her question was less in answer to his words than to his looks and tone, which evinced an insupportable agony. She had thought nothing could be more terrible than to see this old man weep, but she had been mistaken; there were no tears now, but a hopeless yearning in his eyes, a blank distress upon his ghastly face, such as one might wear who prays for death, but to whom death comes not. Dejection and Despair have each their sad insignia, but there is that which makes a sadder show on the countenance of man than they; when the heart is wrung by the sense of wrong-doing for which there is no remedy

—profitless Remorse. It was this that Evy beheld, and though she knew it not for what it was, it shocked and terrified her.

"It is wrong, it is wicked of you, dear," she continued, earnestly, "to thus reproach yourself for a misfortune that could not have been avoided. It was not your fault that your speculations failed, and made us poor. Nor is there any reason to repine—upon my account at least—at that. I am young, and strong, and have kind friends such as many a poor girl lacks."

Mr. Hulet shook his head and groaned; such arguments, she understood him to mean, were without consolation. He knew that it was not the loss of wealth that was making his darling wretched.

"As for Captain Heyton, uncle," she went on, in a firm, quiet voice, "I am not sure that I should have been his wife in any case. He was giving up too much for me as it was. This trouble has perhaps been sent to save me from a selfish act, the end of which might have been disastrous, just as this wet and sullen evening has followed on a sunny morn. How bright and joyous it was!" She was thinking of the dawn of her own love, not of the day; and the memory of it, and how it had all ended, was too much for her. She suddenly broke down and burst into tears.

"Do not let us deceive ourselves, dear Evy," whispered Mr. Hulet, softly, "I know what has bruised your tender heart."

"Is it true then, uncle?" sighed Evy, after a long silence. "I mean about Jack and Judith?"

"I believe so, darling. I heard of from Mrs. Barmby yesterday, but we had not the courage to tell you. She had along, it seems, had her doubts of J-

—suspected, I mean, that she wished to secure Captain Heyton for herself.”

“It was a treacherous and cruel deed; may God forgive her for it,” said Evy, earnestly. “How blind I was; for you, dear uncle, perceived her purpose also.”

“No, no,” answered Mr. Hulet, with a gesture of dissent. “I knew her for a heartless worthless girl, but never dreamt of such deceit as this.”

“Why it was you who warned me, but a few weeks back,” returned Evy, with astonishment. “Do not leave those two together,” you said.

“Did I? I had forgotten that,” rejoined Mr. Hulet, confusedly, and putting his hand up to his forehead. “You must not mind all I say at times, Evy. Judith was no favourite of mine, you know. Don’t let us talk about her any more;” here he gave a little shudder, and closed the window, as though the damp affected him. “A letter came for you this afternoon, darling, when you were in the garden—here it is, with the Dunwich postmark.”

Evy took it eagerly from his hands. The address was in Mrs. Mellish’s handwriting; and, though the hope was small, there was a hope that it might contain the proffer of another line of life. Another home, however humble, than that they at present occupied, now seemed better to her than to dwell among these pitying faces, in every one of which she read her own humiliation and her rival’s triumph; for poor Evy was but a woman.

“What must you have thought of me, my own dear Evy,” began the letter from the Rector’s wife, “for not having answered your last note. It was not that I had forgotten it, believe me, for I have scarce had anything else in my mind for weeks; but the fact is, I dared not write until the affair was completed about which I am going to tell you. To hold out a hope to you that might not, after all, be realised, was a cruelty I could not risk with one who has had such grievous troubles as yourself; and, besides, you did say, ‘If what I ask is out of your power, pray do not give yourself the pain of a reply,’ and it was out of my power until this morning. Though your letter was marked ‘private,’ I was compelled to show it to two persons, of whose devotion to your interests you have, I am sure, no doubt; if you had had any, however, and could have seen how they received the news of your calamities, it would have been soon resolved. My dear Evy, the old Doctor was

fairly overcome. ‘What’s the use of being good, Parson!’ he cried out to my husband, ‘if things like this are allowed to happen to the best of us?’ As for the Rector’s ejaculation, you cannot expect a jealous wife like me to repeat it to you; but it was something tremendous. Of course, my first notion was to ask you and Mr. Hulet to come and occupy our two little spare rooms until something permanent could be devised for you; but both the gentlemen were strong against that. ‘If we had only Evy to consider about, my dear, I should start to-day and fetch her,’ George had the temerity to say; but we must be careful how we thrust what may seem to be an obligation upon Mr. Hulet, who is a comparative stranger to us.’ To this the Doctor assented, adding that your uncle, although a most generous and sound-hearted gentleman, was at once the most nervous and the most obstinate of men—a combination difficult to deal with, and requiring very delicate treatment. Even supposing that we could procure for your dear self any such situation as you suggested, what was to be done with your uncle was, indeed, a serious problem; for you must not imagine that such slender payment as you would receive for teaching the young Miss Colvilles, for example—and I confess I shouldn’t like to see you a governess in *that* family—and there are many like it—would do more than support yourself. ‘Keep her sweet soul and body together,’ said the Doctor, whose language throughout was outrageous; ‘no, of course, it wouldn’t; and how that melancholy old saint’—meaning Mrs. Colville—‘would snub her!’

“Well, while we were proposing this and that, the Doctor suddenly jumped up with a whoop that might have done honour to an American Indian, ‘I have got it,’ cried he, ‘and now I know why churchwardens were invented.’ People who didn’t know him would, of course, have taken him for a lunatic; and I confess that I was a little alarmed myself. ‘Do you mean yard-long clay pipes, Doctor, or real churchwardens?’ asked my husband, quietly. ‘I mean,’ answered he, ‘the flesh and blood ones. Often and often have I asked myself, Why was I fool enough to accept such a ridiculous office just to please Mellish. But now I see that there was an intention in it all along. Your making me churchwarden was what Mrs. Colville would call ‘a special;’ for it just occurs to me that there have been two vacancies

in Seymour's Home for years, and it is the vestry—the muddle-headed, dogged monster that you so well know how to drive—that has the right of appointment!

"This struck us both, dear Evy, as being a most fortunate thought. Seymour's Home, as you doubtless recollect, is a most pleasant place—very different from the almshouse which you used to visit so often, and where you are so sadly missed. We have, happily, so few 'decayed gentle-folks' in Dunwich that it has not been full for a long time; and the election is restricted to persons who have dwelt at least three years in the village. The rooms are small, but with a beautiful out-look. But why should I describe what you know so well? The rooms that are vacant were occupied by the two Miss Simcoes, sisters of the late Rector, with whom you have taken tea a score of times, and sweetened it by your presence. All I need say is, that whatever candidate is elected to the privileges of Seymour's Home—which include a small annual allowance—is under no obligation to any living being, but only to the memory of a good citizen of Queen Elizabeth's time, who endowed the place. To object to the appointment on that ground would be precisely the same, therefore, as though my husband should have refused to accept his fellowship at Cambridge, to which he was elected by those members of his college in whom the right of presentation was vested.

"Only our 'vestry'—to go on with my story—is not composed of quite the same elements; and in this lay the difficulty of our plan. My husband and the Doctor, working shoulder to shoulder, could do a good deal, they thought, and at first imagined their task was easy. But only imagine the fawning meanness of some natures! Your own election was never in doubt, but some influential members of the parish parliament objected to that of your uncle upon the ground that it could be displeasing to Lord Dirleton, because of Mr. Hulet's Republican principles! It is enough to make one a Republican oneself to hear of such things. It is our belief that, as a matter of fact, his lordship would have been the very first to give his vote, if he had had one, in your uncle's favour; for not only is no man, as my husband says, so vile as his toadies, but Lord Dirleton has a warm and generous heart; yet we felt that any application to him would, under the circumstances, have been distasteful to your uncle. And, Evy, darling, after three

weeks of argument (so called) and chatter—during which the Doctor absolutely 'barked,' I am told, at some of them—we have won the day. The malcontents have been at last converted, and Mr. Angelo Hulet and Miss Eva Carthew have been this morning unanimously elected Associates of Seymour's Home!"

"Oh, uncle!" exclaimed Evy, putting down the letter with a joyful cry, "you have only to say 'Yes,' and you and I can go and live together all alone at dear old Dunwich."

"To Dunwich! no, no," answered the old man, awaking from the abstraction into which, as usual, he had sunk while Evy was reading and speaking, in feeble tremulous tones—"not now; I cannot go there now."

This unexpected refusal was a sad blow to Evy. The tidings she had just received had seemed good news indeed. The prospect of exchanging Lucullus Mansion, with its noise and bustle, and ever renewing crowds of strangers, for the calm retirement of Seymour's Home, had been inexpressibly grateful to her. She, for her part, did not shrink, as her uncle seemed to do, from the contrast of the position they had once held in Dunwich, with that which was now offered to them. She did not anticipate that the Misses Colville, or Miss Wapshaw, or the like, would give themselves much trouble about them, even if they noticed them at all. As she had read good Mrs. Mellish's words, the quiet, quaint old garden, into which few footsteps, except those of the associates themselves, ever intruded, the stone-porched doors, over which hung jessamine and roses, and the placid country scenes on which they looked, had pictured themselves before her eyes, and the prospect of enjoying them had been as balm to her wounded heart. But all that was over now. Since the idea was distasteful to her uncle, it was no longer to be entertained. She would go on as she had begun, as Mrs. Barmby's assistant and accountant, trying not to listen to what was whispered about their melancholy fortunes, trying not to see those glances which, though they might be meant to be pitiful, were as cruel as the tender mercies of the wicked.

"I am afraid I have disappointed you, Evy," sighed Mr. Hulet, after a little pause; "and yet Dunwich would have had its bitter memories for you, my darling."

"Perhaps so, dear uncle; you are doubt-

less the best judge," answered Evy, tearfully. "Wherever you choose to dwell, be sure that I shall be content, so long as we are together"—here came a knock at the door; it was their old servant Jane, for whom Mrs. Hodlin had found a nominal situation in the Mansion, but who was especially attached to the service of her former employers.

"Please, sir, Mr. Paragon desires his best compliments, and hopes that Miss Evy is recovered of her indisposition." Here was another source of annoyance, that for the moment Evy had forgotten, and from which, could Mrs. Mellish's offer have been accepted, she would have escaped as from the rest. She was not angry with Mr. Paragon, who after all had acted, if without much delicacy or good taste, by no means without good feeling. A few months ago she might have regarded his pretensions with ridicule, but the offer of himself and his twenty-five thousand pounds to a penniless girl, whom he knew to have been jilted, was something she now understood how to value. His passion was hopeless, of course—so out of all question that the declaration of it had caused her no pain except upon his own account; but it had been obviously genuine, and his naïveté, before his terrible exposure of Judith's depravity—Evy's little stock of hard words was all for her, she had not one for Jack—had touched almost as much as it had amused her.

"Tell Mr. Paragon that I am quite recovered, Jane," said she.

"And please, ma'am," hesitated Jane, with a half glance at Mr. Hulet—as much as to say, "If master was not in the room I would say more"—"Mr. Paragon desires his best compliments, and he has had a letter by the afternoon's post, and would like to speak to you about it."

"Show Mr. Paragon in here to me," exclaimed Mr. Hulet, suddenly rising from his chair. "What does the man mean by sending messages of this kind? Evy, darling, Evy, my own sweet pet," added he, exchanging his angry tone, as the maid left the room, for one of the utmost tenderness, "I am afraid this roof must indeed shelter us no longer; in my selfish brooding over my own troubles I have omitted to concern myself with yours, I fear. Is it possible that this vulgar person, taking advantage of the change in your circumstances, has dared to intrude upon you with his familiarity?"

"No, no, uncle; indeed Mr. Paragon

means no harm," interrupted Evy. "As for this letter, I know nothing about it, unless, indeed, it comes from Judith."

"From Judith!" echoed Mr. Hulet, quickly. "Why should that be? Why should she write to him?"

"Well, uncle, she professed to like him, you know—encouraged his advances, and even, as he believed—but hush! here is Mr. Paragon."

And at the same moment that gentleman was ushered in, looking very much alarmed and distressed, and twisting an open letter in his hand as though he would have made a "spill" of it to light his pipe. "I hope I see Miss Carthew better; how do you find yourself, Mr. Hulet? What a wet afternoon we are having, are we not?" were his first hurried words.

It was a trying position for any man who has come to lay his heart and hand at a young woman's feet, to find her uncle in the room; and, moreover, Mr. Paragon was painfully shy.

"I am given to understand that it is on my niece's account that we are indebted for the honour of this visit, Mr. Paragon," observed Mr. Hulet, austere. "May I ask, as her uncle and guardian, what is the nature of the confidential statement which you seem so anxious to make to her?"

"I have a letter to show her—or at least to read to her," stammered the visitor, "the contents of which will clear up certain doubts, if they should still exist in her own mind, respecting a matter in which she is gravely interested."

"Is the matter private?" inquired Mr. Hulet; "that is, such as I am not privileged to hear."

Mr. Paragon looked appealingly at Evy.

"No, uncle, it is not," said she, with a sudden impulse. "It is true Mr. Paragon has done me the compliment of proposing to marry me; but he has had his answer, which his good sense will, I am sure, have led him to accept as final. Whatever he may have further to say to me, therefore, may be mentioned in your presence."

Never did man look more hopelessly checkmated than poor Mr. Paragon. Evy's instinct had suggested to her the very method best adapted to put a stop to his importunities. She felt that he had come—whatever might be the pretext of his visit—to renew his offer, and that she must needs anticipate him by a decisive rejection. He was just the sort of man who declines to take a refusal if he can

possibly help it, and enjoys dangling about a beloved object, although with scarce the faintest hope of success.

"It is no great consequence," stammered he; "but Judith, that is Miss Mercer, has sent me back all my presents, and the marriage is to come off at once, it seems—and—and—yes, she writes" (and here he referred to the twisted note) "that they're going to live abroad. That's all. It is very short, and not so very sweet to either of us; but I thought you'd like to know."

"Thank you, Mr. Paragon," said Evy, coldly.

She strove this time to be collected, not to give way; but it was very hard to listen to such words with calmness, although they were but the confirmation of what she had heard already. He was to be married shortly, then—almost at the very date that she herself was to have been his bride; and—

"What is it, uncle?"

"Nothing, my darling; you have been only a little faint."

"Where is Mr. Paragon?"

"He is gone, dear, long ago. And, while I have been sitting here, watching my darling's colour come back into her pretty face, and thinking the matter over, I have altered my mind about refusing Mrs. Mellish's offer—"

"Oh, uncle, not for my sake, I hope," said Evy.

"No, darling; but for both our sakes. I think it will be best to go to Seymour's Home."

JERRY DONOVAN'S MIDNIGHT MASS.

LOUGH INEY is situated in one of the wildest valleys in the West of Ireland. The Law Life Assurance Company have erected a lodge by the edge of the lake, for the convenience of the disciples of old Isaac, but for some reason best known to that distinguished guild, the internal arrangements have never been completed, and it stands, virtually a bleak house, resembling that stereotyped dead sea fruit, the rottenness of the core of which is so often made capital of by simile-loving *litterateurs*.

I was fishing Lough Iney—the month was August, the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-three. It was a melting day, with murky clouds overhead, and just a chance of a breeze later on. My rod lay bobbing at its own reflection from out the end of the boat, and I was smoking

the calumet of peace, and engaged—Micawber-wise—waiting for something to turn up. At the bow sat Jerry Donovan, my guide, philosopher, and friend, in the act of "reddyin" his dhudeen, or little black pipe. Jerry's eye was as bright as a glass bead, and twinkled like a dissipated star. He was Myles na Coppalleen, except that he was a trifle more ragged—the complicated patchwork upon his small-clothes would have puzzled the Davenport Brothers. Jerry and I were upon terms of the easiest familiarity, which I cautiously cemented by occasional "golligues," as he invariably called them, from out a leathern flask which hung suspended to my waist, and the giving of which generally evoked from the recipient a thoroughly Irish sentiment, or a fragment of song.

Jerry had lighted his pipe, and I had re-filled, when he suddenly asked—

"De ye ever hear tell o' Martin Hannegan's ass, sir?"

I responded in the negative.

"He was a quare sort av a baste. He dhrank whin he was dhry."

"That's a broad hint, Jerry."

"Beggora, I'm as dhry as a cuckoo."

Having poured him out a "golligoue" he held the vessel in his hand whilst he delivered himself of this flourishing sentiment:

"May yer days be as bright as the bades on this sperrits, an' may yer heart be always as sthrong."

"There's no chance of a fish, Jerry?"

"Divil a wan, yer anner."

"Any chance of a story, Jerry?"

"Troth thin there is, bekase ye've thrated me dacent, and I'll tell ye what happened me in regard av sarvin mass, in the little Chapel of Ballynacluskeen, over the hill beyant," pointing, as he spoke, in the direction of a mountain, known as Honnamondhoul, towering right over us. Having carefully taken three or four vigorous pulls at his pipe, he removed it from his mouth, and commenced as follows:—

"Well, sir, I was a lump av a gossoon about, thoth it's a long time ago, sure enough—and divil resave the buke I'd read, or sum I'd do, but it's ather the rabbits I was, and ketchin fish, an divartin meself intirely, whin wan mornin', nigh Christmas, up comes Father Myles Macmanus—may he be sayin' the rosary in beatificaytion this blessed minit, amin." And Jerry reverently removed his hat. "Up he kem

to where me poor mother was sittin' foreninst the fire, and says he 'Missis Kinshella' says he, 'why the blazes!' here Jerry coughed violently, "thim's not his riverence's exact words, sir, but, ye see, he was riz. 'Misses Kinshella,' says he, 'have ye no regard at all at all, for to be in glory whin ye shovel off this mortal coil,' says he.

"'Oh yer riverence,' says she, 'why wud ye uthther thim hard words agin me,' beginin' for to cry.

"'Bekase mam,' says he, a little softened, 'Ye're not doin yer dhuty.'

"'Oh Father Myles, what is it I done wrong,' says she, roarin' till ye'd think her heart wud splhit.

"'Why don't ye sind that gossoon,' pointin his finger at me, 'to attind me mass,' says he. 'I was bet up entirely a Sunday for some wan to attind last mass, and I was wudout me brequest till it was time for to go to me dinner,' says he, 'an I'm not over sthrong,' says he, 'be raisin av my heart that's wrong.'

"'He'd only spile yer mass, yer riverince,' says me poor mother, thryin for to get me off.

"'Sind him to me on Christmas Eve,' says Father Mac, 'an I'll larn him how for to do it—for he must attind the midnight mass,' says he.

"'So, for to make a long story short, yer anner, he got the soft side o' me poor mother, an I was sint wud a sore heart over the hills to that little chapel, foreninst ye, on Christmas Eve, for to larn for to sarve the midnight mass.

"'Well, sir, Father Myles was the broth av a priest. He never thought av nothin but the souls av the faithful departed, an av the sinful meandherins av some av his flock; an in regard o' dhrink he was cruel hard. Av he got the taste av a smell o' sperrits off av a boy, he was at him like a cock to a blackberry. He'd pick, an pick, an pick, at him, until he wouldn't leave a flither on him, an ye'd do all sorts to get out av his claws.

"'I wint up to the chapel, and he fairly bothered me wud et cum sperrit-tew tew oh, till I kem away wud an ass's load av Latin in my head, but all rowled up like a plate av stirabout, so that whin I had a 'Dominy' all right, av I was to be sint to Botany for it, I couldn't bowl out the vobiscum.

"'Blur an ages (says I), what'll I do at all at all. I must only thry an bother him wud the bell."

Jerry paused, threw a sheep's eye at my flask, which I pretended not to perceive and taking a prolonged pull at his dhudeen, continued—

"'Divil sich a night ever kem out av th sky, for snow. It bet all ye ever hear tell av. The flakes was as big as hin's eggs and there was a wind blowin that wud th the sthings av yer brogues.

"'Yer not goin for to sind the gossoon out sich a hard night,' says me poor father.

"'There's no help for it,' says me mother.

"'He'll be smuthered wud the cowld. Be sed be me, and let him stay where he is.'

"'He must sarve midnight mass,' says me mother.

"'There'll be no wan to hear it,' says me father, a little rough.

"'But Father Macmanus must say it,' says me mother. She got the better av him, av coorse, an I was sint out to cras that very hill, for we wor livin' below there in the bog."

"That must have been a damp spa. Jerry," I interposed.

"'Damp, avic! It's better nor half the year undher wather, an the very snipes has the newralgy. It's only fit for a say gull or a dispinsary dochthor."

A more dreary looking region I never beheld. Even in the bright summer sunlight it looked a dismal swamp.

"I had four good mile to put undherme." Jerry, resumed, "four good mile, as bad as tin, for it was all up hill, an I, only I knew the short cuts on me road as well as a crow, be me song I was mulvadered. an' its in the bottom av the lake here among the salmin—bad cess to thim, why won't they take the illigant flies that yer honor is timpting thim wud—I'd be as shure as there's a bill on a crow."

"It was tough work, yer anner, sthru- lin agin' wind an snow, an I goin entirely agin me likin, an not a word av what Father Myles had discorsed to me in the mornin but was clane bet out o' me head. More nor twice't I was goin for to turn back, but somethin tould me to go on. There was a wake at Phil Dimpsy's, an a dance at a sheebeen beyant Glendalough, but somethin' sed, go on Jerry, yer wanted. an on I wint, wud snow-balls as hard as marvels stickin' to me brogues."

"By jove, Jerry, if I had been in yer place, I'd have left Father Macmanus in the lurch," said I.

"So ye wud, and that's just yer igna-

rance," retorted Jerry, in an offended tone. "Av ye hear me out, ye'll see that I was in the right in purshuin' the path, but folly yer own way. Av ye don't like the story, ye can lave it, sir."

A golligogue restored mutual confidence, and he resumed—

"Whin I got up to the chapel, there wasn't a stim av light, an I crept round to the vesthry doore, and knocked respectful like, but no answer. I knocked agin, no answer. I riz the latch, and pushed the doore, the last sod was burnin' out, an' there wasn't a handful o' fire.

"'He hasn't come yet,' says I to meself, 'so I'll humour the fire,' an I wint for to stir it, whin I felt me heart drop into me brogues, and me hair fly up to the ceilin', for forenenst me stud Father Myles Macmanns, as white as if he was bein' waked, and lookin' quare an mournful. He was in his vestmints reddy for his mass.

"I cudn't spake. Me tongue was that dhry in me throat, that ye cud have grated a lump av sugar on it. I cominced for to shake like a dog that's too long in the wather, an I was that afeard that me stomik was say sick.

"He never sed a word, but kept lookin' at me, quare and mournful.

"I sthuggled wud a patther and avry; it gev me courage, for, sez I, afther a little, 'It's a terrible night, yer riverince.'

"'Are ye reddy to sarve me mass?' says he, in a voice that mad me shiver, for it was as if it kem out av a nailed coffin.

"'I'm reddy, yer riverince,' says I, 'but there's not a crayture stirrin'. I kem up the boreen, an there wasn't a thrack.'

"'Are ye reddy to sarve me mass?' says he, agin, in the same awful voice.

"'Will I light the althar, yer riverince,' says I. He sed nothin' to this, but waved me wud his hand for to go before him. Me knees was rattlin' together, like pays in a mug, but I lurchd before him, out into the dark chapel, and it was as dark as the velvet on yer anner's collar, barrin' one little light, in th' althar, that med the place look like the bottom av the lake. An now kem the fear on me that I cudn't ansur right, an that I was av no more use nor that ould ram that's nibblin' over in th' island there; but it's truth I'm tellin' ye, from the minit he cominced, the whole av the risponsis kem to me as if they wor wrote in letters av light on the wall, an I sarved his mass as well as if I'd been in Maynooth Collidge for a quarther.

"Yer not a Catholic, Mистер Bowles, an

mebbe ye never heerd a mass, or was in a chapel nayther?"

This was put interrogatively.

"I am not a Catholic, Jerry, but I have been in a Catholic church, and have heard mass more than once," I replied.

"I'm glad of it, for ye'll undherstand what I'm goin' to tell ye, sir. At the ind av the mass, when all is over, the priest comes down the step av th' althar, and comminced wud the *Day Profundis* or prayer for the dead. Well, sir, I was reddy wud me risponsis, whin he turns to me, an he sez—oh murther, how I shake whin I pondher on thim words—sez he, 'Pray!' sez he, 'pray for the sowl av a dead man. Pray!' says he, 'pray as ye hope to be saved. Let yer prayer be as white as the snow that's fallin' from heaven this blessed night.'

"I threw meself on the steps av th' althar, and prayed my best. I was found there the next mornin' by Tim O'Shaughnessy, who kem up to reddy the chapel for first mass.

"'What the mischief are ye doin there, ye young imp,' says he.

"I tould him how I sarved Father Macmanns's midnight mass.

"'Sarved what?' says he.

"'Father Myles Macmanns's midnight mass,' an' I up an' tould him all about it.

"He looked very frightened, and quare, an sez he—

"'Ye hadn't a sup in.'

"'Sorra a wan,' sez I, 'and I wud'nt tell a lie in this holy place for the goold av Arabia.'

"'Well,' says he, 'it's awful to think of, for *Father Myles Macmanns died yesterday, at four o'clock.*'"

Jerry Donovan, when he concluded, wiped the perspiration from his brow, and seemed as though engaged in prayer, then suddenly resuming his wonted nonchalance, he exclaimed—

"Here's the breeze, yer anner. Take the rod in the heel av yer fist, an ye'll be into a ten pounder afore long."

MARRIAGE IN JAPAN.

In the two neighbouring empires of China and Japan marriage is a civil rite, except that in the latter, among certain sects, a Buddhist priest pronounces a blessing over the newly wedded pair. A striking peculiarity in the practice of both these countries is that the festivities on

the occasion of marriages, and which form an important part of the ceremonial, take place at the bridegroom's house. In both countries, too, the marriage is arranged, often long beforehand, by the parents, and generally through the medium of a go-between. In Japan, if the lady's family accept the advances made by the go-between, the latter takes her a present from his employers, the acceptance of which, as it were, seals the contract, and there is then no drawing back from it. This present, of course, varies according to the position in life of the high contracting parties, but it usually consists of some pieces of white and other silk, an embroidered girdle, and wine and confectionery, the quantity of which is regulated by well-known custom; no return present, be it observed, is made by the lady. Custom further demands that presents should be sent to the parents of the bride elect, and they are required to reciprocate the compliment with presents of precisely equal value.

In China a man rarely sees his wife till she is brought to his house on the nuptial day; but the Japanese are more sensible in this respect, for after the couple have been betrothed, in which ceremony both families partake, they are allowed and even encouraged to meet, and thus become acquainted with each other's character. The Japanese customs coincide with the Chinese in another respect, besides those mentioned before, in that it is not usual for a wife to bring a dowry with her; but she is generally furnished with an exceedingly good *trousseau*.

Early marriages being the rule in the east, the marriage between the betrothed pair in Japan is usually solemnised when the bride and bridegroom are respectively about sixteen and twenty years old.

On the morning of the nuptial day, the bride's *trousseau* is taken to her future home, and carefully set out for the inspection of the guests at the approaching festivities, much in the same way as wedding presents are in our own country, except that, in the latter case, the display, as well as the "breakfast," takes place in the bride's home. The preparations for the ceremony are next commenced. "In the chief room a domestic altar is erected, adorned with flowers and laden with offerings; and in front of this altar, images of the gods and patron saints of the two families are hung. The aquaria are supplied with various plants,

grouped picturesquely and with symbolical significance. On the lacquer-work tables are placed dwarf cedars and small figures representing the first couple, accompanied by the venerable attributes, the hundred-years-old crane and tortoise. To complete the picture by a lesson in morals and patriotism, some packets of edible seaweed, of mussels, and dried fish, are placed among the wedding presents, to remind the young couple of the primitive food and the simple customs of the ancient inhabitants of Japan."*

Towards noon on the auspicious day, the bridal procession arrives at the apartments which have been prepared as above described. The bride is veiled and attired in a white silken robe, the veil being also of white silk, and sometimes used as a sort of mantle: she is led by her two bridesmaids, and attended by a numerous retinue of relatives and friends, all dressed in as gorgeous attire as they can afford. According to Humbert, the bridesmaids are called, by the Japanese, the male and female butterfly, and are supposed to personify, in their dress, &c., that couple which, according to the popular theory, sets such a laudable example of conjugal fidelity! These bridesmaids (we adopt the nearest English term) are a most important element in the marriage ceremonial, for upon them devolves the duty of putting the guests in their places, and superintending the various arrangements for the nuptial meal. When the bride and bridegroom first meet before the assembled relations and guests, the former, for this occasion only, takes the seat of honour, her future lord sitting at the side and below her.

At the nuptials of persons of high rank some curious ceremonies are observed which are omitted by those of lower degree, such as the pounding and mixing together of two bowls of rice (the staff of life in the East), some mummery with a pair of lighted candles, &c.

The binding or vital part of the marriage ceremony in Japan seems to be very similar to that which obtains among the Chinese, and consists in the bride and bridegroom drinking, according to a set form, nine tiny cups of wine, or, rather, saki. On this point, Humbert, in his work quoted before, remarks: "Amongst the objects displayed in the midst of the circle of the guests is a metal vase, in the form of a pitcher with two mouths: this

* Humbert's "Japan and the Japanese." (English Translation.)

vase is beautifully ornamented. At an appointed signal one of the bride's ladies fills it with saki; the other takes it by the handle, raises it to the height of the mouths of the kneeling bride and bridegroom, and makes them drink alternately, each from the pitcher mouth, placed opposite to their lips, until the vase is emptied. It is thus that, husband and wife, they must drink from the cup of conjugal life—he on his side, she on hers; but they must both taste the same ambrosia or the same gall. They must share equally the pains and sorrows, as well as the joys, of this new existence."

This is a very pretty picture; but the Japanese Record of Ceremonies gives a somewhat different account of the details of this part of the ceremonial observances, though the idea conveyed is much the same. In this work (we quote from the English version given by Mr. Mitford in an appendix to his "Tales of Old Japan,") we are told that—"Two married ladies each take one of the wine bottles which have been prepared, and place them in the lower part of the room. Then two hand-maids, who act as wine-pourers, bring the kettles and place them in the lower part of the room. The two wine bottles have respectively a male and female butterfly, made of paper, attached to them. The wine from the bottles is poured into the same kettle, and the whole is transferred with due ceremony to another kettle of different shape, which the wine-pourers place in front of themselves. Little low dining-tables are laid, one for each person, before the bride and bridegroom, and before the bride's ladies-in-waiting; the woman deputed to pour the wine takes the three wine-cups, and places them one on the top of the other before the bridegroom, who drinks two cups from the upper cup, and pours a little wine from the full kettle into the empty kettle. The pouring together of the wine, on the wedding night, is symbolical of the union that is being contracted. The bridegroom next pours out a third cup of wine and drinks it, and the cup is carried by the ladies to the bride, who drinks three cups and pours a little wine from one kettle into the other as the bridegroom did. A cup is then set down and put on the other two, and they are carried back to the raised floor, and arranged as before. After this the condiments are set out on the right hand side of a little table, and the wine-pourers place the three cups before

the bride, who drinks three cups from the second cup, which is passed to the bridegroom; he also drinks three cups as before, and the cups are piled up and arranged in their original place by the wine-pourers. A different sort of condiment is next served on the left hand side; and the three cups are again placed before the bridegroom, who drinks three cups from the third cup, and the bride does the same."

This ceremony is, among the higher classes, followed by some rather intricate customs with regard to the service of eatables and potables, but usually the bride now changes her dress, and a meal consisting of three courses is served. In olden times it was the practice for the pair to change their robes several times during the ceremony, but this is not now done, and we learn from the work just cited, that when the bride changes her dress, she "puts on the silk robe which she has received from the bridegroom, while he dons the dress of ceremony, which has been brought by the bride." The bride next pays her respects to her husband's parents, to whom she makes presents of silk dresses. A slight repast is then partaken of, and some curious drinking ceremonies are observed, every one drinking nine little cups of "saki." If, however, the bridegroom's father and mother be dead, he takes her to make her obeisance before the tablets which bear their names.

One very strange custom, connected with marriage in Japan, is that a wife in that country blackens her teeth, and plucks out or shaves off her eyebrows, in evidence of her fidelity to her husband. Brides in the upper ranks of life usually go through the former operation before they leave their ancestral homes, the latter being performed shortly after the nuptial ceremony. The mixture for blackening the teeth is said to be composed of metal filings, saki, and gall-nuts; and the custom must be a very unpleasant and troublesome one to Japanese ladies, for the operation has to be gone through nearly every day, if they wish to keep their teeth a proper colour. Japanese wives, too, need behave themselves with the utmost discretion, for their spouses are said to have the power of killing them on the slightest suspicion as to their actions.

Polygamy has been supposed to prevail in Japan, but a man can have only one legitimate wife; among the wealthy and

licentious nobility any number of inferior wives or concubines is allowable, and in fact the same may be said of all classes; but in the middle and lower grades of society, want of means is generally a quite sufficient check upon any tendency in that direction.

The festivities, &c., attendant upon marriage in Japan, which ordinarily last about a week, are so exceedingly expensive as to act, in some sense, as an impediment to it, for it not uncommonly happens that a man is hampered for many a long year by the lavish expenditure to which the national custom has driven him, on the occasion of his entering into the bonds of Hymen. The Japanese, however, are gifted with a good deal of hard common sense, and not caring to be burdened for half their lives with the consequences of indulging, against their will, in the extravagant festivities necessary for getting married in the orthodox manner, they sometimes resort to a species of elopement, to avoid the pecuniary embarrassments we have alluded to. M. Humbert, in his "Japan and the Japanese," gives such an amusing description of a supposed case of this kind, that we venture to quote it in extenso. "An honest couple," he says, "have a marriageable daughter, and the latter is acquainted with a fine young fellow, who would be a capital match, if only he possessed the necessary means of making his lady-love and her parents the indispensable wedding presents, and of keeping open house for a week. One fine evening, the father and mother, returning from the bath, find the house empty; the daughter is gone. They make inquiries in the neighbourhood; no one has seen her; but the neighbours hasten to offer their services in seeking her, together with her distracted parents. They accept the offer, and head a solemn procession, which goes from street to street, to the lover's door. In vain does he, hidden behind his panels, turn a deaf ear; he is at length obliged to yield to the importunities of the besieging crowd. He opens the door, and the young girl, drowned in tears, throws herself at the feet of her parents, who threaten to curse her. Then comes the intervention of charitable friends, deeply moved by this spectacle; the softening of the mother, the proud and inexorable attitude of the father, the combined eloquence of the multitude, employed to soften his heart; the lover's endless protestations of his

resolution to become the best of sons-in-law. At length the father yields, his resistance is overcome; he raises his kneeling daughter, pardons her lover, and calls him his son-in-law. Then, almost as if by enchantment, cups of saki circulate through the assembly. Everybody sits down upon the mats; the two culprits are placed in the centre of the circle; large bowls of saki are handed to them; and, when they are emptied, the marriage is recognised, and declared to be validly contracted in the presence of a sufficient number of witnesses, and is registered the next day by the proper officer without any difficulty." Truly this is an ingenious way out of the difficulty, and clearly shows that the Japanese have an innate talent for comedy.

In Japan there is no privacy in the honeymoon; the newly-married pair are not allowed to depart to any quiet retreat, and there enjoy their newly-found bliss in peace before entering upon the prosaic pursuits of their future life. On the contrary, they remain at home and are constantly visited by their friends and relatives, whom they are required by inexorable custom to visit in their turn; and they have, further, to go through what we should consider a most painful ordeal, in the shape of a tedious and troublesome round of family festivities, where eating and drinking are the order of the day.

THE LAST TRYST.

OVER brown moors and wither'd leas
The angry winds were weeping;
Over the great grey northern seas,
The created waves were leaping;
And you and I stood close together,
In the chilling gleam of the wintry weather,
As the bare gaunt branches, overhead,
Shook their lingering leaflets, gold and red,
While in every faltering word we said,
Rang the pitiful wail for the days that were dead;
For, by the sad seas, 'neath the storm-beat trees,
Our last tryst we were keeping.

I scarce could hear the words you sobbed,
Amid your passionate weeping,
And the glow from my eager prayer was robbed,
By the chill around us creeping;
From the silent paths, where in summer weather,
Youth, joy, and music had met together,
From the cry of the sea-mews flitting past,
O'er the wild white waves in the bitter blast,
From the breakers that crash'd on the hollow sand,
From the sigh of the breeze o'er the dull damp
land,
From sea and shore rose "No more, no more,"
As our last tryst we were keeping.

There was not a pale bud left, in sooth,
'Mid the dry leaves round us heaping;
The bitter harvest of reckless youth,
Time's iron hand was reaping;

Our lips still said, "For ever for ever,"
 As the trembling fingers clung together.
 But even then each sad heart knew
 What fate and circumstance meant to do,
 And the mighty billows boom'd like a knell,
 As we turned apart from that long farewell;
 And to wind, and rain, and the moaning main,
 Left the last tryst of our keeping.

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

XII. "GENTLEMEN OFF THE ROAD."

Two of the ugliest phases of London life—ugly, because so hard, so stony and uncompromising—may be studied cheek by jowl in Cripplegate. There rushes ever, monotonous wave succeeding wave, the tawny money-grubbing stream, side by side with the still turgid flow of grinding poverty in its coldest, most depressing aspect. There anxious-browed men, all squares and angles, too busy to mind bumps and jostling, are for ever combining, scheming, plotting, planning, how best to gain the blind side of their neighbours; how to water their investments into fruition; how surely to swell a shilling into half a crown. Omnibuses and heavily-laden carts clatter along unceasingly. Great warehouses and city palaces spread out their chests, exposing to view as wide a waistcoat of polished granite as they may; floor above floor hangs out its sign of wealth within, each separate store winking down encouragement with its brass eye on the struggling throng below. Strange burrows, like grimy plaster mole-paths, intersect the houses. Mysterious blind alleys, leading nowhere between blank walls, play a goblin hide and seek with you, landing you at last in five feet square of paved no thoroughfare, where garments like winding-sheets flutter on cords, and where muffled indications of ghostly hammers, printing presses, planes, toiling somewhere underground, unite in a dim chorus. Hard by winds unsavoury Whitecross-street, whose still tomb for the life-sufferings of debtors has by a whimsical turn of fortune's wheel become the noisiest of railway stations, and from the squalid recesses of this street, from out its alleys and its passages, crawl and shamle in and out all day such a scum of human London vermin as makes the heart sick to look upon. Bloating women creep along the walls bearing the brand of drink, sodden, filthy, hopelessly disreputable, their bloodshot eyes half-glazed with dissipation, their long matted hair, like strips from an old mattress, hanging down their backs.

Their cotton dresses are mud-stained, torn, and draggled; their half-concealed stockingless feet are thrust into slipshod boots—one, a woman's, down at heel, the other, once a man's, denuded of side-springs, and almost of sole. Yet on their heads they wear some piteous rags of finery as weak protest against their deep abasement, something which, in its vague groping after better things, humanises them in some sort, dividing them from the very brutes—maybe a green velvet bonnet with a tawdry flower, or perchance a soiled ribbon and broken feather. Miniature grandfathers and grandmothers (for by no courtesy can they be styled children) fight in the gutter like little Cains, instinctively tearing each other's waxen sallow cheeks with a running accompaniment of highly-flavoured epithets. Coster-barrows and bivouacs of planks block up the way, each one laden with such hideous bloaters, bacon, and stringy ends of meat, as are enough fully to account for the faces that you pass, without the assistance of bad air. Foul offal unremoved, imbedded in greasy mud, causes the feet to stagger; decayed apples, pears, and plums lie crushed about the road, each one adding its quota to the overburdened atmosphere. Burly ruffians in ratskin caps bawl out their wares as though threatening vengeance to non-purchasers. Public-house doors are ever on the swing, betraying glimpses of the only bright objects in the neighbourhood, invitingly close to shops containing incongruous goods exposed for sale, above which hang three glittering golden apples of temptation. A glamour of lying varnishes the whole, a brazen, reckless scorn of truth put forth defiantly. "Our sugar is the best sold in all London." "Try our threepenny tea, superior to that bought for eightpence over the way." "This is the cheapest shop in town for zinc or brass work." You know as you read the labels that the statements are false, and the shopmen know that you will know it when they fix the labels up, but they think the startling announcement may draw momentary attention, in which case their object will be gained.

A little off the public thoroughfare, hustled away humbly in a corner almost under the shadow of St. Luke's, appropriately contiguous to it, sleeps Etheldreda-square, a spot so unutterably neglected and woe-begone, that it seems as if some seed from an ancient country town had drifted, thistle-like, into an unused cranny of our

bustling metropolis, and was there mildewing out of life. None of its tenements rise above a flattened first floor, nipped and dwarfed in the bud; its windows, too closely packed, bulge out in every angle but the right one; its doors are shrunken and bald of paint. Its little front gardens—where the virgin soil has been left unturned by dirty little Vaubans, armed with impromptu spades of slate, and left to study fortification under lock and key by mothers out at work—throw up a parterre of half-gnawed bread-crusts, egg-shells, and a rich crop of groundsel. The palisading that fences round these mouldering plots is quite a study of incongruous form and colour, so quaintly constructed is it in its patchings, according to taste or means of its inhabitants, out of old ship timber, stunted fragments of venerable rafters, or scraps of rusted iron railings. The central square, devoted principally to cats and sunflowers, is the life interest of an ancient man, who probably dropped here along with the crazy buildings long ago, and who mows on wheezily but persistently, like some feeble uncanny wreck of Father Time, with so antique a remnant of a scythe, that it skips in hoary playfulness under his hand, biting off the tops of the rank herbage in patches, and leaving the sward uneven, like some moth-eaten old piece of velvet stuff. In a sheltered corner stands usually a ragged individual, vendor of chains and immense dog-collars: perchance an emissary from St. Luke's close by, sent to chain up temporarily such madmen as may venture into so mummified a locality. His dog-collars are the only glittering things about the place, for when the sun elects to shine, his rays only cause the sad samples of fast approaching dissolution to start out into gloomier distinctness. The dirt pies, the mud-stained infants, are more prominent in light and shade, the ribbed grass more unevenly moth-eaten than ever, the corroded nails more evidently dropping from mouldy cracks, the face of Father Time more seared, and lined, and sunken, the tottering tenements bowed more tremblingly from the perpendicular. It is sad, that in the City quiet should always be an equivalent of decay. Once withdrawn from the bubbling, seething, deafening turmoil of wheels and hurrying feet, a cold, damp finger seems to touch everything, chilling it with festering mould. The old churches are slowly sinking among the worn, shaky tables that once did duty as tombs; the old houses, now that their task is done, are

falling into tinder under the shadow of neglect; the old squares are vanishing one by one away. Soon, square boxes of counting-houses, smug and white, and bald blocks of warehouses with creaking cranes will have hurried them from the world, stamping even their remembrance out, and their place shall know them no more.

Just round the corner of Etheldreda-square, quiet and dull, but not so forlorn, is situated Etheldreda-crescent, scene of quite a different phase of life. Almost every house displays a brass-plate, bearing the inscription, "Commercial boarding-house." No grass grows between its stones, which are worn with continued pattering. It is a perfect hive of boarding-houses, from the honeycombs of which flit commercial bees, buzzing, humming in and out perpetually to and from railway stations and great wholesale houses, each with his or her receptacle for pollen (generally a black leather bag), attached to their hands instead of their hind legs, as we are accustomed to remark in our garden apiaries. These houses are nearly always full, the gentlemen "of the road" alighting each but for a day or two, and then bustling off to make way for others. Drapers from the provinces come up for stock and take refuge here, finding these houses more home-like than hotels; country milliners in search of fashions; bonnet-makers to imbibe town wisdom, and carry back with them the last new form and pattern.

I took up my quarters at Mr. Hawkins's, the Yorkshire house par excellence, frequented for the most part by bagmen from the north, who are sure, by patronising one special establishment, to fall amongst friends and cronies. Mr. Hawkins was himself once a commercial gentleman, but being a severe Wesleyan threw up the business, "because," he said, "the temptations of the life were inclined to shake his moral rectitude." And so he bought with his savings the lease of this secluded dwelling, called around him his Yorkshire friends, and promised them the best north country bacon and fresh butter and eggs, and his rooms are scarcely ever empty. A queer, round-the-corner, eel-like house it is, every window in it placed as near an angle as possible, appearing to slide and twist itself the better to spy into its neighbour's affairs—not through vulgar curiosity, oh dear no!—but in hopes of discovering something less blank and grimy than itself. Every cupboard, of

which there seems an unlimited allowance disguised as something else, coils itself away in chinks between stairs; or, persuaded that the several dozen worn carpet slippers confided to its care are as valuable as Cinderella's, and that the medley of boot-jacks, button-hooks, and blacking brushes are secretly set with gems of price, makes futile attempts to escape up the chimney with the prize. Since the roof was slated no light has shone upon the stairs save that which has struggled through keyholes or open doors. One is therefore for ever bumping against commercial gentlemen, or risking one's neck in a tussle with some cunningly devised ambush of business-worn boots. I thought I caught occasional glimpses of a slavey, blacker than any coal, or than her own stairs, gliding up and down the shadowy flight, hiding in doorways, whisking into closets, performing when nobody was by wild dusting saturnalia; but this must have been fancy, for the house had evidently not seen a duster for many years. Notices in the several bedrooms inform "gentlemen" that bills will be presented weekly, except in such cases as seem to demand daily payment of two shillings per night, a rather startling announcement, as though pickpockets were abroad, and one must on descending to breakfast prepare to be sharply scrutinised before being informed to which category one is judged to belong. However, there was no help for it, the eight o'clock breakfast bell had rung over the house, and I groped down to gaze upon my fellow bagmen.

Is it not amusing to consider the amount of tyranny Englishmen will endure with equanimity, if prudently coerced? They are like burly blundering sheep, and will follow their bell-wether meekly wheresoever that animal may elect to lead them, careless of flints or thorns. Boarding-housedom is apparently a vigorous protest against Bohemianism, a special astringent for the curing of unduly loosened buckram. Its meals are by no means movable feasts, being like the laws of that most uncomfortable people that altered not, inexorably fixed; its doors are locked and barred at a determined hour, without hope of reprieve. If you come down late for breakfast or dinner your only prospect is to go without; if you should be unlucky enough to batter at the door after closing hours, you will either be left outside unnoticed, or let in, with a scowl, to be politely bowed out in

the morning. The independence of these houses withers up the free-and-easy soul. Their proprietors are not anxious to take you in. They just manage to bear with you on sufferance, so long as you shall behave yourself, with allegorical swords hanging over your head, meanwhile, typifying the pains and penalties which will accrue to you in the event of your disobeying their arbitrary code of laws. It is obvious that the enforcement of a strict regimen of regular hours in the phase of society in which you and I are now moving should be more natural than in some other cases, when we take into consideration the fact that all are bound on the same errand, that all are prepared to start in the morning on a similar day's work, and that all are too tired at the close of the day to do aught but go to bed. But in other cases, say the genteel boarding-houses for instance, or the semi-artistic, where people are more or less idle, mentally off their balance and unanchored, it is amazing to see them bend voluntarily beneath so stern a yoke—dining smilingly at an inconvenient hour, returning home when they would prefer remaining out. In the course of my experiences I came upon one old lady who was incorrigible as to clocks, and who quietly said that she had got quite accustomed to doing without breakfast. One thing to be said is that very few denizens of boarding-houses belong to clubs, and they are therefore saved the temptations to dawdle into the small hours held out by those delightful institutions.

My meditations, combined with the darkness, caused me to stumble into wrong rooms, wondering at the scanty luggage therein contained—comprising generally a toothbrush, comb, roll of paper collars, and large sample-box—until I was late for breakfast by just forty seconds, for which dereliction I was forthwith banished to the side table, all the places at the principal one being by this time already occupied. The table was covered with the produce of the north country. Yorkshire bacon, Yorkshire relish and sausages, a cold turkey straight from Yorkshire, butter ditto, also flowers, Yorkshire accent and Yorkshire topics of conversation. Mr. Hawkins, in his shirt-sleeves (it is remarkable how many there are who enjoy the freedom of shirt-sleeves), occupied an anomalous position at the board, half landlord, half fellow-wanderer, for he knew as much about wool sales as any man present, having himself been a prominent member of "the road," and

accordingly advised us all round, from the pinnacle of long and disinterested London experience, occasionally recalling to respectfulness such as were inclined to be familiar, by coldly suggesting one more slice or another cup of tea. One fat old gentleman, who breathed unnecessarily loud, and seemed to suffer from a chronic birchbroom in his throat, was quite a father to all of us, entreating us pathetically to try another egg, imploring us almost with tears in his eyes to venture upon a chop well done, which was especially good-natured of him, considering that we were to pay ourselves for any such extra delicacies. A pimply young gentleman next to me, with hair nearly brushed off his head, in a pea-green necktie and cornelian ring, gorgeous with coats of arms, whispered in my ear "That wheezy old fool wouldn't be so precious civil if he knew that I travel for the other house," and straightway chuckled to that extent that I quite expected him to turn black in the face. This ingenuous youth was wondrously communicative, informing me that should he get his work done betimes he was to pick up a damsel, at the Baker-street Bazaar, and escort her to the play that evening. "It's jolly," he continued; "for to get back here in time for closing I shall have to leave her there, and so I shall save her 'bus fare back." A thrifty soul was he, with a practical turn of mind even in love making. Presently, tidy Mrs. Hawkins appeared with a post-bag, and distributed quite a bazaarful of little boxes done up with tape and seals, which all watched anxiously, each one setting down his share in a heap beside his plate.

"My dear," one lady presently whispered to another, for there were several ladies of the party, fresh-cheeked and countrified, "you know we must get back to Chinnington this evening, as we promised the doctor's good lady the last new pattern for her christening dress, so, as we're pushed for time, I'll tell you what we'll do. You go to Madame Louise's, and buy half a dozen of the newest style of bonnet, while I trudge to Holborn and see if those layettes have come from Paris. I'll undertake the fashion-books, too, as it's all in the same direction. And so we can play into each other's hands, you see."

Another lady in spectacles was busy dotting down particulars from an invoice into a note-book, while yet another was discoursing in a corner, with a boy, who had

just discharged upon the floor an avalanche of paper parcels. And now the gentlemen had pushed aside their cups and plates, and were examining the little boxes which contained samples of all kinds, for some of those present were ordinary bagmen with goods to sell by pattern; others were here for the purchase of wool for the cloth trade in the north. They frowned and bit their lips, and muttered and scratched their heads, and I was interested to observe that it was etiquette for each one to ignore his neighbour's boxes, looking from his own to the table-cloth, or ceiling, or at his stockinged feet; but then it was also etiquette for one gentleman to consult another, even for five or six to empanel themselves as jury upon same frayed remnant, provided, of course, that the said four or five were in other lines of business, and ignorant, therefore, of the matter in hand.

Breakfast having been cleared away, each man drew from his own black bag his own black blotting-book and pen, and straightway indited long business epistles; such as were partners and worked together, mumbling in undertones the arrangements for the day. "Well, Bob, we'll settle it so, then; they've seen my face too often there, so you take the houses from the Post Office to the Bank, and draw it mild, for the sort of gab that does very well where we've just come from won't pay at all here. They're much too knowing, and slam the door in your face without a word, and then you'd look an uncommon fool." A few moments more and every man had put on his boots, had ferreted out and arranged his mysterious bundle, each lady had donned her bonnet and mantle, and all were gone, sallying forth with the quick firm step that characterises people whose minds are fully occupied with a press of business.

Towards nine p.m., the dingy dining-room was once more crowded, but with mortals in how different a frame of mind! The ladies, jaded and worn, with unmistakable signs of mud on their under-garments, had dropped into the first available seat, and were indulging in tea and buttered toast. Mr. Hawkins, still in his shirt-sleeves, argued on professional matters with such as had strength left for speech, and took orders for supper at becoming intervals. The gentlemen had kicked off their boots, had sought out the least tattered slippers from the blind cupboards, and were silently, for

the most part, enjoying long pipes and hot whisky-and-water. There had been so much talking, palavering, and wheedling during the last twelve hours, that by common consent the moving of jaws for mastication and the clink of glasses were the only audible sounds, whenever Mr. Hawkins' reminiscences could be smothered. But then he was not hoarse with talking, and most obligingly was not particular as to being answered. He had originally travelled for a pianoforte firm, but his conscience and his business being always at loggerheads the former at length gained the victory. "I could not stand the window-trick," he concluded at last.

"The window-trick—what's that?" I asked unwarily.

"And you, who say you are on the road, don't know that? True, you've not been in the jingling line. Well, some of the lower classes of firms have a way of turning out cheap cottages in showy cases, well Brummaged up with single gilt handles and branches. They get hold of indigent ladies, with polished manners, who have a dash of acting talent, and who can do the briny if necessary. The rubbishing work is then advertised in a sensation announcement: 'To the truly benevolent. A bargain. Going for twenty-five pounds, cost seventy!' and gulls come flocking to the bait, for these rascals have a shrewd knowledge of the world, knowing well that people love a bargain, especially when they can cheat themselves into the idea that they thereby combine charity with profit."

"And so you gave up the road in disgust?"

"Yes. I gave it up for this house, and a good thing too. I make, on an average, four hundred a year, clear of all expenses, charging every one three-and-sixpence a day bed and breakfast, sixpence for boot-cleaning and newspapers, grog and supper extra. People are always coming and going; the missus and I and one girl do all the housework, and our rooms are scarcely ever vacant. Much better than the precarious business of the road, sir, with its petty villanies. I beg pardon, gents, you know what I say is true. One glass more, gentlemen? No? Well, then, here are your candles. You've all got slippers, I think. Leave your boots down here; you can pick 'em from the heap in the morning, and good night."

And so the gentlemen and ladies went

temporarily off the road to recoup their strength with slumber.

But in London there are other gentlemen and ladies "off the road," who herd together, battling hard for life, existing chiefly on the hope of some day getting "on the road" once more. I allude to the refugees who have their eyrie in Soho. The cosmopolitan hotel and boarding house the Alliance des Nations, stands at the corner of a close court leading out of one of the semi-respectable ways between Oxford-street and Leicester-square. It is a large house, grimy and gloomy-looking, with a sullen, brooding air, and sinister little windows like eyes too closely set together; great, broad, low sashes of tiny panes on the ground floor, festooned with muslin curtains of not unimpeachable whiteness; and an unnaturally small door set wide open, through which may usually be discerned sallow groups of foreigners sipping coffee from thick white cups, and rattling dominoes. Though not in reality of inordinate proportions, the house appears to be bigger than it is, consequent on the contrasting stumpiness and shakiness of its neighbours; it renders itself conspicuous, moreover, by a pair of great unwieldily hands limned over the portal, their blue coat cuffs cut off by clouds, enjoying a friendly clasp, suggestive of the assistance supposed to be freely tendered from one to another by companions in misfortune. There are all sorts of placards, too, pinned to the curtains, offering the services of masters and governesses, and calling attention to proffers of table d'hôte at inconceivably reduced price, with tariffs of viands à la carte, that have swayed there so long as to be completely blurred by fly-marks, and rendered cloudy by accumulated mist and smoke. It has a showy exterior of the passé out-at-elbows order—pasty-faced, like the clients who resort thither. Let us walk down the court to the festering little square on which its back abuts, and our comparison of the house to its clients will be still further established. What a miserable show of squalor, sickness, and pretensions seediness! In its centre a set of sheds falling down from very rottenness, one of them a ragged school of the lowest order, little boys playing marbles in the gutter as they wait outside; another a slaughter-house, dabbled with red clots and mud. Further on a better class of school, where French, English, geography, and arithmetic are taught for five shillings

a quarter; further still a dispensary, the mysteries of whose interior are masked by sphinx-like blinds of the nature of kitchen sieves, where sad pallid groups of the unshorn are waiting in strings, for the satisfaction of detailing their symptoms to unsympathising ears.

Attenuated, blistered tenements jostle one another, trying to keep an even line, like ill-drilled militiamen, and at their doors stand, early in the morning, bearded, frowsy men, in faded garments of good cut, tawdry beaded slippers down at heel, and unkempt heads of hair. Women scurry hither and thither, their questionable linen concealed under a long cloak yecept "impermeable," their locks still hidden under soiled nightcaps, cautiously dispensing coppers for the bare necessities of life, counting anxiously their store as they hasten onward, and vainly endeavouring to squeeze sixpence out of eight halfpennies. Some of these careworn-looking women sink by nervously, as though they would wish not to be seen; some study the bills of fare exposed in the windows of the numerous eating-houses, or wolfishly gaze into bakers' shops. Others, again, dressed in relics of what was once finery, may be seen stopping at corners to look hastily round, then plunging into dens decorated with three golden balls. Some of these poor creatures are small and frail and simple of aspect, their round soft faces ground into sharp lines by the hard hand of Want; others stride along defiantly with blowsy figures, bold eyes, and brazen brows, conscious martyrs of an unsuccessful political cause. As they go they scan the murky London air, and sigh as they remember the fair metropolis which possibly they will never see again. Nay, probably — for have they not been guilty of wearing "the breeches," actually as well as metaphorically? have they not stood on bloody barricades, clad in blouse and trousers, their hair twisted into Amazon knots, deftly picking off their men with the best of them? And those yonder, of more mature years, huckstering over vulgar bloaters unknown at home, did they not quite lately, at dead of night, glide along walls of fashionable quarters pouring petroleum down unprotected gratings, starting like stricken goblins over their unholy work, when a shell, screaming more close than usual, thundered into a neighbouring roof, and bespattered them with plaster fragments?

At six a.m. there is a complete market carried on within this square. Barrows of fruit, or vegetables, or dried fish, bump against each other. More barrows laden with cheap artificial flowers, showy passementerie wherewith to conceal "whitened seams, misfit boots, cheap braces, even second-hand garments, pass invitingly from door to door. Dust-stained windows open one by one, for the protrusion of still dustier faces, enjoying a morning pipe, and hallooing to kindred faces opposite. One by one the barrows move off, the finery unpurchased disappears, the matutinal coffee has been consumed, the broken hat furbished up with water, the soedy clothes with ink, and shady Mossoo strolls leisurely to the little blind shop hard by, bearing the piteously ironical title, "Au Petit Paris," to be shaved. There is quite a throng in that tiny shop, sitting on crazy chairs or cracked marble slabs, among the hair washes and infallible dyes. Somebody sacrifices himself for the public good by expending twopence on the Figaro or the Impartial, and reads it aloud for the common benefit, amid a chorus of comments, unwittingly recalling to our minds the Italian barber's in the Middle Ages, so admirably described in Romola. Cleaned and brushed up, furnished, moreover, with a new paper collar, and even cuffs on a gala day, Mossoo now looks around him for his favourite shoe-black, the artist who knows the deficiencies in his boots, and will move swiftly and tenderly over cracks growing in the leather. There is more art in shoe-blackening than you are aware of, I assure you. Go and live for a day or two in Soho, where the habits of the place will force you daily to place your feet upon the block, and you will find it out to your cost. Some boys perform a sort of conjuring trick; a finger tipped with black compound, a rapid circular movement of a brush, a little breathing, two or three quick passes with other brushes, and your highlow sparkles like water with the summer sun on it. Others, again, bang your foot about, knocking your tenderest toe with the brush edge — till, but for dignity, you would howl again — and then send you limping away, with a good deal of blacking on your trousers, and not much upon your boots. Mossoo is now completely bedizened for the day, and lighting his halfpenny cigar, strolls round Leicester-square, where others of his kind are already assembled in a sort of *al fresco* club. At one o'clock he will enter one of

the restaurants, clean with a bright new paper and a pot or two of flowers, and fortify his inner man with a sixpenny dinner, consisting of "Un potage gras, un plat de viande et légumes, avec pain à discrétion." The remainder of his day will be passed in more strolls, renewed scrutiny of the political sky, dominoes, coffee, and an evening club held at a restaurant, until his hair, being again out of curl, his hat too candid as to rusty marks, he will retire once more to his warren among the cabbage-stalks to dream of "La belle France," and a "grand avenir" under some régime yet unborn.

I wandered one evening with a bag into the cosmopolitan establishment and looked round for somebody from whom to beg a room. The patron slept on a bench, very hirsute and grimy-fingered, culinary murmurs rose from below, and I was about to retire discomfited when a draggle-tailed lady emerged from some back sanctum announcing herself as the sleeper's wife.

"A bed? oh yes. If I would take it by the week. Au premier une chambre superbe." She looked at me askance though, as I followed up the stairs, and at last asked pointed blank what I wanted it for.

"To live in to be sure," I replied.

"Pardon, monsieur; but it is so rare for Englishmen to intrude into our colony that curiosity is excusable. Will monsieur pay in advance?"

"Of course, if needful, though the demand seems rude, considering that I bring luggage with me."

"C'est égal. Un edranger ici, ça ne se gombrend pas," and I paid accordingly, unpleasantly conscious of being taken for a spy.

If the house wore a dissipated look outside, how foul was it within! What nauseous odours of scullery sinks and ill-kept drains, what slimy walls glistening with greasy finger-marks of years, what a shroud of chronic impecuniosity about the whole place! My superb chamber was about twelve feet square, looking on to the semi-respectable street. The bed was propped at one end with an old trunk. The water-jug boasted no handle, the glass bottle rejoiced in a crack, through which the liquid trickled slowly on the floor, as my hostess filled it from a can. One wall consisted of a wooden partition with chinks the width of one's finger, which made all thoughts of privacy a dream.

"Whose room is that?" I asked.

"That's my husband's workshop. He

is a tailor from Metz: I am originally from Strasbourg. We have come here since the war. We may return to France some day, perhaps; to Lorraine or Alsace never, so long as the Prussians stay there. It is hard living here. The foreigners live much in coteries independent of other nationalities. There are so many Alsatian houses that there remains scarcely room for us. That's a German house over the way. The very sight of it makes me ill. A noisy party? I should think it was. That is the house of call for German waiters, who dine there daily at a shilling a head. To-night they are having a carouse for the anniversary of Sedan. Champagne, indeed! they ought to be ashamed of themselves. If you want supper, come down at once. Those German rejoicings make the patron wild, and he promises to close the house forthwith, though that will not deaden the sound of revelry."

I went down-stairs where the tailor was engaged in putting up his shutters, mumbling execrations the while, and where the occupants of the house were already gathered together for the evening meal. A more respectable class of refugees than those I had seen in the square behind; they were all well dressed, as were their wives, who were for the most part in black with snowy collars and cuffs. For the most part they appeared to be workers at different trades, permanently settled in London. Others appeared merely listless compulsory sojourners in a foreign land, living mysteriously on their "rentes," as one of them informed me, till something should turn up. Others again were of the entirely sodden, or hopelessly dried-up class, vegetating no one knew how, with no object or aim in life whatever beyond a negative desire not to die. Supper, or rather late dinner, was quickly served, consisting of soup, entrée, joint, vegetables, cheese, and coffee, for the surprisingly small sum of one shilling per head, and was done considerable justice to by the refugees, in spite of the mildew of exile which clung so heavily around them all. After supper, the time was whiled away with dominoes, darning of stockings, and even a little flirting on the part of grim ghosts of Parisian flaneurs; the whole being accompanied by a running commentary from the tailor's wife in a strong Alsatian accent, and by the distant music of knife-cleaning.

By ten o'clock all had retired to their

rooms, if not to rest, for the waiters opposite were making night hideous with discordant renderings of Kennst du das Land? and the Wacht am Rhein, bursting out fitfully every now and then with the old student song Crambambuli.

On the same landing with myself dwelt a painter, a man of much talent, but unfortunate political opinions, who, unable to afford models, daubed contentedly away daily at groups of inanimate objects, immortalising with his cunning art the homeliest implements of common life. A genuine artist at heart, he cared not for pelf, selling his work for mere bread and cheese.

"What is the good of money to me?" he argued. "My Maker bids me live, so I obey his will. I live in a world which is utterly bad and false. Is that my fault or my misfortune? Did I place myself here or not? No! Well, then, the higher power who fixed me here must be obeyed, and I obey."

Next to him was the store-room, a strange medley of blankets, eiderdown quilts like pincushions, candles and soap, and all manner of incongruous details. Here bivouacked the servant-maid, on the floor apparently, as there was no bed, but after all, this damsel's habit was to rise so early and retire so late, that, perhaps, sleep had but little to do with her daily routine.

I opened my window and looked out. The French town seemed already asleep. Shutters were closed everywhere. The numerous milk-shops gave no sign of life; a few only of the endless blanchisseuses de fin still burned the midnight gas, "getting up," with the help of pots of porter, some fine lady's snowy jupons amid a sea of feminine adornments hung up to dry. In the midst of the silence one glaring British public-house alone was very wide-awake, its doors for ever swinging on its straps, as women, soldiers, cabmen, passing waifs and strays, and all kinds gathered like moths around the candle, and the steaming potman rolled his shirt-sleeves yet higher, and the beer-handles bobbed up and down unceasingly. Another whiff of Kennst du das Land, yet another Bim-Bam-Bombuli, and the waiters streamed from their restaurant with a Schlafen sie wohl Adolph, or a Gute nacht, Fritz, to sleep off the fumes of their orgy, and become by the morrow the swift, attentive, respectful young men whom we meet at every large hotel on the surface of the habitable globe.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LXIV. A BITTER STORY.

THAT my uncle's revelations had been most painful to us all I need not say. Dead silence followed his narrative. For my part I could not speak. Somehow it seemed that I was constituted the judge of my father; the impeachment of him was plainly addressed to me; sentence against him was looked for at my hands. I could not utter it. I could not even frame it in my own mind. My consternation was too great. I still clung desperately to unreasonable doubts. With something of a convulsive effort I closed my mind against conviction.

My mother still held me by the hand, as though she dreaded my being torn from her, or my being moved to forgetfulness of her. And now and then she directed timorous glances at my face, seeking to read there my thoughts, with a kind of fear lest I should judge her harshly or misinterpret her conduct. At times I noted she trembled violently, and the dew of exceeding suffering glistened upon her forehead. This story of the past wounded her like a knife. Yet, as I learnt afterwards, she had insisted upon being beside me the while it was told to me, although my uncle had almost forgotten this, it seemed, having been prematurely hurried into his recital. He had been waiting an opportunity for entering upon it, and one had occurred almost before he was aware.

"It was thought well, Duke," he said, "to withhold from you knowledge of these facts until you were of an age to understand them fully. For my part I wish they could have remained hidden from you altogether. That might have been, perhaps, but for what has recently occurred. Your going to London almost involved introduction to your father. So your mother judged at least. She thought it due to him that he should at any rate know of your existence. Well, without acknowledging you, he has been kind to you, you say. He has offered you employment, and a home in his house. His motive in doing this? Does he or not seek to detach you from your mother? I tell you plainly that I have no faith in him. That I think of him now exactly as I thought of him twenty years ago. I will have no dealings with him. I will not exchange words with him. I will not look upon his face this side of

the grave, if I can avoid it. But I will not again wound you by expressing in plain terms my opinion of him. Only be sure of this: he is now what he was then. His conduct shows it. Or why did he hesitate to call you his son? Well, it is for you to decide what you will do. Mind I hold out no threat. I know what you have been both to your mother and to me. You are very dear to us, dearer than I care to say, than I can find words to say, for my heart cannot make its way into speech—least of all in such a case as this. I'll not speak, therefore, of closing the farm-house doors against you. Something of that I may, at one time, have had in my thoughts; but it's gone from me now. Only, don't close the doors yourself. Don't part from us without well knowing why. If you are to choose this man's side, to cleave to him rather than to your mother—and no doubt he can help you on to fortune, luck has favoured him, he's prosperous, and can make others so—be sure of what he really is, and learn from his treatment of others how he may treat you someday. There, I'll say no more. I'll leave it to you, Duke, and, God willing, I'll not repine or quarrel with you, let you decide what you may." So he ended abruptly, collecting the papers before him into a little pile, his hands trembling nervously as he did so.

I could not speak for some moments. My heart beat with a painful rapidity and violence.

"I must see Sir George," I said at length.

"Must see him again? But why?"

"He has been accused, justly, perhaps. But, at least, he is entitled to be heard in his own defence. That must be if I am to be his judge, as, Heaven knows, I never wished to be. I must see him and tell him of these charges against him."

"He will deny them. He will persuade you of their injustice."

"I cannot condemn him unheard."

My mother pressed my hand tenderly. In her judgment I had decided rightly.

"Be it so," said my uncle gloomily.

"Only be careful, Duke. You are no match for him."

"Let me take these papers and confront him with them. Trust me."

"Can you trust yourself?"

"I promised to see him again. It was my last word when I parted from him in London."

"Be it so then," he repeated. "You must keep your word. Take the papers."

Think of your mother, and of what she has suffered. So you may be armed against him."

"And if he confesses his sin," I said with hesitation; "if he is indeed penitent—is there to be no forgiveness for him, nor hope of forgiveness?"

"Let him come back to the wife he has abandoned—let him avow his penitence on his knees before the woman he has wronged—it will be time enough then to talk of forgiveness. Again I tell you, think of your mother and her sufferings. She should hold the first place in your heart, and not this man, your father, who shrinks from owning you. Remember that."

With a stern face and a certain solemn movement of his hand that added impressiveness to his speech, he strode from the room. My mother threw her arms round me and kissed me tenderly.

"You will remember, also, that you are speaking to your father, Duke."

She whispered this cautiously, as though fearing lest she should be overheard by my uncle. It was plain that he, usually so submissive to her slightest wishes, had asserted his authority in this matter, overruling her in some measure, fearing, perhaps, feminine yielding and failure of decision on her part. Could it be that she loved her husband still? It was certain that no word of blame or charge against him had fallen from her lips. And now her eyes were dim with tears.

"God bless you, Duke. And come back to me soon—you will, I know you will—but do not harden your heart against him."

Early the next morning I quitted the farm for London. I bade adieu to Rachel in a few rather formal phrases. She was surprised, I think, at the abruptness of my departure. But I could not explain to her its object and motive.

I was greatly depressed. The story of the past weighed very heavily upon my heart, wounding and bruising it sorely. The future seemed dark and threatening to me. I was entering upon a most painful and difficult task. I was beset with doubts as to how I should accomplish it. I tortured myself with fanciful pictures of my forthcoming interview with Sir George: revolving, mentally, over and again, the possibilities of the case; rehearsing the words I intended to utter, and framing the answers it was probable that he would make to me. It was a most miserable and futile occupation. Such things never

happen as we plan them; but usually take quite different and unexpected turns and forms. I felt acutely the burthen of responsibility that had fallen upon me. I seemed to be growing old with undue rapidity: the events of the last few weeks had so saddened me as to sap away something of my life.

I dreaded lest I should be blamably weak—lest I should be foolishly severe. I mistrusted my own strength of mind and powers of judgment. I knew that I was still capable of much "boyishness" of conduct. I liked Sir George, the while I could not pretend to feel towards him the affection a son ordinarily feels for a father. But he had been kind to me, and I was grateful. I admired him. I recognised the singular charm of his manner. Its influence I had been unable to resist. There was danger of his cajoling me out of my sense of right. I was bound to hear such explanation, if any, as he might choose to offer. A graceful attitude, a soft smile, a tender pressure of the hand, a few easily-turned sentences, admirably delivered, and I might be subject to him again, enthralled by him completely. I was weak enough even for that; or feared that I was.

On the other hand, I was fully sensible of the deep wrongs my mother had received at his hands. She had been treated most cruelly, most infamously. My heart burned and throbbled violently, as I thought of all she had undergone. No censure, no punishment seemed too severe for the man who had brought upon her this long and wholly unmerited suffering. I was bound, at least, to shrink from him with repugnance. But, then, he must have an opportunity of explaining his conduct. Could he explain it? Could he prove anything in his defence? And would he, if he could?

My love for Rachel was for the while driven from my heart. There seemed no room in it just then for tender sentiments. They were expelled by the angry and conflicting thoughts and purposes that possessed it. The statement conveys as complete a description as I can furnish of my mental condition at this time.

I found Sir George in his studio.

He was busy before his easel, working with almost a feverish alacrity and appetite, as it seemed to me. His eyes were very bright, and there was a flush upon his cheeks.

"Ah, Duke," he said cheerily. "So

you're back again. I'm very pleased to see you." And he advanced to meet me.

"What has happened?" He stopped suddenly, gazing at me curiously. "Something, I can see. And something serious, too. You wear crape. Ah! I remember. You have lost your poor young friend. You wrote to tell me of it; but I was too busy—I mean I hadn't the heart—to answer you. But I feel for you, I do assure you, Duke." He paused for a moment. "No," he resumed, "it's more than that. How white you look. Are you ill? What has happened, I ask you? Why do you stand there silent?"

I could not answer him. The words I had planned to say had gone from my mind. I only knew that I felt faint, and weary, and strangely confused. I was trembling in every limb.

"I see," he said, in an altered tone. "You have had news, bad news—of me—is it not so? We are to meet on different terms henceforth. Your friends in the country have been talking of me. Well? and what did they tell you?"

"All, Sir George."

His face paled, suddenly. He frowned and bit his lips. His expression varied quickly. It was now angry—now sorrowful—now almost contemptuous.

"And they did not spare me! Why should they? It was a bitter story, no doubt."

"A very bitter story, Sir George."

"Well—they told you—?"

"That I was your son, Sir George."

He bowed his head, studying the floor with shrinking half-closed eyes.

"Can't you call me father, Duke?" he asked in a subdued plaintive tone.

"The word is so new to me," I said simply. He flung from him passionately the paint brush he had been holding in his hand. He turned away from me and leant against the mantle-piece. It was exactly in that attitude I had seen him on my first introduction to the studio.

"No, you cannot call me father," he said, hoarsely. "I have no right to expect that. It cannot be. And yet, I had hoped, Duke, that you might be able to care for me, if but a little. I thought I might win something of your—regard, I'll say—as a friend; your love, as a son, I knew I could not claim."

"Indeed, Sir George—"

"Hush, Duke. Be careful not to say with one breath what you needs must unsay with the next. And don't, don't for

Heaven's sake tell me that I have been kind to you. The reproach would be too cruel." His voice failed him. It was some moments before he spoke again.

"You had no suspicion of all this before?"

"Indeed I never dreamt of such a thing. Even now it seems scarcely credible to me."

"It is true. I am your father. Better, perhaps, if you had never known it. But no, it is part of my punishment that you should know it. Your mother, Duke," he asked presently, "you left her well?"

"She has been suffering. The story that had to be told——"

"True. It must have pained her deeply."

He was silent again.

"We are to part then, Duke, I suppose. You are forbidden to be with me. You are to discard me now, in that I for so long a time ignored you. Isn't that so?"

"When I left London, I promised to return to you, Sir George."

"I remember. I thought that something like this might happen. I was sure of it. And I wanted, at least, to see you again. We are to be strangers henceforth?"

I could not reply. He went on in a musing, despondent, submissive tone.

"You are bound to fulfil your mother's wishes; she has never forfeited her claims upon your duty. She must be obeyed, at whatever cost to me."

"Will it cost you anything, Sir George?" I asked, with some anger.

"I may not speak of myself," he answered. "I am bound to bear the consequences of my own acts. I have borne them hitherto, though how severely they have tried me I may not tell—you will not, perhaps, believe. I must bear them still. God knows how!"

"Oh, Sir George!" I cried to him, "can you urge nothing of excuse, of explanation? Will you not even avow sorrow, penitence, for what you have done?"

"What would it avail? Who would credit me? I have sinned past forgiveness, beyond the reach of pity. Can you think that I have not suffered, that I do not suffer now, that I shall not always suffer? But the past is past. What has been done cannot be undone. You ask—you expect of me—what? Words? They are vain. Deeds? I can do nothing; but bear my punishment—not shrinking from it; courting it, rather—as bravely as I may. And I have a duty to fulfil—to the

world—to my position—to the fame I have achieved. I have cast off and sacrificed wantonly, cruelly, wickedly, it may be, other ties, but not that one. I have maintained it, and I will maintain it. But do you fancy I escape unscathed? Do you come here to take vengeance for my sins against your mother?"

"No, indeed not." But with an abrupt movement of his hand he waved away my interposition. He had lost his usual command over himself. He was speaking with strange violence and passion.

"She has been avenged most amply—she is avenged incessantly. You cannot look into my heart. You do not know what my life has been. You cannot think how keen and killing is perpetual self-reproach; how heavily weighs the sense of unending shame; how much it costs to live a lie! And was it nothing, can you believe, to forego calling you my son? The word has been on my lips a thousand times. Was it nothing to know that you would never call me father, or love and honour me as a child should, but must rather shun and shrink from me always? You are dear to me, Duke, most dear. How tenderly I love you, God knows—you never can!"

He stopped exhausted or overcome by his emotion, and sank into a chair.

"I talk wildly and vainly. We must part it seems. Be it so. You came with that object, and none other."

"You will not then even ask to be forgiven?"

"Forgiveness? It may not be in such a case as mine. I have sinned too deeply. What," he asked, suddenly, "did you come to offer me terms of forgiveness?"

I bore in mind my uncle's words—

"Return to the wife you have abandoned—on your knees before her avow your penitence, and then it will be time to talk of forgiveness."

He paused for some time.

"It may not be, Duke," he said at length, rather coldly, and he leant back in his chair.

I was leaving him. But an appealing movement of his hand retained me.

CHAPTER LXV. "RING FOR PROPERT!"

"Don't leave me yet, Duke. There is something I would say to you, if I could only find the right words; but my mind's confused just now, my brain is all disordered. I'm faint and giddy. I've not been well of late, and the remedies I have

sought relieve me but for a little while, and bring upon me worse suffering afterwards. And now this has come upon me. Have patience with me!"

A sudden feebleness had afflicted him. His voice had lost all firmness and tone. The light had gone from his eyes; they were dim and colourless. He reclined infirmly in his chair, his thin white hands hanging down helplessly. There was something alarming in his look of decrepitude and exhaustion.

"I have but little in the way of explanation to submit to you, Duke. Only, before you judge a man, you should know something of the trials and temptations he has undergone; you should live his life, if that might be; at least, you should try and understand his heart—its troubles and secrets and sore perplexities. You should trace his sins to their source, for then you may light upon their excuse.

"I was a spoiled child, prematurely forced into notice, over-indulged, ruinously fondled and flattered. I loved and I married—grievous errors both; for I was poor, in debt, and extravagant. Something of this you have, no doubt, heard before; but not all. Under circumstances of extreme pressure I left my wife and her child, yourself, to try and establish myself in London.

"I am charged, of course, with abandoning her. But, when I quitted her, believe me, Duke, I had no such thought. Against your mother, my wife, I desire to say no word. I married her because I loved her. She is the only woman I have ever loved. But we were ill-suited to each other. That's the plain truth. Our marriage resulted in misery to both. Under happier conditions this might have been otherwise. But the world seemed to be in a conspiracy against me. It was too strong for me. I ought not to have married. I had not sufficient faith, or patience, or fortitude.

"I left my wife, as I said, and came to London, alone, to fight my way to success. I had introductions; they availed nothing. I cannot tell you how arduous were my struggles to win fortune and fame; to obtain, in the first instance, even the merest subsistence. For months I was on the brink of starvation. I was destitute. I had pawned all my clothes. My sufferings were almost more than I could bear.

"I received letters from my wife—not all she wrote—for I had not money even to pay the demand for postage. How could

I answer her? Could I tell her of my wretchedness? I could not.

"Fortune turned towards me at last, but very slowly, and dealing out her favours with a very niggard hand. Still I was gradually rising. I obtained a prize from the Society of Arts. I sold the medal to buy bread.

"I emerged triumphant from the conflict; but with my heart dead within me; my whole nature was seared and embittered by the suffering I had undergone. I loved no more. And I learnt from enquiries I made upon the subject that my wife had sought and found a home among her own kindred. They had previously treated her with cruel neglect. She did not write to me again, and I remained silent.

"I had concealed the fact of my marriage. It was known to no one in London. It seemed to me too flagrant a proof of my folly and imprudence, a fatal hindrance to all professional advancement. It had ruined me in Bath; I was determined it should not also ruin me in London. I had learnt to think that fortune has no kindness in store for those who have given her hostages in the shape of wife and children. And I kept silence so long, that speech upon the subject became at last impossible to me. I could not speak for very shame.

"Do not think that good intentions, rightful impulses, never stirred within me. I had a sense of justice left me yet. But the impediments in the way of honesty seemed insurmountable; and time and absence became impediments in their turn. It was easier to advance and to be silent. The future had prosperity in store for me. But as I became famous, so the difficulty increased of revealing a past that was in the present shameful to me. And, as I have said, I no longer loved.

"And then, bear in mind that my circumstances have been always less prosperous than they have seemed to be. I have been called rich; I am not rich. It is true that I have earned large sums; but my expenses have been very great. I have always been extravagant. Money slips through my fingers, almost before I can close them upon it. For long years I was harassed and drained by my early debts and difficulties. I have never been able to save. I have had a position to maintain. Expensive journeys have been forced upon me. And I repeat I have been extravagant throughout my life—a prodigal and a spendthrift.

"That is my story, Duke. You are the

only living creature to whom I would tell it. And you can well believe that it is no light trial to me to relate it even to you. To the world I owe no explanations; I will give none. It has shown me no kindness; it has no real claim upon my gratitude. I have forced from it its rewards; they were not freely given. The world was well content that I should perish unknown, unaided. That my fate has been different, has been of my own ordering, the result of painful toil and bitter anguish. But I would have, Duke, if it might be—your good opinion—no not that—I dare not ask that—but something of your pity. I would beg that, of you—and of you only.”

His voice had sunk almost to a whisper. He had been speaking with his face turned from me—pausing now and then for breath; he was in deep pain, apparently, physical, as well as mental.

“Yet I would not have even your pity, upon false pretences, Duke,” he resumed in a firmer tone. “Of penitence I can make no profession. I know the weakness of my own nature. What I did, it may be, under like temptations, I should do again. Pity me, if you will, because I have sinned and suffered, not because I am penitent. I concealed my marriage from a feeling of false, unworthy pride. But that pride clings to me still. My sacrifices to it in the past I might repeat—I cannot be sure—were the chance again offered me, and my life given me back to live over again. And to that pride, false, unworthy, as I own it to be, I owe something. It brought me fame and success; it sustained me while I fought my way to the front. It shall sustain me still, though it may be as a poison that gives strength for a while, only to bring death at last. I have discarded it but for a moment, for your sake, Duke; my story told, I resume it again. And as I have lived, I will live on to the end. What may be said of me, when I am gone hence, will not trouble me.”

Again he paused.

“Will you not speak to me, Duke? I say again, my wife, your mother, is wholly blameless. I make no charge against her. She was too good for me; I was unworthy of her. She deserved a far happier fate than that entailed upon her by our most ill-starred union. I would that we had never met. For what she has endured my pain and sorrow are genuine indeed. And then she is your mother, Duke. She gave you life, and has loved and cherished you always—she has made you what you are

—fulfilling the duty to you I have so scandalously evaded. I can regard her only with the tenderest reverence.”

He ceased speaking, and with an effort he turned in his chair, and fixed his glazed lustreless eyes upon me, looking for my reply. Upon one point, in the story of the past, which the most severely charged his conduct and character, he had not touched.

“You left your wife to starve,” I said bluntly—but without design to be unfeeling. I but used the first words that came to me—thankful that any came. He did not rebuke me by any display of impatience. He answered with a sort of despondent humility.

“What could I do? I was starving myself.”

“You don’t know—you have never asked—what she endured.”

“Poor woman! I can judge by my own sufferings.”

“She was left with her child—helpless, forlorn, destitute.”

“Still she had friends who came to her assistance. I was quite friendless.”

“But before that—to what was she exposed?”

“Do not ask me. I cannot answer. I dare not even think. God knows I would have helped her if I could. But I was powerless. As I have told you, I was myself destitute—desperate—I was for days without food.”

I thrust Lord Overbury’s letter into his hands.

“She was exposed to this. Do you know it now for the first time?”

He screamed as he read it, and clutching me convulsively by the arm, dragged himself up. He was trembling violently; the letter fluttered in his hands. He gasped for breath. He tried to speak—but could not for some moments.

“His writing! The villain! He dared do this? I see now—I understand,” he said at length, in a strange strained voice. “Duke! as I am a gentleman—but that’s idle! as I am a man, I swear to you that I knew nothing of this. I never dreamt that such a thing could be. God help me: I am punished now, indeed! I never felt my punishment until now. I see what you have thought of me, what you must think of me. And she, my wife, believed what this villain wrote, believed that it was with my sanction—my connivance—I cannot speak the words! As I live, Duke, it’s false, false, false!” His voice failed him; he could no longer articulate distinctly.

It was a most distressing scene. I could say nothing, do nothing, but afford him some support as he leant heavily upon me.

"The villain, the lying brutal villain! And he called himself my friend; he had been my patron! I had received help, money from him—a price for my infamy, so it must have seemed! She believed it; she could not but believe it. But she baffled him, defied, escaped him? I'll not ask that. I know she did. She was always pure as snow, and brave as pure, and Heaven heard her when she cried for help. Yet that I, her husband, should have left her at that devil's mercy! I, her lawful protector, who had sworn to love and cherish her! I was far away. I knew nothing of her cruel trial. I did not know it, and yet I should have known it, for I knew him, and what he was capable of. Duke, my poor boy, I'm going mad I think. Let me hear you speak, say something, anything, but that you believe me guilty of this hideous crime!"

I could not believe it.

"Father!" I cried to him.

"Thank God that you have said that word! My boy! My boy!" He hid his face upon my shoulder.

He seemed quite wrecked and broken. I was terrified at the change in him. Was this the Sir George Nightingale, I asked myself—the question rushed across my mind, even at that moment of wild excitement—that I had seen no long time since? The calm, polished man of fashion, so stately and elegant, with the studied speech, the cold set smile, the composed manners, the dignified presence? All were gone. He was as another creature. Was he systematically acting a part? was he himself then, or now? But no, I could not doubt the truth of his emotion; the agony of his suffering was not to be denied. It was only my own bewilderment that brought questioning of his good faith. I was so distressed and disturbed I could not fairly grasp the facts about me. All seemed blurred and involved, real and yet unreal too, substance and shadow for ever shifting places, dreadful under both aspects.

He roused himself a little presently, and turned towards me a worn, gaunt, pallid face, wet with tears. He gripped my hands with spasmodic fierceness, as though to make sure of my presence, while he fixed

upon me his hollow, vacant-looking eyes. He spoke faintly, indistinctly; I had a difficulty in comprehending all he said. There was something of delirium in his manner.

"You'll not leave me, Duke; at least, not yet. You'll not quit the house. I only ask that. I'll not trouble you; you need not see me. Only let me know that you are still near me; let me hear you, now and then, moving to and fro overhead. I won't ask more than that. My boy! You said 'father!' didn't you? I was not dreaming? God bless you, Duke! I shall paint no more; at least, I think not. I can't. The power's gone from me. But there's that sketch of you I began a little while since; I shall never finish it. But your mother might like to have it. She'd not take it from me. No, no; she couldn't, you know. I don't think that for a moment. But, from you, she would. You are the only link between us. God help me! I'm dying, I think. But, no; I'll not die yet. I've work to do. That villain! I'll find him; let him hide where he will. I've not seen him this many a long year; but he shall not escape me. How weak and faint I am! Ring the bell, Duke, for Propert. I'm ill. Propert knows what to do. I can stand for a moment without help, Duke; at least, I think so."

He could not, however, As I left him, to ring the bell, he tottered and fell heavily on the floor. I sprang to assist him. Propert entered.

"There's no occasion to be frightened, sir," said Propert, quietly. "Sir George has fainted, sir; that's all. I've seen him like this before—almost like this. The medicine he takes, sir—that's a good deal to do with it, I think. He'll sleep now, and wake refreshed. You don't look very well yourself, sir. You're not used to this sort of thing; and it's upset you a bit. No wonder. Better get a breath of fresh air, sir. This room's very close; with the smell of paint and one thing and another. You can safely leave Sir George to me. I know what to do."

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CHAPTER XXXIII. SEYMOUR'S HOME.

IN 1589, A.D., out of "thankfulness to Heaven for the dispersion of the Spanish Armada," and also to perpetuate the memory of his wife, Frances Elizabeth, whose days had been devoted to charity, John Seymour, citizen of London and native of Dunwich, did devise and bequeath certain sums, to be expended in smoothing the path of those who had fallen from good estate to poverty. The bequest had been originally considerable, and the money had so grown with time that it had become in modern days—by reason of the restriction imposed by the testator of three years' previous residence within the bounds of Dunwich—out of all proportion to the claims made upon it; and some seventy years ago an edifice of goodly proportions had been constructed out of the funds, and denominated Seymour's Home. It was built in the Elizabethan style, perhaps in order to mark the date of the benefaction, but with improvements such as wealthy John Seymour, and even his Royal mistress, could never have commanded for themselves. Time had mellowed it, but it had suffered no touch of decay. The roof showed a patchwork of moss, and grey and yellow lichen; the walls were covered with ivy, close clipped only about the quaint old casements; the stone porches were in the summer time cool bowers, into which the roses that overhung them peeped at will, and filled them with delightful odours. The garden of Seymour's Home was not less than about forty thousand acres—that is, its front and western windows looked directly down

upon that exquisite landscape called the Garden of Kent. Its own modest plot of pleasure ground was on the east of the building, and was only separated from the village street by a low stone wall. The Home had been built for the accommodation of single persons, each associate having his own little self-contained residence, with a common kitchen; but the Miss Simcoes, to whose quarters Mr. Hulet and his niece had succeeded, had had a door cut in the wall of partition, to the very great contentment of the new comers. For at Seymour's Home Evy Carthew and her uncle were now located. From Balcombe the former had departed with an inexpressible sense, not of pleasure, indeed, but of relief, although it had cost her not a few tears to part with two such friends as Mrs. Hodlin Baraby and the widow; but Mr. Hulet had evinced neither regret nor satisfaction. Seeing that Evy was well contented, he also was content.

Her uncle was a riddle to her in this respect, as in some others. To have found such a shelter as Seymour's Home so soon after the storm that had wrecked their fortunes, and to know that it was assured to them for the future, was surely a cause for thankfulness; to be within the reach of such tried friends as Mrs. Mellish and the good Doctor, and yet to be removed from the intrusion of undesired sympathy or vulgar curiosity, was more and better than they could have had the right to expect. Yet Mr. Hulet seemed to take it all as a matter of course, acquiescing, indeed, in whatever was proposed to him, but with a melancholy pretence of interest such as would not have deceived a child. Occasionally, when the thought of his strange ways, and especially of the contra-

dictions manifested in his talk and actions—his sudden resolve to return to Dunwich, for instance, after protesting that he would not do so, and his inexplicable statement that he had not foreseen Judith's designs with respect to Captain Heyton, when he had himself expressly warned her of them—these things, I say, caused Evy ever and anon to shudder with the thought that her uncle's mind was giving way under the pressure of his misfortunes; but at other times she was able to convince herself that all these symptoms were but the effect of pre-occupation. Whenever he was left alone, he would fall into what happy childhood, to whom despondency is a marvel, terms "a brown study," brooding over she knew not what; and though he did his best to respond to her attempts to enliven him, the effort was obviously painful to him. When Mr. Mellish came, or Dr. Burne, he put on some show of cheerfulness, and his talk would even exhibit traces of its old caustic style. But his mood was apt to change with startling suddenness; and sometimes he would rise and leave the room without a word, as though his own laboured part in the conversation had become insupportable, and remain in his bedchamber until the visitor had taken his departure. One instance of this had been specially remarkable. Dr. Burne had been congratulating Evy upon the state of her uncle's health, which, singular to say, had greatly improved of late months (it was one of those strange, but by no means unexampled cases, where mind and body do not react on one another); and turning to Mr. Hulet, he said laughingly, "You see the good effects, my dear sir, of getting rid of all these rubbishy drugs that you used to swear by, and which would have poisoned any man who had not, like yourself, acclimatised himself to their effects."

"Dr. Burne," replied Mr. Hulet, with dignity and a sudden pallor of face, "If, as I have every reason to believe, you would avoid giving me offence, I entreat you not to allude to that subject; I"—here he stopped, as though repenting of an intention to say more, and simply added, "It is painful to me;" and then abruptly left the room. "Have you any explanation of this, Evy?" inquired the Doctor, raising his eyebrows; "your uncle never used to object to be rallied about his medicines, even when he believed in them!"

"No, Doctor, I don't understand it; but then," sighed Evy, "there are many

things about dear uncle now which are equally inexplicable to me."

"He is not communicative, then, even to you?" inquired the Doctor, gravely.

Evy shook her head.

"Umph! Doesn't talk much of what has happened, I suppose?"

"He never speaks of the past," replied Eya, sorrowfully, "and never thinks of anything else."

"I see; that's bad," said the Doctor.

The settled melancholy, diversified only by gleams of cheerfulness, which themselves were always followed by deeper gloom, that had taken possession of her uncle, would, under other circumstances, have distressed Evy above measure, but as it was, her solicitude and even her apprehensions upon his account had this good effect, that they did not permit her to brood over her own sorrow, else that would have been bitter indeed, and hard to bear. Within a few score yards of Seymour's Home, the woods of Dirleton were putting forth their summer glory; she never entered them, yet dark and cold was the shade they cast upon her. The year was not yet complete, since she had wandered beneath their branches with the man she loved; and though she loved him still, dearly as then, he was lost to her forever. Each breath of wind that stirred them whispered sad farewells, and waved to her eternal adieux. Almost every spot on which her mournful eyes could rest had its especial association with him, and was the grave of a tender joy.

Though the very landscape spoke of her lost love thus, she had no ears for the tittle-tattle of the little town, which, indeed, occupied itself vastly more with Captain Heyton and Judith than with his past relations with herself. Balcombe had been too far off, for anything beyond vague rumours to reach the good folks at Dunwich, concerning Evy's engagement. They had no idea that matters had gone so far.

There was a general notion that he had "thrown her over," which, some said, was only "just what they expected," and others, "just what she deserved." Mrs. Colville did not hesitate to tell Mrs. Mellish that, in her opinion, the event was in the nature of "a judgment" upon Miss Carthew for setting her affections upon one whose position was so superior to her own. "And if I don't say a word about 'wiles,' or 'artifice,' my dear Mrs. Mellish, it is only because the girl has suffered

enough. The idea of being in Seymour's Home—a mere almshouse—and almost next door to that pretty place that was once their own, must, indeed, be very trying to her."

"The Cedars" was not almost next door, but it was even more within view of "the Home" than if it had been, because the village curved at that spot. From the window of her little chamber Evy looked directly down upon the garden in which she once used to take such pride; on the lawn, with its stately and far-shadowing trees; on the terrace, fringed with the well-trimmed hedge, where the pink and white May bloomed alternately in the spring; on the fountain, that leapt and sparkled in the sun, above the basin where she used to feed her gold fish. But this sight was not so painful to Evy as Mrs. Colville imagined. The Cedars was one of the few spots that had no connection with her lover; and she regarded it, if not with philosophy, certainly without humiliation, or any bitter sense of contrast.

Mrs. Mellish said but little in defence of her young friend; but it was only because she feared to say too much. If Lady Wapshaw and Mrs. Colville had but known how very painful it was to her to bear the theme discussed, they would have spoken of nothing else, until there had been an open rupture between them and the Rector's wife, which it was the latter's resolve, if possible, to avoid. She bore with much more equanimity their remarks upon the misfortunes of Mr. Hulet. Even to her charitable spirit there did seem a certain propriety in the coming to grief of a man who would not "hear the Church" upon the anniversary of the martyrdom of Charles I., and who had been, also, habitually given to speak evil of dignities; but still she pitied him, and shrank from the bad taste and ruthlessness with which her visitors would paint the penalties that had befallen him. Both those ladies "felt it their duty" not to call on Evy, lest they might seem to be giving their countenance to her previous presumption; but, being above measure curious to know from trustworthy sources—persons, that is, who took their own view of affairs—how Mr. Hulet and his niece "got on" at the Home, they permitted their daughters to call. It was a question with Lady Wapshaw whether her dear Margaret should not take with her some inexpensive little gift in the shape of a bottle of elder wine or a pot of marmalade—a scheme of

benevolence into which that young woman, however, refused to enter. To do both her and the Colville girls justice, indeed, they were more tender-hearted than their mothers, and felt a considerable commiseration for Evy, sunk now so infinitely below the plane of rivalry; and it was to their credit that the embarrassment throughout their respective visits—which were not repeated—was fully as much on their own side as on that of their hostess.

And all this time not one word had Mrs. Mellish breathed to Evy concerning Captain Heyton, or the girl who—as she had learnt from Mrs. Barmby—had so inexplicably taken her place in his affections. As a woman she naturally longed to hear the details of that most interesting affair, but as a true gentlewoman she forbore to distress her young friend by any allusion to it. At last, however, a circumstance took place which not only excused but necessitated her speaking to Evy upon the subject.

"My dear," said she, taking her accustomed seat in the stone porch one summer's morning by Evy's side, "I have brought some news, which is not good news, and yet which I should be loth for you to hear from less friendly lips than mine."

"I know what it is, dear Mrs. Mellish," answered Evy, quietly. "They are married."

"Yes darling."

There was a long pause. Evy had been expecting the tidings for weeks; yet, now it had come, it was a shock to her bruised heart.

"They are going to ring the bells, I believe, this morning, Evy, though that depends upon Lord Dirleton's wishes. It is not known if he will permit even that much: they have sent up to the Park to know. If I had my way, they should ring no bells."

"Why not, dear?" asked Evy, slowly.

"Well, I hardly know why not, since I have heard so little; but I feel—Hush! there they are!"

And crashing through the still, blue summer air came the marriage bells, so near, so loud, that for a minute no other sound was heard.

"Thank Heaven," murmured Evy. "He will have his own now, and will lose nothing by poor me."

"How is that, Evy? Although, if it pains you, do not tell me."

"It does not pain me now, dear friend," answered she, calmly. "I meant that if I

had been his wife, even at the best, he would have lost house and land in gaining me; and afterwards he might still have lost them, and through me, since but for me he would never have married Judith. That is what has distressed me so of late weeks. I fear I must have seemed very thankless, very indifferent——”

“My dear Evy, pray do not imagine that. But, for my part, if I were in your place, I should not be so considerate about Captain Heyton. It seems to me he has behaved very ill to you. My husband says, ‘I give that fellow up; I was utterly mistaken in him. He is a false——’”

“Hush, hush,” interrupted Evy, laying her hand upon her friend’s shoulder. “Mr. Mellish is quite wrong. Captain Heyton is incapable of falsehood.”

“What! not false, and yet he has married this girl,” cried the Rector’s wife, raising her voice by reason of the tumult of the chimes, “Not false to have jilted a girl like you!”

“He never jilted me. It was I who— who refused to marry him. He was a free man when he proposed to Judith.”

“But why, Evy, did you refuse him? I think I can guess, however: your uncle had lost his money, and you would not let your lover, who had already given up so much for you, marry a penniless girl.”

“That was one of the reasons,” said Evy, quietly; “though there were others.”

“Now is it not odd?” cried Mrs. Mellish, triumphantly; “upon my word my husband is always right: that was the very idea that occurred to him when he heard that your engagement was broken off. ‘She has done it herself,’ he said. Only when the news came about Judith, he altered his opinion. He thought the Captain had behaved ill throughout.”

“He never behaved ill at all,” said Evy, firmly.

“What, not in going straight from your side, as it were, to this other girl, almost an utter stranger, and making *her* an offer. Such a man can have no heart, Evy; in my opinion you have had a fortunate escape.”

“How little you know Captain Heyton,” returned Evy, with a sad smile. “He has a heart both tender and faithful. I wounded it to the quick, and he turned from me—he cared not whither. Then this girl met him. She was no stranger to him, but had striven to win him from me all along, though, blinded by my love and confidence, I had seen nothing of it.”

“The girl is beautiful, I suppose?”

“Yes—as a serpent, and wise as a serpent also. Heaven forgive me, but I cannot wish her happy. I can only wish that she may make her husband so.”

“I think that’s quite as much as can be expected of you, my dear,” said Mrs. Mellish, drily. “What a treacherous creature this young Mrs. Heyton must be, and to behave thus to her own cousin, too!”

“She was not my cousin; it was supposed she was poor Mrs. Hulet’s niece, but that was not the case. She was a friendless orphan, whom that lady had adopted from a child.”

“That is news indeed,” returned Mrs. Mellish, thoughtfully. “It explains, too, in some sort, Lord Dirleton’s consent to this marriage, which, though I did not like to say so just now, seemed to me as unlikely as in your case, though he has permitted the bells to be rung. If the girl had been of the Hulet blood he would certainly never have done so. You heard, doubtless, of his declaration that with his consent his nephew should never marry into a ‘regicide family,’ a very ridiculous objection, it is true, but then he always sticks by his word. He was very fond of his nephew, you see, and, however unwelcome this match may have been to him, it has given the old lord an opportunity for reconciliation. I have been told that Mrs. Heyton has a great deal of money. Is that so?”

“Yes; my aunt left her a considerable sum, I believe.”

“What! and did she not offer to help Mr. Hulet in any way?”

“Oh, no; nor would he have taken anything from her hand; my uncle did not like her.”

“And quite right, too,” remarked Mrs. Mellish, approvingly. “I hope the old lord won’t like her when she comes down here.”

“She will hardly do that, I imagine,” said Evy, the remembrance of Judith’s cowardice in leaving the cottage without venturing to bid her farewell recurring to her. If the sense of wrong intended had thus stung her rival’s conscience, how much more should the sense of wrong committed do so? No; Judith would never come to Dunwich while her uncle and herself were at Seymour’s Home.

“Nay; depend on it, she will come if she can—that is, if Lord Dirleton asks her, which is naturally what she is doing

her best to induce him to do," argued Mrs. Mellish. "The bride and bridegroom are not going to reside abroad, at all events, as was originally intended, which looks significant. Moreover, the very delay in their marriage, for it was spoken of months ago as being immediate, seems to suggest that overtures of reconciliation have been made; at least, that is Dr. Burne's view, who knows the old lord better than any of us. His opinion is, if Lord Dirleton has given his consent to the marriage at all, which it now seems he has done, that Captain and Mrs. Heyton will very soon be at Dunwich Park."

"I think not," said Evy, quietly, as her visitor rose to depart; but her heart was sick within her. She was not afraid of meeting Judith in the least. It was Judith who would shrink from meeting her, rather; but the thought of seeing the two together, as husband and wife, that was wormwood indeed.

MUSHROOM GOSSIP.

THE only security I, your servant, believe, for mushroom-eaters to depend upon, is a personal and practical acquaintance with the several species which have been proved to be wholesome as well as pleasant food. Other tests fail, in numerous instances. For example, the *Pall Mall Gazette* tells us "Edible mushrooms do not change colour when cut, by the action of the air." But the horse mushroom, young and fresh gathered, does turn yellow on its white portions when rubbed, bruised, or cut, which the true mushroom, so far as I have seen, never does; and the peculiarity is so constant as to suffice to distinguish the former (*Agaricus arvensis*, *Agaricus exquisitus* of *Badham's Esculent Funguses*), as a species, from the true or cultivable mushroom, *Agaricus campestris*. On the other hand, almost all the poisonous *Agaricuses* have a flesh that does not change colour, while several *Boletuses* which are perfectly safe to eat do so change.

That the horse mushrooms, which thus turn yellow when bruised, are not poisonous, my own stomach has testified on innumerable occasions—and I am bound to believe it. They may be, when large and aged, less easy of digestion, because often less tender than the others, perhaps not quite so nutritious, but equally innocent. Notwithstanding its title, *exquisitus*, most

people will agree with Mr. Berkley that its flesh and juices are of inferior quality. But as it continues to grow after the crop of wild true mushrooms is over, and will show itself at seasons when the other does not appear, it is accepted as a substitute without being turned over often on the dish. The epicure will look down upon it (though its nutritive flavour and quality should plead for it) but the hungry botanist will be fastidious.

Mr. Justice Denman has an idea of mushrooms which grow under trees dangerous, because, as he supposes, they feed on decayed roots, which are qualified the statement with a "perhaps tainted with poison. That being so perhaps—the learned judge advises, everybody beware of eating mushrooms which grow under trees.

The caution is a broom which sweeps too clean. To obey it, everybody ought to beware of eating truffles, because woods are one of their favourite habitations and it is even doubted whether they are not parasitic on roots. The horse mushroom persists in growing under the clump of trees, in half-shady situations to which horses and cattle retire to doze and ruminate, year after year on the very same spot—unlike the true mushroom, which is of a shifty nature, and loves to search itself about "promiscuously" when the hour for starting above-ground arrives. In such places the horse mushroom obtains considerable dimensions, though not equal to those assigned by M. J. Verne to the antediluvian mushroom which are said to have been thirty or forty feet high, and under whose shade many theria and amphibious ichthyosauri sought shelter from the rays of the still young sun.

Now, the proof of the mushroom is in the eating. My gardener, on his way and from night and morning, passes a meadow in which stands a row of trees screened from public view by a hawthorn hedge. The spot is decidedly shady, except from the early morning's sun. Under those trees, when the stars are favourable he finds horse mushrooms so frequently and perennially that, by an effort of imagination, he calls that meadow mushroom-bed. The produce is always brought in with pride, and is shared, just, between kitchen and parlour. I did those under-tree mushrooms contain anything deleterious, the hand that will

this would long since have lain in the grand terrestrial mushroom-bed.

The eatable boletus (*Boletus edulis*), which nobody, one would think, could mistake, after once gathering and handling a specimen, is to be found in many a park and plantation, abundantly in autumn, and occasionally in spring and summer. Where squirrels abound (and squirrels imply assemblages of trees) it is difficult to get good samples of *Boletus edulis*, whose stems resemble nuts in taste and somewhat in texture. Its favourite sites, indeed, are woods, especially those of pines, oaks, and chestnuts, and one variety is called *pinicola*, from its fondness for the society of fir trees.

Its structure is very curious. Its under surface nearly flat, instead of presenting "gills," as is the case with mushrooms, is covered with little holes like pin-pricks, which in fact are the orifices of tubes, at first white, then yellow, and afterwards of an olive or yellow-green tint. This fungus is best for table between the white and the yellow stages, or at least before the olive tinge is reached.

In the South of France the edible boletus is largely consumed under the name of *cépe*. You see ladies in the market bargaining for a fungus which few English people (unless bent on suicide) would eat for any consideration. It was first handed to me at a table d'hôte at Pau. I looked at it twice, and said, "Merci, non." But seeing my neighbours engulf it without trembling, I plucked up courage and did the same. After repeated trials, I must pronounce it good; though fresh-gathered British mushroom is still better; and nearly agreeing with Berkeley's dictum: "Though much neglected in this country, it appears to be a most valuable article of food. It resembles much in taste the common mushroom, and is quite as delicate; it abounds in seasons (and in situations and districts) where these are not to be found." What a vast addition would be made to the national supply of food, if people could take to stewed boletus! But your intelligent labourer would just as soon think of eating a frog as of eating a *cépe*.

Who bids for my *Chantarelles*, *Cantharellus cibarius*, fresh from the forest and yellow as egg-yolks or apricots? At Rome, being in no great esteem, they fetch from two pence to two pence half-penny a pound, in England not two pence a hundred weight. Here, Badham tells

us, it is the Freemasons' fungus; who keep the secret. But a waiter at the Calverley Hotel, Tunbridge Wells, confessed that he had been in the habit of dressing them for years, on state occasions, at Freemasons' Tavern. Badham found immense supplies under the beech trees in Buckhurst Park, but no hands venturesome enough to gather them. The *Chantarelle* grows in profusion in the birch woods of Aberdeenshire, without the slightest suspicion on the part of the peasantry that it is an excellent article of food. Stew it gently and long, ye who dare, and mince it with meat or other fungi!

There are races of men, the Chinese and the African, capable of resisting miasms and climates which are fatal to Europeans or at least to Anglo-Saxons. Are there tribes and nations on whose constitution the poison of fungi produces little or no effect? The Russians, driven by the severity of their Lent to a vegetable diet, at a season when vegetables are scarce, eat fungi almost indiscriminately, without regard to their presumed wholesome or injurious qualities. Other peoples of Eastern Europe do the same.

It has been supposed that the poison is neutralised by the salting of the fungi for winter use and then storing them away in vinegar. Knowing nothing of the real nature of fungus poison, we cannot say whether this process constitutes the antidote—whether it effectually destroys the virulence of such dangerous species as the fly mushroom (*Agaricus muscarius*), one single individual of which, mixed with wholesome kinds, is sufficient to produce fatal results.

Here again may be urged the necessity of a specific knowledge of each particular form of fungus. With cultivated mushrooms people suppose themselves safe. They gather and eat them in perfect confidence, without taking the trouble to examine them. In some continental cities, none but cultivated mushrooms are allowed to be brought to market. John Bellows's wonderfully tiny pocket dictionary translates "*champignon de couche*" by "edible mushroom;" which, as a rule, is quite correct. But mushroom-beds occasionally produce, especially before, and sometimes after, the appearance of the intended crop, others besides the true mushroom.

It must have been some fatal admixture which caused the accident recently investigated before a court of law. The young

woman who died must have eaten some fungus which the "skilled witness" did not see. Otherwise, if that witness, as reported, saw nothing in those fungi to distinguish them from the true mushroom, his skill was equivalent to that of the cook who should stuff her leg of pork with parsley and hemlock, in her inability to distinguish one from the other. A "by-the-by" worth the room it takes, is that accidents for fool's parsley, the lesser hemlock, may be avoided, by allowing none but curled or double parsley—as easy to cultivate as the common sort, and much more decorative as garnishing—to enter the kitchen. When Cardinals and Popes have died of dishes of mushrooms, who knows that the mushrooms were not made the scapegoat of some more active ingredient?

The Italians, again, seem to have fungus-proof stomachs. Under the arcade at Genoa, over which most of the hotels are situated, sacks of "funghi" are offered for sale, so mixed, dried, and cut up into shreds, that he must be indeed an expert mycologist who could tell you what those sacks contain. Whilst hundreds of baskets of what we call toadstools are carried home at Rome for the table, almost the only one condemned to be thrown into the Tiber by the inspector of the fungus market is our own mushroom. In such dread is it held in the once-Papal States, that no one knowingly would touch it. One of the fiercest imprecations among the lower orders, not nice about the quality of their oaths, is to pray that any one may die of a pratiolo, or meadow mushroom.

On the other hand, although the strings of dried boletuses sold during winter in every market place in Italy are composed of many different species, no mischief, Vittadini says, was ever known to occur from their indiscriminate and very extensive consumption. He thence concludes that all the species of this genus are innocuous, or, at least, that drying and cooking extracts any deleterious principles they may contain. His inference is supported by the daily use amongst the peasantry of certain districts, of *B. luridus*, which of all bad boletuses passes far the worst. Berkeley calls *B. luridus* "very deleterious," which Badham, however, says requires further confirmation.

Vittadini also experimented with it in large doses upon animals, who did not suffer in consequence. But we cannot infer that because certain fungi are eaten by animals they are, therefore, fit

for human food. Goats eat tobacco and several other noxious plants, with apparently absolute impunity. Of innocuous fungi some animals are fond. *Agaricus grammopodius* is greedily eaten by cows. Sheep often eat *Marasmius oreades* and other fleshy and leathery species. Many are the favourite food of slugs; but those creatures are omnivorous and even devour their own dead kindred. A crushed slug or snail is a capital bait for a slug.

The vulgar tests of the wholesomeness of fungi, such as cooking a piece of bright silver, or an onion, with them, are perfectly worthless and delusive. There is no infallible sign whereby the unwholesomeness of any unknown species can be detected. Nothing can be depended on except practice, familiarity, and experience; and even behind them lies a mystery.

As the Gardeners' Chronicle of Oct. 4, 1873, remarks, improper selection of species, ignorance, or carelessness will not account for all the phenomena—such as that certain persons can, and other persons cannot, eat with impunity particular fungi. It will not account for the fact that the same fungus under one set of circumstances is harmless, and under another poisonous, to the same individual.

The case is rare, but it exists. In fact, there is an undeniable capriciousness—using the term in ignorance of what is the real cause—in the effect which many fungi produce. A correspondent of that journal has experienced this capriciousness in his own proper person. He states that for many years he was able to eat and enjoy mushrooms, but that for the last ten years he has been unable to do so without experiencing violent pains. He is actually poisoned by them. Even a dish flavoured with ketchup serves to cause him great discomfort.

Instances, I repeat, are very rare with true mushrooms; so rare that they need excite no apprehension; but examples of a similar capriciousness as to their effects are much more frequently furnished by another article of diet, shell-fish, as in the case of mussels. One member of a family will not be able to eat a single one without suffering, while all the rest will feast on them unharmed.

Gathering mussels on the rocks at low spring-tide is an amusement in which the writer and his belongings occasionally indulge. One evening we came home with

well-filled baskets; everybody supped heartily off them; nobody's sleep was disturbed by indigestion. Next day, after partaking of the rest at dinner, one person only, a young man in vigorous health, who had eaten his share the day before without the slightest inconvenience, was unmistakably mussel-poisoned, and became really ill during several hours.

Some children had a gluttonous father-in-law, who knew not mussels, and wondered at the glee with which they ate them. One day, to have a mussel treat, those children clubbed their weekly pence. The mussels, real Stiffkey sluice, were bought, cooked, hustled, and served. The father-in-law peeped in, pounced like an ogre on the dish, took it away, and ate it all himself. He approved, for once, the children's doings; they were not such fools, respecting mussels at least, as he thought them. But an hour afterwards he was in a fever. His skin turned red, with such intolerable irritation, tingling, and itching, that he was near tearing the flesh off his greedy old bones.

It is said that those children grinned in their sleeves and went to bed, though mussel-less, with tears, not of sorrow, in their eyes.

The age of the individual may have something to do with peculiarity of constitution and liability to certain influences. A gentleman, who, all his life, had been untouched by sea-sickness in the roughest weather, on approaching three-score years and ten, took advantage of a brilliant autumn morning to go out to sea in a Norfolk crab-boat. He was there surprised by a new sensation, and could never afterwards place himself in similar circumstances without experiencing the same affection.

The uncertain influence of fungus poison may partially account for the opposite degrees of favour and disfavour with which different species are regarded by different people. A Breton peasant, if compelled to choose between being hung and eating a mess of mushrooms, might quite possibly prefer the hanging. For the choice of this sorry alternative he has reason; and it all depends upon a word. In other parts of France the same prejudice exists amongst the middle and the working classes. Begging Juliet's pardon, much depends on a name. Give a dog a bad one, and we know the result. Now the French do not employ two words, as we do, "mushroom" to indicate the good, and "toadstool" the

bad sorts of fungus. They have only "champignon," which comprises all, good and bad alike. "Mousseron," a small edible species—sometimes called "champignon" by Anglo-French cooks—is a term rarely employed. "Fungus" does not enter into French familiar speech.

When, therefore, a housewife reads in her provincial and prefectorially-patronised newspaper that a numerous family, or a troop of soldiers, or a party of sportsmen, were all found dead one morning, after supping on champignons they had recklessly gathered—and editors are glad of such filling-up stuff, which incurs no political penalty, fine, or liability to seizure—she concludes that everything called champignon is necessarily deadly, and goes into fits if asked to cook mushrooms which would fetch a fair price at Covent Garden. Whereas, if there existed a verbal distinction for things which possess such a mortal difference, she might profit by the good gifts of Providence, mushrooms, knowing that they were not identical with poisonous toadstools.

Other classes of vegetables, besides fungi, comprise both wholesome and deleterious articles of food. Even in the same vegetable or plant, some parts will be harmless or nutritious, others medicinal or deleterious. The capsule of the poppy yields opium, the seed it contains furnishes excellent salad oil. Surely the knowledge which distinguishes good from bad, necessary in all cookery and alimentation, might be extended with advantage to the fungus family, if people would take the trouble to use their senses. But with the great majority of men and women, it is the old story of "Eyes, and No Eyes."

HALF AN HOUR WITH AN OLD HERALD.

I HAVE a great fondness for stopping at old book shops, and peeping at odd volumes that lie scattered at their front. It is not an uncommon or unreasonable weakness. Many a good writer has confessed to an indulgence in it, or has expressed his sympathy with men whose taste and leisure have allowed them to enjoy it. Kindly hearted "Elia" owns to an affection for those who "filch a little learning at the open stalls; the owner, with his hard eye, casting envious looks at them all the while, and thinking when they will have done." I well remember when at school, and exhausted as to pocket-money, spending

parts of my half-holidays in the sober recreation of reading bits of novels, or of voyages and travels (which I liked much better), at the various old book-stalls that I chanced to pass, sometimes lingering so long to "snatch a fearful joy," that I really almost wondered I was not handed over as a thief to the police, and made in some way to disgorge all I had devoured.

Stolen pleasures are the sweetest; and even now that I have old books of my own, and have access to more libraries than I ever can look through, I rarely have the virtue to withstand the strong temptation of stopping to steal glances at the old books in the streets. Besides the pleasure of the feeling that one is getting something without having to pay for it, there is the even greater luxury (in nine cases out of ten) of thinking that your stoppage is a dreadful waste of time, and that instead of standing there you should be going about your business. For I note that, as a rule, one feels always most inclined to stop and read at bookstalls, when one is most engaged and least can spare the time for it; just as one is never so inclined for a cigar as when staying in a house where tobacco is prohibited, and as one never feels so tempted to take up a new novel, or play a game of billiards, or lie down and go to sleep, as when one has a lot of work that must be done at once, and the printer's boy is waiting in the ante-room for "copy."

One of the quaintest of old books that I have lately chanced to meet with in my course of way-side reading bears on its title-page the date MDCCXXIV. (men had leisure then to use the Roman numerals), and is called, in large red letters, "A Display of Heraldry, by John Guillim, Pursuivant-at-Arms." It is a thick substantial volume, about sixteen inches high, and weighing pretty near a stone; notwithstanding which dimensions it had reached a sixth edition in the year that I have named. But men then sat down to their reading with sedateness and solemnity, and great books were not esteemed so great an evil as they now may be in these high pressure times. The lightest of light literature then weighed heavy in the scales, and a book or two to lighten the tedium of a long journey would have formed no slight addition to the luggage of a traveller.

"Mr. Guillim," as he styles himself, informs us in his preface that the aim of his "Display" is to put in shape the "Chaos-

like contemperation of things, not only diverse but repugnant in nature, hitherto concorporated in the generous profession of heraldry; as the forms of the pure celestial bodies mixed with gross terrestrials; earthly animals with watery; savage beasts with tame; whole-footed beasts with divided; reptiles with things gressible; fowls of prey with home-bred. Which confused mixture hath not a little discouraged many persons, otherwise well affected to the study of Armory, and impaired the estimation of the profession." How far Mr. Guillim has succeeded in his effort to "dissolve this deformed lump," as he called it, I doubt if any reader would much thank me to inquire. The point was doubtless settled by the critics of the day when his "Display" was first produced, and to re-review a work of a century and a half ago is scarce what readers of this journal would care to have me do. All that I intend here is to dip into his pages as I did at the old book-stall where I chanced to come across them, and just jot down a few specimens of Mr. Guillim's patient learning, and his oddly-jumbled quaintnesses of humour and research.

His "introduction" begins in a manner highly scholarlike, with quotations from a host of classical authorities, including Virgil, Plutarch, Pliny, Plautus, Lucretius, and Livy, to prove that Arms may be defined as "tokens or resemblances, signifying some act or quality of the bearer." Their institution, he informs us, somewhat naively, "is not new;" and to show that he is justified in making this assertion, strange and startling as it seems, he tells a tale related by Diodorus Siculus, how that above four hundred years before the Israelites left Egypt, Osyris (as he spells it), who was surnamed Jupiter the Just, son to Cham the cursed son of Noah, called Janus by the Gentiles (as every member of a school-board surely ought to know), being banished from the blessed tents of Shem and Japhet by reason of the curse that had fallen on his father, was constrained to go in quest of some far-distant place, wherein he might settle himself, his children, and his people. Wherefore the intending emigrant assembled a great army, and, having appointed Hercules his eldest son as captain, he and Hercules and his two other sons, Macedon and Anubis, as well as sundry other gentlemen whose names have not survived, did paint certain signs upon their shields and other weapons, which signs or emblems were

afterwards called Arms. Osyris in his war paint "bore a sceptre royal, insigned on the top with an eye; Hercules a lyon rampant, holding a battle-axe; Macedon a wolf, and Anubis a dog."

As affording further proof of the antiquity of Arms, the learned Mr. Guillim brings the evidence of Pindarus, who records, on the authority of his own war correspondent, that the hero Amphiaras, in his Theban expedition, bore upon his shield the painting of a dragon; while the shield of Capaneus, one of the brave seven Thebes-besieging captains, is said by Statius to have been beautified with a doubtless correct likeness of the many-headed Hydra that Hercules had fought. Mr. Guillim also tells us that he has read enough of Virgil, and of Homer, to discover that Polynices bore a Sphinx, Agamemnon a lion, Theseus an ox, Selencus a bull, and Ulysses a dolphin with a typhon breathing flames. The same source has moreover enabled him to state that Achilles had "his shield beautifully adorned with a great variety of things celestial; as the motion of the sun, moon, stars, and planets, and other (what other?) the celestial spheres: the situation of the earth, and the adjacent islands (!): the seas, with the ebbing and flowing thereof, &c." How many more things the "et cetera" may extend to, Mr. Guillim does not hint: but it seems to me an artist would find quite enough to do to paint the world and its surroundings, the tidal movement of the seas, and the whole planetary system on the surface of a shield.

Mr. Guillim is, however, careful to observe that these old military emblems and adornments of the armour were not strictly speaking Arms, according to the modern acceptation of the word. However, he considers that they afterwards became so, through the fact that signs and emblems, being useful for the purposes of personal distinction, for the encouragement of valour and securing of respect, were gradually submitted to certain laws of honour touching their assumption, inheritance and use. Thus the figures on the shields, and other personal ensignments, became hereditary emblems and family distinctions; were conferred as the rewards of merit by great people ("Emperors, kings and princes, and their generals in the field") and in their assumption were subject to strict rules. Mushroom millionaires, who now can buy

a coat of arms as easily as though it were a coat of Stultz or Moses, may learn from Mr. Guillim that, by the Law of Gentility in England, no one may bear arms but they who "either have them by descent, or grant, or purchase from the body or badge of any prisoner they in open war have taken." And they may further be informed that "whoso irreverently useth the arms of any man, seemeth to have offered indignity to the person of their bearer," and is therefore liable to an action of trespass, and, according to some writers, a trial by battle. Despite these penalties, however, such irreverence was practised in the time of Mr. Guillim as well as by the mushroom Croesi of our day: and he especially alludes to the "horrid mismanagement of funerals, by painters, undertakers, &c." as affording a marked instance of the way in which the laws concerning Arms were then abused.

Having thus described the origin of Heraldry, and shown that arms have in most instances a "sympathy" with their bearers (as the lion of Agamemnon), or a conformity with names (as "the family of Sprat, whose arms are three sprats,") Mr. Guillim next proceeds to treat with no less length than learning of "blasonings, and marshallings, escocheons, and abatements, charges, ordinaries, accidents, bends, tinctures, and impalements, artificials, chiefs, and fields," and all the other queerly-christened matters in his noble art. How he contrives to interweave with them odd scraps of natural history, and somewhat prosily to point a moral while so doing, the following brief extracts will suffice to show:—

"He beareth Argent a Tyger passant, regardant, gazing in a mirror or looking-glass, all Proper. This coat armour standeth in the chancel of the church of Thane, in Oxfordshire, in a glass-window of the same chancel, impaled on the sinister side with the coat armour properly pertaining to the family of de Bardis. Some report that those who rob the Tyger of her young, use a policy to detain their dam from following them, by casting sundry looking-glasses in the way, whereas she useth long to gaze, whether it be to behold her own beauty, or because, when she seeth her shape in the glass, she thinketh she seeth one of her young ones, and so they escape the swiftness of her pursuit. And thus are many deceived of the substance, whilst they are much busied about the shadows."

"He beareth Argent, on a Mount Proper, an Hart lodged, Gules, by the name of Harthill, to which it alludes, being a Hart on a Hill. The Stag is a goodly beast, full of state in his gait and view, and among beasts of chace, reputed the chief for principal game and exercise. It is observed of him, that finding himself fat, he ever lodgeth and sulketh in secret places, to avoid chasing, as knowing himself worth following, and worth killing (as was said of the great Stag at Killingworth) but most unfit for flying."

Surely, a very sensible animal. By the way, the Stags of Capel Court used to "skulk in secret places," when the railway bubble burst. And here is another point of likeness between man and beast:—

"Or, a bear passant Sable, by the name of Fitzourse. It is written of the she-bear that she bringeth forth her young ones imperfect and deformed, like a lump of raw flesh, and licks it till it comes to shape and perfection. The she-bear is most cruelly enraged against any that shall hurt her young, or despoil her of them: as the scripture saith, in setting forth the fierce anger of the Lord, that he will meet his adversaries as a bear robbed of her whelps. Which teaches us how careful nature would have us to be of the welfare of our children, since so cruel beasts are so tender-hearted in this kind."

"Licking into shape," is a process very often adopted towards children, and many a young cub in manners has been bettered by it. Another fact in natural history Mr. Guillim speaks of, thus:—

"He beareth Or a Raven Proper by the name of Corbet. . . . It hath been an ancient received opinion, and the same also grounded upon the warrant of the sacred scriptures (if I mistake not) that such is the property of the Raven, that from the time his young ones are hatched or disclosed, until he seeth what colour they will be of, he never taketh care of them, nor ministereth any food unto them: therefore, it is thought they are, in the mean space, nourished with the heavenly dew. When he perceiveth his young ones to be penfeathered, and black like himself, then doth he labour by all means to foster and cherish them from thenceforward."

Old writers, as well as new, never seem to tire of flinging sharp words at the lawyers. This is how the worthy Mr. Guillim has a slap at them:—

"He beareth Argent, two Reynards countersalient in bend, the dexter sur-

mounted of the sinister, saltire-like gules, by the name of Kadrod-Hard of Wales. These are somewhat unlike Samson's foxes, that were tied together by the tails, and yet these two agree in *aliquo tertio*. They came into the field like two enemies, but they meant nothing less than to fight, and therefore they pass by each other: like two crafty lawyers which come to the bar, as if they meant to fall out deadly about their client's cause. But when they have done, and their client's purses are well spunged, they are better friends than ever they were, and laugh at those geese that will not believe them to be foxes, till they too late find themselves fox-bitten."

The ladies come in for attack too as well as the lawyers. This is how Mr. Guillim forgets his gallantry, and speaks of them:—

"He beareth Argent, three Peacocks in their pride, Proper, by the name of Pawne (not a designation to be proud of, one would think). The Peacock is so proud, that when he erecteth his fan of plumes, he admireth himself. He displayeth his plumes against the rays of the sun, that they may glisten the more gloriously: and he loseth this beautiful train yearly, with the fall of the leaf; at which time he becometh bashful, and seeketh corners, where he may be secret from the sight of men, until the spring of the year, when his train beginneth to be renewed. And such is the quality of many dames, who being painted (O fie! Mr. Guillim) and richly attired, cannot keep within doors: but being undressed, and in their own colours, they are loth that any man should see them."

Besides odd scraps of natural history, anecdotes of the ancients, and moral dissertations upon things of modern life, Mr. Guillim has a quantity of knowledge at command upon such subjects as astronomy, politics, and field-sports, which he every now and then drags in for the instruction of the readers of his book. On the latter point, indeed, he is much more learned, and agreeably diffuse, than one could have fancied an old writer upon heraldry would have ever cared to be. No fewer than three pages doth he devote to a digression on the names applied to "beasts of venery and of chace," and to setting forth the terms which are "ex-cogitated and used by proper foresters," as that a hare "seateth," a fox "knelleth," a hart "harboureth," and the like. For the benefit of cockney sportsmen, he ex-

plains that it is proper to say "dislodge" the buck, "start" the hare, "rouse" the hart, "bowl" the coney, and "unkennel" the fox. This last term is well-known, even in Cheapside, in our more enlightened day; but I doubt if there be many hunting gentlemen now within sound of Bow Bells who are aware of the correctness, alleged by Mr. Guillim, to apply the term of "holy water sprinkle" to a fox's brush. And, doubtless, there are many who go deer-stalking in Scotland who are in ignorance that in the second year of its existence it is the right thing to call a roe a "girl." For the instruction of town sportsmen, the thoughtful Mr. Guillim takes occasion also to "give some little touch of the propriety of terms commonly used by falconers in managing their hawks," the cause of his digression being the desire that gentlemen, by this means, in their mutual conversing, may be able to speak properly, when they happen to discourse of the "noble recreations and delights" of hunting and hawking.

What is meant by "exorbitant" as applied to certain animals is not so very clear; but Mr. Guillim uses it as being proper to such monsters as griffins and dragons, creatures deformed, as St. Augustine thinks, solely through the fact of "man's first disobedience." That a "mullet" means in heraldry not the fish so-called, but the rowel of a spur; and that a jack-pike is known rightly as a "Lucy;" these are, likewise, things that may be learned of the old writer whose work is under notice. It may be seen, too, that men's arms in some cases are legs; whereof three armed proper, conjoined in fess at the upper part of the thigh, flexed in triangle, garnished and spurred topaz, are quartered in the shield of the noble house of Derby. Quaint as he is in some of his expressions, Mr. Guillim rarely condescends to make a pun. He speaks, however, of the spider as having been "born free of the Weavers' Company," and he pokes some quiet fun at those "hedgehog holy ones, whose sharp censures and bitter words pierce through all those who converse with them." Moreover, speaking of the arms of Philip Hoby, of Glamorgan-shire, "Argent, three fusils upon slippers, gules" (fusils from the Latin *fuscus*, a spindle of yarn), he takes occasion to remark, on the authority of Pliny, that in Ancient Rome when maids were to be wedded, there attended upon them one with a distaff dressed and trimmed with

kembed wool, as also a spindle and yarn upon it, to put them in mind that housewifery and wifery were to go together. Another gentle hint, too, he conveys to the ladies, in speaking of the arms of Johannes de Fontibus, sixth bishop of Ely, who "beareth azure the sun, the full moon, and the seven stars, or, the two first in chief and the last of orbicular form in base;" telling them that "as the moon hath all her light from the sun, so hath the wife from her husband, and as the moon is ever lighter on that side which looks towards the sun; so should the wife study to be fairest in her husband's eye."

With this last sensible remark, I take my leave respectfully of Mr. John Guillim, having said enough to show what queer and jumbled scraps of reading and reflection may be found in his "Display." It is not a work that I should relish reading through, any more than Southey's "Doctor," which, in some points, it is like. But anyone who spends a spare half-hour in its companionship may learn somewhat more of heraldry than is known to men in general, and, while being so instructed, cannot fail to be amused.

AGASSIZ.

Once in the leafy prime of Spring,
When blossoms whitened every thorn,
I wandered through the Vale of Orbe,
Where Agassiz was born.

The birds in boyhood he had known
Went sitting through the air of May,
And happy songs he loved to hear
Made all the landscape gay.

I saw the streamlet from the hills
Run laughing through the valleys green,
And as I watched it run, I said
"This *his* dear eyes have seen!"

Far cliffs of ice his feet had climbed
That day outspoke of him to me;
The avalanches seemed to sound
The name of Agassiz!

And, standing on the mountain crag
Where loosened waters rush and foam,
I felt, that though on Cambridge side,
He made that spot my home.

And looking round me as I mused,
I knew no pang of fear or care,
Or homesick weariness, because
Once Agassiz stood there!

I walked beneath no alien skies,
No foreign heights I came to tread,
For everywhere I looked, I saw
His grand, beloved head.

His smile was stamped on every tree,
The glacier shone to gild his name,
And every image in the lake
Reflected back his fame.

Great keeper of the magic keys
That could unlock the guarded gates,
Where Science like a Monarch stands,
And sacred Knowledge waits,

Thine ashes rest on Charles's banks,
 Thy memory all the world contains,
 For thou could'st bind in human love
 All hearts in golden chains!

Thine was the heaven-born spell that sets
 Our warm and deep affections free,
 Who knew thee best must love thee best,
 And longest mourn for thee!

LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

HAMPSHIRE (THE NEW FOREST.)

AMONG the great oaks of Lyndhurst and the beeches of Mark Ash we start in search of legends. The wild boars that Rufus saw sharpening their tusks against the tree-trunks; the wolves he startled to flight; the tall, red deer he pursued past the thorn-brakes of Bratley, or the funeral yews of Sloden, are gone for ever; but the woodland and moorland, the river and the sea, remain unchanged. The half-wild swine still grub there among the smooth acorns and the rough beech-mast; the charcoal-burner still broods over his smouldering fires, the bee-keeper still watches his hives in dell and glade, though the sunset gun at Portsmouth can be heard on Hordlercliffs, and the screech of the railway whistle reaches brakes that were woods before even the Conqueror's trumpets sounded at Hastings. By Christchurch Priory, past gleams of the Avon and its water lilies, by Milton and Brockenhurst, by Lyndhurst and Sloden, we shall dig for legends with all the patient toil of truffle-hunters. We shall wander over the New Forest, free as a kite, and ready to pounce down on any curious tradition or quaint superstition. On Ashhurst or Roydon we may swoop, at Boldre wood we may start our prey, or in Great Huntley Woods find the object of our search. We have long avenues of forest to travel through, leagues of dead leaves to trample under-foot. But the toil is pleasant, and we shall follow the ghost of Rufus with all the topographers of Hampshire to help hunt him down, till he tells us the sober truth about his own death.

That the Conqueror's son was a monster of cruelty, and steeped in vice, we are assured. We know, also, that he was a short, thick-set man, with a red face, red hair, and staring eyes. He stammered when he was calm, and, when drunk and angry, he swore the grisliest oaths. His father had doubled the severity of the Norman forest laws; but whether he had mercilessly burnt down Hampshire churches, and villages, to make fresh forest land, is now gravely

doubted. Mr. Wise, in his *New Forest*, has very ably summed up the arguments on the question, which are by no means uninteresting. There is no doubt that the traditions of the Conqueror's cruelty to the New Forest people are not strictly true. The New Forest once occupied the entire south-west angle of Hampshire: the great oaks, stretching in a sea of leaves from Southampton Water and the Avon on the east, and on the north, as the best local topographers agree, from the borders of Wiltshire to the English Channel. In the reign of Edward I. these boundaries were reduced, and now the forest only reaches from Bramshaw on the north to Wootton on the south, and from Hardley on the east to Ringwood on the west. In the year 1079, say historians, just thirteen years after the slaughter at Hastings, William ordered the afforestation of this part of Hampshire. Now William owned a great deal of land in this district, inherited from Edward the Confessor; and by right of conquest Ashley, Bashley, Hulborn, Wootton, Pilley, nearly all Boldre, Eling, Breamore, and Ringwood fell to him when he seized the English throne from Harold.

The first historian who mentions William's cruelty is an anonymous writer, who continued the chronicle of William of Jumiègues, who died in 1135; the author of the Saxon Chronicle, the most contemporary authority, makes no mention of destroyed villages, or even of the enlargement of the forest. The Domesday Book furnishes no clue to the supposed cruelties of the Norman. Two-thirds of the district, including thirty manors, were, it is true, afforested. But, as Mr. Wise justly observes—carrying out Voltaire's shrewd suspicion—this by no means shows that the villages were destroyed or the inhabitants banished or murdered. At Eling, for example, it is expressly mentioned that the houses were still standing; and at Batramsley, Pilley, Wootton, and Oxley express mention is made that the meadows and pastures remained untouched. Hordle and Bashley, though contracted, kept up their value. Efford doubled its former assessment; while Brockenhurst and Eling increased in value, though reduced in size. The village of Totton, near the forest, was not touched, because it was all pasture and plough land; and the hamlets of Barton and Chewton, being corn land, were also spared. The mills at Bashley, Milford, and Burgate, all in the Forest,

says Mr. Wise, went as before; the fisheries at Holdenhurst and Dibden were undisturbed; the salt works at Eling and Hordle were untouched; only two churches are mentioned in Domesday, Milford and Brockenhurst, in the heart of the Forest, and those still exist. The New Forest land was never fertile, as many writers have proved. Except in some valleys, where the soil has accumulated, the Forest is chiefly sand or drift, with surface-earth only a few inches deep. "Half of the sixty-three thousand acres," says an agricultural writer of 1861, "are not worth one shilling and sixpence an acre." Where, then, could have arisen the population to fill thirty or fifty churches, and where are the ruins of those churches? There are still existing Keltic and West-Saxon barrows, the rings of British huts; the urns of Roman potteries still unbroken, but there are no ruins of Saxon churches or villages. The truth simply is this, William, "loving the red deer as if he was their own father," cleared away some woodman's huts, and increased the severity of the old forest laws, and being, as a conqueror, naturally unpopular, obtained a worse name than he deserved. Hence, long years after, the annotator of the Monk of Jumiegues writes, "Many, however, say that the deaths of Rufus and his brother were a judgment from Heaven, because their father had destroyed many villages and churches in enlarging the New Forest." The story, suiting the Saxon taste, grew and grew. Night after night, in the charcoal-burner's hut, or the woodman's bothy, the story-teller of the circle round the fire drew pictures more and more ghastly of the Bastard's cruelty.

From the peasants' stories the monkish historians drew their history. Ordericus Vitalis makes sixty parishes devastated, and tells us that those places had supplied Winchester with food. Walter Mapes reckons up thirty-six mother churches pulled down; while Knyghton, in the reign of Richard II., hesitates between twenty-two and fifty-two ruined churches, and attributes the afforestation to Rufus.

No wonder, with these beliefs, that the death or murder of Rufus is still the great tradition of the forest. Let us seek out the spot where he fell, deep among the oaks and thick in the fern. It is a haunted place. Lazy Lawrence, that lubber fiend, sleeps there under some huge beech. There is the Pixey, too, who, as a ragged

forest colt, will lead us astray into bogs; there are barrows haunted by fairies, to pass, and forest wells which, as the Hampshire woodman will tell you, are full of old gold.

Rufus's stone lies about four miles from Lyndhurst, where the Red King's spurious stirrup is still preserved, and where the timber and fern stealers are still tried at the Verderer's court. The pleasantest road to it, says Mr. Wise, is over Emery Down, passing the woods of Kitts Hill and James Hill. Another way is by Minestead, with a glimpse of the hills above Winchester, Southampton, and a gleam of the Wiltshire downs. Above the valley where the stone is to be found is the site of Castle Malwood, with its single trench, and Forest Lodge, where Rufus is said to have feasted the morning of his death. The story of his mysterious end is best told by William of Malmesbury. On the night of the 1st of August, Rufus, probably sleeping at Malwood, woke with a screaming supplication to the Virgin, and a dew of fear upon his brow. When his attendants rushed in with lights, he told them of the fearful vision he had had: he had dreamt he was bled, and that the blood had risen in a red cloud, and had darkened the very day. At daybreak Rufus's special friend, Robert FitzHamon, again awoke his fears with fresh forebodings of evil. A foreign monk, staying at the court, had also had a dream the same night: he had dreamt that he saw the Red King enter a church, and tear a rood image limb from limb in a paroxysm of rage. The image suddenly struck the king, from whose mouth, as he fell, issued flame and smoke that rose and put out the light of the stars. Rufus had already, perhaps, had his cups of Gascon wine, for, with the brutal laugh for which he was famous, he cried—

"He is a monk and dreams for money, like a monk. Give him, FitzHamon, this hundred shillings."

Still the dreams pressed upon the king, but he drank fiercely at his early meal; till his usual high spirits rose. He defied the dreams; he scoffed at the monks; he got him ready to hunt, and ordered his horse and dogs, and bows and spears and arrows. As he was booting and spurring, an armourer entered with six brand new arrows for the King. Rufus selected two, and gave them to Walter Tiril, one of his retinue, the lord of Poix and Poin-toise, and recently arrived from Normandy.

"The best arrow to the best marksman," said the King, as he gave the fatal present. The hunting-party consisted only of Rufus, his brother Henry, William de Bretenil, Walter Tiril, FitzHamon, and a few more. As they were leaving the courtyard a monk arrived, bearing a letter from Serlo, the abbot of St. Peter's, Gloucester: a monk of the abbey had dreamt that he had seen the Saviour and all the host of Heaven standing round the great white throne. Then, too, came the Virgin, robed in light, and flung herself at the feet of her son, and prayed him, by his precious blood and agony on the cross, to take pity on the English; prayed, too, as He was judge of all men, and avenger of all wickedness, that he would punish the King. The Saviour answered her, "You must be patient and wait; due retribution will in time befall the wicked."

The King read it, and laughed.

"Does Serlo," he asked, "think that I believe the visions of every snoring monk? Does he take me for an Englishman who puts faith in the dreams of every old woman?"

With this the party set out gaily into the forest. With shouts, and curses, and drunken laughter, and blast of horns, Rufus rode through the glades in search of the tall deer. The time of chase continued from early noon till towards sunset. Rufus and Tiril, as the setting sun was firing the oak boughs, found themselves alone. Just then a stag bounded by. The King flashed an arrow at it, and slightly wounded it; but on flew the stricken animal, with the hounds at its heels. At that moment, as the King stood watching the flying deer, shading his eyes with his hands, another deer, or, as Vitalis implies, a wild boar, broke covert, and Rufus shouted to Tiril—

"Draw your bow, you devil."

Tiril shot. The arrow glanced from the boar's back, or, as Matthew Paris says, from a tree, and struck full in the breast of the King, who fell without a word or groan, trying to pluck out the arrow, which snapped in his hand. Tiril, afraid of being suspected of assassinating the King, at once mounted his horse, and rode at full speed twelve miles to a ford on the Avon, where he had his horse shod at a smithy, the site of which still stands, and then rode across the river. Henry galloped to Winchester to claim the crown and seize the treasury. The other nobles scattered and left the corpse bleeding in the

fern. A charcoal-burner, named Purkess, whose descendants still live near Minestead, came by in the evening, found Rufus weltering in his blood, placed him in his cart, black with charcoal dust, and drove the dripping body to Winchester along the road now known as King's-road. An ugly iron-cased stone still marks the spot where the King fell. Leland, however, in his Itinerary, and Gilpin, in his Forest Scenery, mention Fritham as the place of Rufus's death, about which, indeed, none of the chroniclers say a word. Fritham is a hilly spot, surrounded by Keltic barrows and encircled with woods, and there was a chapel there in Leland's time.

The mystery that surrounds the death of Rufus is not likely to be ever cleared up. Tiril, according to one account, never saw the King in that day's chase, nor even on that day, as he swore solemnly to Hugh, Abbot of St. Denis, and to other persons; but then, why did he speed off like a guilty man and take ship for Normandy? According to some, the King was alone; according to others, surrounded by attendants. It is impossible even to say whether Tiril's arrow glanced from a stag, a tree, or a wild boar. Justly does Mr. Wise remark the suspicious fact of the King's hasty funeral, and the absence of inquiry into the cause of his death. Tiril, too, was a friend of the banished Anselm, as Anselm was of Henry I. The monks' dreams, too, look suspicious. Indeed, the ecclesiastical mind generally seems to have been prophetic on the matter; for the very night Rufus fell in the forest glade, the Abbot of Cluny told Anselm, his visitor, that he had seen Rufus summoned before God and condemned; and the next day, at Lyons, a youth told Anselm's chaplains of the King's death. Moreover, the day before the fatal arrow flew, Fulchered, first abbot of Shrewsbury, ended a sermon in that city, on the woes of England, with these ominous words—

"The bow of God's vengeance is bent against the wicked. The arrow, swift to wound, is already out of the quiver. Soon will the blow be struck; but the man who is wise to amend will avoid it."

Whether assassinated or not, we know that both priests and nobles hungered for this man's death. To the English clergy, Rufus was known as an Atheist and a red-handed persecutor, for he held in his own hand the archbishopric of Canterbury, the bishoprics of Salisbury and Worcester,

and eleven abbeys. He had banished Anselm, and promoted the rapacious Flambard, whom Henry I. instantly stripped of his power. He had refused to pay Peter's pence, and had denied the Pope's supremacy. He had plundered monasteries, and put out the eyes of some inhabitants of Canterbury, who had taken the part of the monks of St. Augustin. Nor had the nobles fared better. Rufus, goaded to fury by perpetual conspiracies, had hung his steward William, who was his own kinsman. He had lopped limbs and put out eyes wherever he went. The taxes he had made intolerable, his forest laws were written in blood. Amongst other vast estates, which he had seized, were those of Roger de Yvery, son of a favourite of his father's. In this last fact may we not perhaps find a clue—might it not have been the arrow of some revengeful vassal of Roger's, which pierced the evil heart of Rufus? Alanus de Insulis, better known, from his vast learning, as *Le Docteur Universel*, is indeed quoted by Mr. Wise, who shows that in his commentaries on the prophecies of Merlin, Alanus, who lived not long after the event, boldly asserts that Rufus fell by treachery.

Even after his death the monkish hate to Rufus continued virulent. The King's brother is said to have also died in the forest from riding against a tree, while his nephew Richard was, according to Florence of Worcester, killed there by the arrow of one of his knights, who expiated the deed by retiring into a monastery. The monks of Winchester also declared, when the tower of their cathedral fell, that it was because Rufus was buried in the nave. After all, who will ever know who let fly the arrow in Canterton Glen? but whoever shot that arrow, one thing is certain, that Rufus died while hunting, and no one lamented his death. There he lies in Winchester Cathedral, his bones mingled with those of King Canute.

Another tradition of the New Forest is connected with Cadenham Oak, which stands about three miles from Lyndhurst, on the Salisbury road, and is not far east of Stoney Cross, which disappeared about fifty years ago. This tree is supposed, like the Glastonbury Thorn, to bud on Old Christmas Eve (January 4th), in reverence for the old chronology and the sacred season. The present tree is probably a successor to the original "Boundary tree." Country people, who never go

half way in their belief, say that the Cadenham Oak is perfectly bare and leafless before and after Old Christmas Day, when oxen kneel in their stalls, and all nature, according to monkish tradition, does homage. All old things were thought miraculous in the olden time, and all unexpected events were explained by supernatural causes. The real fact is, that in mild winters in Hampshire the oak does sometimes show buds in early January; for the first frost, says Mr. Wise, seldom happens on the warm south-west coast till the new year, but the small amber leaves wither, and are not seen again till the fall spring.

Smuggling traditions are to be found in the New Forest as thick as seed on the back of a fern leaf. Warner, at the end of the last century, says he had seen twenty or thirty waggons laden with spirit kegs, and guarded by two or three hundred horsemen, each bearing two or three tubs, coming over Hengistbury Head, and making their way in open day past Christchurch to the forest. There is an old chap-book tradition, that about 1776 a troop of robbers and smugglers—rough murderous fellows, half pirates—half thieves—took possession of Ambrose Cave on the borders of the Forest, and ran spirits and plundered many a house. Soldiers were at last sent for; the men were tracked, the cave discovered, and after a rough and tumble fight the smugglers captured. The captain, the most execrable villain of all, turned king's evidence, and confessed that they had murdered upwards of thirty people, whose bodies had been thrown into a well, where they were found. Strange scenes happened in this wild life; there were men killed at Milton, and at Old Beckton a house was burnt down by a keg of carelessly broached spirits catching fire from the spark of a smuggler's pipe. The forest deer poachers turned smugglers when the opportunity arrived, and there was a cargo to run. Smuggling boats were built slyly in barns, and from that circumstance many inland fields are still called "the dockyard mead." Crews of foresters armed with flails defied the coastguard at Beckton, and at Chewton Bunny as many as one hundred tubs would often be run in a night. Now as each tub was worth two or three guineas, the profit of this run would be tremendous. Each man carried two or three kegs, one slung before and two behind; and if the

cliff was very steep, a chain of men was formed, and the tubs passed from hand to hand, till they could be buried in a ploughed field or sent on inland. The well-known proverb of the smugglers of the New Forest was, "Keystone under the hearth, keystone under the horse's belly;" which means that the smuggled spirits were concealed, either below the fireplace, or in the stable, just below where the horses stood.

The deer poachers, too, have their traditions, and men, says Mr. Wise, can still tell how they used to bait a hook with an apple tied to a bough to catch the deer; or caught a fawn and pared her hoof to keep the doe in one place till they wanted to kill her. Wild people to meet in the glade, wild people to meet on the sea cliff.

At Christchurch, between the Avon and the Stour, and on the south-west border of the forest, there is a fine legend about the old Priory that stands on rising ground, between two rivers, a sea-mark and a landmark. It is full of good Norman work, and the tradition is that it was originally to have been built on lonely St. Catherine's Hill. The stones, however, taken up by day, were by night removed by the angels. The beams, long enough in the town, shrank, and were too short on the hill. The legend also adds, that while the sacred building was being reared, there was always a mysterious extra workman, who nightly came to the pay-gate and demanded his wages. This was Our Saviour.

The forest peasants have also a legend that the stone that built Beaulieu Abbey was brought across the dry bed of the Solent in carts, from Bristed quarries. There is also a curious monastic story about the foundation of Beaulieu Abbey. In the year 1204, say the historians, King John, after various oppressions of the Cistercian order, convened a meeting of the abbots, simultaneous with his Parliament at Lincoln, and as soon as the white-robed men came, John ordered his retainers to charge them and trample them down. But no one would obey, and the monks flew from the tyrant in utter fear. That night, the usurper dreamt he was led before a judge, who ordered him to be scourged by those very monks. The next morning, John told the dream to a priest of his court, and declared that the vision was so vivid, that he felt the stripes when he awoke. The priest told him that God had been most merciful, in thus simply chastening him in this world, and revealing the secrets

of his will, and implored the King to send at once for the abbots, and implore their pardon. The next year John founded the Cistercian Abbey of Beaulieu, placing there thirty monks from Citaux, and endowing it with land in the New Forest, and manors, villages, and churches in Berkshire. He also gave it one hundred marks, and exempted it from taxes. Forty-five years after the foundation, the monastery was finished, and Henry III. and the Queen came to the dedication with a long train of nobles and prelates. Only a portion of the small transept is now left. The stones went to build Henry VIII.'s Martello Tower at Hurst. The old stone pulpit still remains in the refectory, from whence monks read to their brethren during meals. It was in the sanctuary here, on the banks of the Exe, that the wife of the King-maker took refuge after the battle of Barnet, where her mighty husband fell; here, too, skulked Perkin Warbeck, after he had deserted his troops, and, here decoyed by Henry VII.'s soft words, Perkin rode towards London, only to find a gibbet at Tyburn. Some old walls near the church are still called "The monks' Vine-press," the sloping meadows beyond, were vineyards; while on the north rise the woods of the New Forest.

In a region like the New Forest, where the country people still believe that the Man in the Moon was sent there for stealing wood from the forest, and that the death's-head moth was never seen before the execution of Charles I., we may expect to find traditions; and in Brockenhurst (the badger's wood), once in the very centre of the New Forest, it is remembered that years ago droves of deer would sometimes in the stillness of the night come tearing up the village street, the village dogs often leaping out on them and killing them, or driving them back to the forest. In the reign of Edward II. Peter Spelman held a carucate of land here for the service of finding the King an esquire clad in mail for forty days in the year, and whenever the King came to hunt, litter for his bed and hay for his horses; and some miles from Brockenhurst, is the manor of Bishop's Ditch belonging to Winchester College. The forest people say that this place was a grant of land, consisting of as many acres as the Bishop of Winchester could, in a day, crawl round on his hands and knees.

At Fordingbridge, in that part of the valley of the Avon which was once part of the New Forest, tradition says that

during fence months the lord of the manor used to keep guard on the bridge to stop all suspected persons, who could only on the north-west leave the forest that way.

Further on beyond Ibbesley Manor is Moyle Court, just on the boundary of the forest, looking out upon the woods of Newlyn and Chartley. Here Dame Alice Lisle lived, who was burnt to death by Judge Jefferys for sheltering two Puritan fugitives after the battle of Sedgmoor, where her son had fought in the King's army. The house is half ruined now, the oak floors removed, part of the fine old mahogany staircase broken up, the tapestry destroyed, and the iron gates gone. But the private chapel remains with its *Ecce Homo* and carved string course of heads. Dame Alice lies under a brick tomb in Ellingham churchyard. About eight miles away, across the Avon, near Woodland Farm, the Duke of Monmouth was captured in a ditch, where the sparkle of his eye had betrayed him as he cowered among the brambles.

Traditions still linger in the forest of the terrible winter of 1787. An old man told Mr. Wise that his father, during that hard year, lived in a lonely farm-house. The storm began in the night; by the morning the snow-drift was so deep that the door could not be opened. Luckily, a back room had been filled with fuel, and provisions had been laid in. The storm increased till, by-and-by, the straggling hedges were covered, and even the woods began to disappear. After a week's snow, a heavy frost followed, and the snow hardened. People went out shooting, and wherever they saw a breathing hole in the snow, they fired and nearly always killed a hare. The snow continued on the ground seven weeks, and, when it melted, the stiffened bodies of horses and deer covered the plains.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LXV. REACTION.

I LEFT the room. I found Mole on the landing outside.

"What has happened?" he asked. I told him that Sir George was ill—that he had fainted. I added that Propert was with him.

"But you yourself, Duke? Have you seen a ghost? You're as white as a sheet; you're all of a tremble; your teeth

are chattering. No, don't answer. Come down-stairs. Lean on me."

I was in a sadly confused state, with a feeling of sickness and giddiness oppressing me. I could see nothing distinctly. There was a painful singing in my ears. I only knew that Mole was supporting me in the kindest way, full of solicitude on my account.

A little crowd appeared to have gathered round me. All were talking at once, and all at random, in a most bewildering way. So it seemed to me.

"Give the lad air," I heard Mole say. "Let's have room to breathe;" and he opened one of the windows. I was reclining in an easy chair in the dining-room. It had changed its aspects somehow. All the pictures I remembered to have seen there—the black, highly varnished old masters in their massive frames—had vanished.

There was a kneeling figure beside me, proffering smelling salts, a woman—Rosetta! Could it be? Yes, certainly, Rosetta!

How did she happen to be there? She had called to sit to Sir George, possibly. But her presence did not surprise me. Nothing surprised me. I was as one dreaming.*

There was talk of sending for a doctor, for me or for Sir George. I knew not which.

"But you're better, now. You're beginning to look more like yourself," someone said; Mole, I think.

"My poor Duke!" Rosetta was smoothing my hair from my forehead, was bathing my temples with eau de cologne.

"You were scared at seeing him faint."

"It wasn't that only," I said.

"It's nothing. He'll be well again, presently;" Mole was speaking. "Sir George——"

I stopped him. "Take care what you say. He's my father." I saw that he interchanged significant glances with Rosetta.

"And you didn't know it? Never guessed it? The news came upon you suddenly? Ah! I see!"

"My Duke! I read it in his eyes long since—whenever he spoke of you—I was sure of it. And then there was a trembling in his voice, though he tried to hide it. But I knew it must be so. And your mother—his wife? Of course, of course. Pardon me, my Duke. But why—no, no, that's your secret. I've no right to ask."

She pressed my hand tenderly; there were tears in her eyes. Mole stood silently surveying me, rubbing his chin meditatively.

"I always said Sir George was a strange man," he muttered, after a long pause. "I perceived a likeness from the first, 'a trick of Cœur de Lion's face,' I said. You remember? The line is in King John: act the first, scene the first."

They were very kind to me. Soon I recovered somewhat, and could stand unassisted, though I still felt weak and tremulous, and greatly depressed. Rosetta went her way, having first made inquiries concerning Sir George. He was going on well, Propert reported. He was sleeping quietly on the sofa in his studio.

A strange, shabby-looking old man had been passing to and fro—haunting us—now sitting on a hall chair, now peering into the dining-room. He wore list slippers, and was very silent in his movements. There was an air of mystery about him.

"Who is that?" I enquired of Mole. He hesitated, and looked at me curiously.

"He's a model. He sits to artists. That's his profession." From his manner I knew that he was deceiving me. I said as much.

"Well, that's what I'm told he is. That's what I tell other people he is," Mole answered. "Can you bear to hear the truth? Haven't you had enough of bad news—no, I don't mean that, either. But some scandal against Sir George is involved; that is, it would be scandal if it wasn't true. I mean—indeed, I scarcely know what I do mean."

"This man—who is he? Why is he here? What does he want?"

"If you insist, I'll tell you."

It seemed to me, that he was really anxious to tell me.

"That man is what's called, 'a man in possession.' The fact is, there's an execution in the house. Don't start. We're getting accustomed to things of that kind. There was one in last week while you were away. We got rid of it, and the pictures that used to hang here, at the same time. Now comes another. That's the plain truth—the still plainer truth being—shall I go on? I will. Sir George is ruined."

"Ruined?"

"That's the word. It's been coming a long while. It's come at last. You remember our noticing, some time ago, that his hand shook very much? If that

had been all! It wasn't. His elbow has been shaking too."

I did not understand him. He gave a pitying shrug.

"I must speak by the card. And yet there are so many flourishes of speech handy that would drape a little the ugly nakedness of the fact! Hush! Sir George is a gambler. The money that comes by canvas goes by green baize."

He appeared much gratified by this fanciful method of stating the case.

"You understand? Hazard, roulette, the dice box. That's the secret of his ruin, and of a good many others' besides. It should not be, of course; but it is, and has been for some time past. Don't be angry. You would have the truth, you know. He's ruined. It's odd, but somehow I like him the better for it. He's so much nearer to me now than when he was rich. After all, what's wealth but a bubble? A bubble that hasn't blown much my way, however. I'm not a fair judge of it, perhaps. Mind; I don't say he won't recover himself. He may. Easily. He's only got to work; if he'll but turn on the tap, money will soon flow forth again. But—as I happen to know—he's heavily in debt, and he will go on playing! Have you never wondered at his strange absence, at the late hours he keeps? Of course you have. Well, now you've got a key to the mystery. And then the opium! A strange man, as I have always said. But I have pained you, I see. You're quite upset. You're little used to troubles of this sort. I am, and I can bear them. Especially other people's troubles. It's astonishing how lightly they weigh upon one. But I'm talking idly. I feel for you, and am sorry for you, my boy, believe me when I say so. And go up-stairs and lie down for awhile. That will be the best thing for you. And try and sleep. I'll come up presently, and see how you are. Don't be down-hearted, there's a good lad. Life's like the Devil—never so black as it's painted, or so insupportable as it seems to be. And if I might recommend such a thing, a stiff tumbler of brandy and water, very hot. You'll find it afford very considerable relief under almost any circumstance of difficulty. It would even, I do believe, minister comfort to a mind diseased. It's the real sweet oblivious antidote Macbeth asked for and couldn't get. He flourished at a remote and uncivilised period, you know."

I was wretchedly unnerved and ill; and for some days I was almost confined to my room. I slept badly; I suffered from violent headache and feverish restlessness; I was greatly perplexed as to the course of conduct I should adopt in the future. At present it was clear to me, however, that I could not quit Sir George's house. I had not strength of mind or of body to take so resolute a step. I was oppressed with doubts as to my duty in the matter, the while I bitterly reproached myself for my own infirmity of judgment. I was miserable at the thought of decision being required of me. Should I write to my mother or to my uncle for counsel? I could not. My hand refused to hold a pen; my thoughts shrunk back from being set down on paper: became inarticulate and vague and halting at every attempt. I felt that I was unable to do justice to Sir George's explanations—to render them intelligible or to obtain for them the consideration that was their due. I might be peremptorily bidden to part from him forthwith. That I could not do. Not because I felt for him the love of a son for a father, according to my ideal conception of such a love, but because I pitied him extremely, and my interest in him was most absorbing.

So I lingered on in the Harley-street house long after I was well and strong enough to have quitted it. I was hoping for—I knew not what—but for some conclusion of this trying condition of things to be achieved by chance, without any stir on my part.

Sir George had recovered, I learnt, had even resumed work in his studio. He had made many inquiries as to my state of health. To Mole he had openly spoke of me as his son. His manner had been alert and energetic; almost cheerful, I was informed.

The man in possession had disappeared. Sir George had found means to satisfy the more importunate of his creditors. He appeared, indeed, to be now well supplied with money again. He had been occasionally absent, and he still kept irregular hours.

It was very late one night—or rather I should say that it was in the early hours of morning—when I heard, as I lay restless in my bed, the street-door close; and I knew that Sir George had returned home. For a while all was silence. Then came the unaccustomed sound of some one mounting the stairs. It could only be Sir

George. He was visiting his studio on the first floor? No, he was still ascending. He had passed the second-floor. He was on the landing outside my door. The handle was softly turned and he entered—a tall figure, wrapped in a long dressing-gown, and carrying a lighted candle, the flame of which he shaded with his hand.

He advanced into the middle of the room, and then stopped suddenly with a start.

"You are awake, Duke?" he said, gently. "My boy, I did not mean to disturb you. I was anxious to know how you slept, that was all. You have been ill, you know, but you are better now, thank God. I came up last night, but you were sleeping soundly then, with a strange look of your mother on your face. I never noticed it before. It was fancy, perhaps; a painter's fancy; we're privileged to be fanciful about likenesses. The room strikes cold—you should have a fire, Duke; and they've given you but a thin coverlet, my poor boy." He took off his dressing-gown, and spread it over the bed. "That's better, I think. There, I'll not disturb you further. Something I had to say, but it was not much. You'll not quit me, Duke, stealthily, without a word? You're sure? I've been dreading that so much. My boy, it would break my heart—and I have a heart, so I find." There was something of anguish in his look and tone, as he said this. "I came to see that you were still here, to make sure; it was that brought me, at least I think so. And to tell you, if I could, that you are very dear to me, Duke, my son. But, there is your mother to be thought of; you will not forget her; you will be true to her, whatever happens. I submit myself humbly to her decision and to yours; only, when you can, think of me as your father. Say the word over to yourself, again and again, until it becomes at last a thing to be believed and felt. Now try and rest. God bless you, Duke. Your mother has prayed that often, I know; and surely her prayers will be heard, though mine may not."

He bent over me and pressed his lips upon my forehead. His tears fell upon my face. Then very softly he withdrew.

His manner had been most simple and tender; scarcely a trace of his old artificial air of courtesy was now perceptible. Yet a suspicion remained with me that he had not said all he had designed to say—that something occupied him to which he could not give expression.

Mole's solicitude on my account was most complete at this time. It was by his counsel I undertook, so soon as I had sufficiently regained strength, various excursions about the environs of London in quest of fresh air and new scenes. He was my companion, escaping without difficulty from his duties in the studio, and labouring incessantly to cheer me by the liveliness of his talk, the while, in deference to my depression, he curbed his high spirits somewhat, and refrained from exuberance of levity. Nothing, indeed, could have been kinder or more considerate than his bearing towards me during this very trying period of my life.

Mention of Sir George he prudently withheld almost altogether. But he discoursed much of his own early life and its vicissitudes, his sense of the sufferings his profession had entailed upon him being much mitigated by a perception of its humours. He had plans for the future, confessing to weariness of his labours and position as a painter. He thought of visiting America; not as an actor, however. That had been feasible once, but was so no longer, he admitted. But something in the way of stage management, he thought, might be open to him. Or he would go as secretary to—why not Miss Darlington? She had been offered an engagement in the States. She would accept it, of course, sooner or later. Kean was the first actor who boasted a secretary; but the thing was becoming common enough now. Rosetta must have a secretary. Could she secure a better than Fane Mauleverer? For in such case he intended to resume his professional name. As to the question of propriety—he understood they were particular on that head in America—what did I think of it? Surely, scandal would be hushed in the presence of his bald head. Or, if need be, he'd "make up," as a patriarch of a most superannuated description, and pledge himself never to wash the paint off his face during the whole period of his sojourn in the States. Or he would even marry Bembridge—for, of course Bembridge was going too. Miss Darlington would not stir without her. He thought her success in America would be quite unprecedented: he was convinced of it. They had never had anything like her in America yet. And—there was another thing—would I entrust him with a copy of my tragedy? What did I say to The Daughter of the Doge being produced in

New York? I could easily introduce a part for Bembridge; something like the Nurse in Romeo and Juliet. A great success was really quite possible. He would do all he could for the work. Upon that I might confidently rely. If necessary, he would even go on as one of the senators, or one of the bravos, he did not care which. The time had gone by for his appearing as the Doge or as Ludovico, although, a little while back, he felt satisfied, either part would have fitted him like a glove. Would I turn the matter over in my mind? All this was part of his plan for comforting me.

He spoke very tenderly of poor Tony's death, and with genuine grief. He greatly gratified me by his cordial way of sounding the poor boy's praises. He had seen Vickery, it appeared, and found him in a tolerably hopeful state. I judged that the old man still looked to saving something for Rachel out of the wreck of her father's estate.

And with Vickery, he told me, he had discussed the question of Rosetta's marriage. It was clearly invalid. Lord Overbury's wife, the divorced Lady Wycherley, still survived. That was beyond question. Even had it been otherwise, where would have been the advantage? Lord Overbury had no property in Scotland, where only his marriage with Rosetta could possibly have held good. Was it not better that she should be free from him and all claims on his part?

We had walked some distance along the western road I knew so well, from my journeys to and from home. Turning towards town, we stopped to rest at an old, red-roofed, gable-windowed wayside tavern, that has long since vanished. It was part inn, part farm-house—much frequented by drovers and carriers, with straddling horse troughs and a swinging sign-board in front, and spacious yards and barn-like stables in the rear. In its rude, old parlour, with wainscoted walls and sanded floors, we remained some hours. Mole, after his manner, made friends with its frequenters, for the most part graziers, salesmen, market gardeners, and tradesmen of a humble sort. There was much animated conversation, smoking of pipes, and circulation of glasses.

It was dark night and late as we passed down Piccadilly. We turned out of our way a little to the right, that Mole might point out to me "Crocky's," as he called it, the giant gaming club in St. James's-street.

Suddenly he gripped my arm tightly, and drew me back.

A figure, wrapped in an ample Spanish cloak, such as gentlemen of fashion then wore in winter or at night over evening dress, was descending the steps of the stately mansion.

"Sir George," whispered Mole.

CHAPTER LXVII. HAZARD.

SIR GEORGE crossed the road, not turning to the north towards Harley-street, as I had expected him to do, but walking swiftly in an easterly direction. With what object? We could not tell. It was no business of ours. We followed him at a little distance, however.

Our agreement to do this was unspoken; it seemed a course irresistible to both of us. A momentary sense of shame, I certainly felt; I was, I knew, playing the part of a spy; unworthily dogging the footsteps of my own father. But my curiosity was excited; and, moreover, it was only from time to time that I could convince myself that I was in truth Sir George's son. The fact had still only an intermittent reality for me.

Mole, I think, was wholly without scruple on the subject. He was resolved upon ascertaining his employer's errand. He perceived a certain mystery in the case; and that he was bent upon solving, if possible.

Sir George hastened on, threading various streets, and approaching the purlieus of Leicester-square. He stopped at last in a narrow, ill-looking thoroughfare. We halted also some thirty yards behind him. Suddenly we missed him.

"I begin to understand," said Mole, after a few moments' reflection. "Turn up the collar of your coat, Duke. Pull your hat well down on your forehead. That's it. Come on further. We're going to see a little life. Don't be frightened; only keep close to me, whatever happens, mind that. Now then; this is what's called 'a silver hell.'"

He tapped gently at the door of a dingy house, in the windows of which no light whatever appeared. All was darkness. Presently a little wicket was opened. Mole spoke in a low voice through the bars to some one inside.

"All right!"

We were admitted: Mole thrusting his arm under mine, and drawing me in with him. A man wearing a ragged fur cap, and a watchman's coat, with a red com-

forter wound round his neck, stood behind the door. With him Mole seemed to be well acquainted. I had often before been impressed by the fact that Mole's friendships and intimacies were quite innumerable. He seemed to know and to be known by the whole human race, to be on amicable terms, inclining towards jocosity, with everybody. He always obtained recognition wherever he went. To hackney-coachmen and crossing-sweepers, I had noted, he was especially known, and I had found him to be on a familiar footing with street-traders in matches, and even with beggars.

"When I first knew that man," he whispered to me, "he was under-prompter at Warwick. They said then, that he had once kept his hunters and a pack of hounds. I never felt sure about that. Now he's—what you see."

We were advancing along a dark, narrow passage towards a room at the back, from which a great noise was proceeding. On our way we were brushed against by some one hurrying out, much muffled up. Indeed, muffling up seemed to be the fashion with all that night.

"George is here. Look out!" he whispered to Mole as he passed. "I'm off."

By "George," he clearly meant Sir George.

"Propert!" Mole explained to me, for I had failed to recognise him. "To think of his being here! But, like master like man. I always had a suspicion that Propert punted. Now, keep close."

We entered a large room upon the ground floor, with some remains of decoration of a tawdry sort upon its walls. The ceiling was low, and much blackened by the fumes of a gaudy lamp hanging from it, and so shaded as to cast its oily, yellow rays as forcibly as possible upon the green baize cover of a large circular table beneath. In this way the sides and corners of the chamber were left in comparative obscurity. The windows were strongly barred and secured by outside shutters. There was an absolute want of ventilation. The heat was intense, and the vitiated atmosphere was heavily laden with tobacco smoke. From this cause there was a dense and blinding fog. An excited crowd had gathered round the table. The uproar was very great.

Mole told me in a whisper something of the game that was being played. It was, he said, "French hazard." Small wooden

bowls, rakes, and sundry counters formed the furniture of the table, which had a deeply-bevelled edge, to prevent, as I perceived, the dice from falling off and landing on the floor. A "croupier" occupied a raised high-backed chair, placed on one side of the room.

"Make your game, gentlemen, make your game!" he cried, incessantly, in harsh, hoarse tones. "Make your game! We bet the odds against nicks and doublets. Dice, Mr. Duberly. In one moment, gentlemen. Waiter—cigars and champagne! We've the best of refreshments, gentlemen. Waiter, soda and brandy to the gentleman on the left!"

Mr. Duberly, a shabby-looking man with a red nose, a green shade hiding one of his eyes, was the "vice croupier," it seemed. He opened a little packet containing three pairs of dice, and shook them together in one of the wooden bowls. In the "gentleman on the left," wearing a white box coat, with a shawl of many bright colours wrapped round his neck, I soon recognised—Jack Bumsey the pugilist! He was much changed, however, since I had seen him combating the Mudlark, in Chingley Bottom. He had lost the simple, almost rustic expression that had then distinguished him. His face wore now, indeed, a thoroughly villainous look; it was seamed with scars, and discoloured with bruises. His features appeared to have been flattened and battered out of shape. And his whole aspect and bearing were disreputable and degraded in the extreme. Yet he had once, and not so very long since, been a little curly-haired, rosy-cheeked carter boy on old Jobling's farm!

He was far from sober, and was very rude and boisterous. He flung some money on the table, and taking up the dice, cried, "Seven's the main!"

"Seven's a nick!" said the croupier, paying the stakes. The caster had won.

"Eight's the main!" and he threw again.

"Eight the caster has to five; eight with the quatres. No gentleman on the doublets." Again the caster had won.

"He's been winning all night, I hear," said Mole in my ear. "The Baker they call him. He lost the fight at Hurst Green the other day. They say he sold it. He's been very flush of money ever since."

"Seven's the main!"

"Duce ace. The caster's out," cried the croupier, raking up the stakes. The

bank had won this time. It was another player's turn to throw the dice.

Even with Mole's assistance it was some time before I could comprehend the game. He avowed it to be very simple; still, as I judged, it was attended with many complications. But the circumstances were certainly not favourable to careful study of the matter. The heat of the room was stifling; the noise was deafening. The croupier kept up his hoarse cries of "Make your game, gentlemen, make your game!" varying his speech every now and then by recommendation of the refreshments to be obtained in the room. "Cigars and champagne, gentlemen; brandy and soda; ham and roast chicken on the sideboard; cold round of beef and lobster salad; the best of port and sherry; cigars and champagne, gentlemen. Make your game, gentlemen! We bet the odds against nicks and doublets!" And the betting of the players and bystanders—the laying and taking of the "odds," declared by the "groom porter," and calculated apparently with mathematical nicety—contributed greatly to the din. Moreover, there was much drunken shouting, with rude jesting, unmeaning cries, and tumult of all kinds. It was, to my thinking, a most extraordinary scene.

This much of the game I did learn. There were five "mains" upon the dice: five, six, seven, eight, and nine. Of these the player, moved either by accident or superstition, mentally selected one, which he called aloud as he shook the box and ejected the dice. If he happened to throw the exact number called, he "nicked" it and won. Throwing any other number, with some few exceptions prescribed by the rules of the game, he neither won nor lost; but the new number thrown became his "chance," and if he could succeed in repeating it before again throwing his "main," the number he had originally called, he won; if otherwise, he lost. In other words, having failed to throw his "main," he would lose his stake, but for the interposition of his second throw, which gave him yet his "chance" of winning. And meantime a most important element of the game had come into force—the laying and taking of the odds caused by the probabilities and the relative proportions of the "main" and the "chance." These had been accurately systematised and were subject to no variation.

Further into the mysteries of "hazard"

I need hardly enter. Indeed, I must admit that my acquaintance with the subject remains most imperfect, even now; while the game itself can claim to possess in these times little more than an antiquarian kind of interest.

I had become, almost in spite of myself, so occupied in watching the progress and vicissitudes of the game, that I was in some danger of forgetting the object of our entering the gambling-house. It was soon plain to me, however, that the chance of our presence being noted was less imminent than I had supposed. We stood in the rear of the players, and out of reach of the rays of the lamp. The eyes of all in the room were bent upon the table, and absorbed by the proceedings of the players. As each caster failed at length in his throws the dice box was passed to the next person upon his left, who at once continued the game.

As yet I had not discovered Sir George. Suddenly I felt Mole's warning pressure upon my arm. I had advanced too near to the table; I was entering the lamp's circle of light. I drew back instantly. Sir George was standing nearly opposite to me in the thick of the crowd. He had raised the fur collar of his cloak, and little of his face was to be seen. He appeared intent upon the game; and I felt assured that he had not as yet observed me.

Quickly I looked away from him; impressed with the conviction—unreasonable enough, perhaps, yet not to be resisted—that if I fixed my eyes upon him too constantly, he would somehow become conscious of the fact, and would in turn look at me.

I glanced towards the players on either side of him. One with a white, bristling chin, bleared eyes and sodden inflamed features, especially attracted my attention. As my gaze rested upon him I could scarcely restrain a cry of surprise.

Within a few feet of Sir George stood Lord Overbury! I could not be mistaken.

The dice box had now come to his hands.

"Five's the main!" he screamed in his old wild way. He shook the dice-box noisily, holding his hand on high, and swaying about, pushing his neighbours on either side away from him, so that he might have ample room for his operations.

Of what followed I had no clear under-

standing at the time, and I have even now but a confused sense. All was so sudden and violent as to be most perplexing.

It seemed that, by the laws of hazard, any player was fairly entitled at any moment of the game to demand fresh dice; and that this might be done even after the main had been called, and the dice were in the act of falling upon the table.

Sir George had exercised his right as a player. His clear ringing voice had called "dice" just as the main was thrown. It was therefore voided.

Calling five as his "main," Lord Overbury—it seemed—had thrown seven. He had failed to "nick his main," but still the throw had promised success. For now seven would have been his "chance" to win, the odds being three to two in his favour. He dashed the empty dice-box in Sir George's face.

The anger of the caster at being interrupted was shared by many betting on the issue. Sir George was denounced as an officious intermeddler. There were screams of rage, fierce oaths and furious threats. Fists were shaken at him, and sticks were raised and brandished in the air. The lamp was struck by accident or design, and set swinging to and fro, spilling hot oil upon the green table beneath. I found myself pushed hither and thither. It was with difficulty I could keep in Mole's neighbourhood.

Then occurred a scuffle; of the details I could form no judgment. But I saw that Sir George had seized Lord Overbury by the throat. The crowd seemed to surge about the room. I felt myself lifted off the ground. Jack Rumsey was striking to the right and left of him, with some confused aim, it seemed to me, at assisting his patron, Lord Overbury.

Presently the lamp was extinguished. A sudden lurch of the throng overthrew the table.

"Keep close," I heard Mole whisper in the darkness, "hold tight to my arm. Let's get out of this. I know the way. Whatever you do, keep close to me."

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CHAPTER XXXIV. A SCRAP OF NOTE PAPER.

CALM and without event went on the days at Dunwich for Evy; calmer, even, than they had done during her prosperity at the Cedars; invitations to dinner, rare even at that time, had now altogether ceased—it would have been so very "incongruous" to invite people out of Seymour's Home—and one or two requests for the pleasure of her company in the evening, from persons desirous, at any sacrifice to "congruity," to hear her story, if possible, from her own lips, having been civilly declined, she was importuned to partake of such hospitalities no more. Occasionally, only, she spent a few hours at the Rectory, when Mrs. Mellish and her husband were quite "by themselves," for Mr. Hulet could not be induced to accompany her, and Evy did not like to leave him alone. She had those never-failing companions—her music and her books, however; nor did she omit to visit, as in the old days, the poor folks in the almshouse opposite, although, since she had sought to give, they were no longer her pensioners. With a good conscience and good health, freedom from the pressure of actual want and of anxiety for those who are dear to us, it is not, perhaps, possible to be unhappy. At all events, with such peace and quiet as she found in her present position, Evy felt content, and was very grateful for them. The thought, alone, that Captain Heyton and his bride might presently visit Dunwich, and even take up their residence at the Park, at times overshadowed her days, which, although without sunshine, had a

calm and subdued light that suited her wounded spirit well enough. Whenever his name was mentioned, or that of Judith, a pang went through her that showed how little her wound was healed, and she could not avoid hearing of them. Even those who were studious to avoid the subject in her presence would suddenly enter upon it unawares—a proof how much it occupied their talk elsewhere. Indeed, all Dunwich was talking of the newly-married couple, exchanging surmises as to how they would get on in time with the old lord, who was at present understood to have declined to receive them, or retailing choice pieces of information upon the best (anonymous) authority. No one who has not lived in a small country town, with a local magnet attached to it, can conceive what a magnet he is.

Of those decayed gentry, who shared the advantages of Seymour's Home with Mr. Hulet and his niece, we have hitherto said nothing. These were but two in number: the one a half-pay naval lieutenant, who had been present at the battle of the Nile, which had been his single topic of conversation for the last half century. This old hero was almost stone deaf; and if you spoke to him—no matter on what subject—it was ten to one but his wrinkled face would light up with a look of misdirected intelligence, and he would answer "Aye, Aboukir; I was there, sir."

The other tenant of the place—a Mrs Sanboy, the widow of a Dunwich surgeon who had been Dr. Burne's senior partner—was even more ancient than the Lieutenant and might be almost said to be in a fossil state. Still she got about on sunny afternoons by the help of her horn-topped stick, and expressed her views, which had mostly, reference to the probable instability,

of the Thames Tunnel, the last achievement of human skill to which her memory, properly so called, attached itself. Of what had happened since in the world she had only the vaguest notions.

It had been the fixed resolve of Evy, upon coming to the "Home," to divorce herself, as much as possible, from the society of their fellow lodgers; gossip, always distasteful to her, had become a thing to be dreaded as well as hated, and she would have endured not only complete isolation (for that would have been welcome), but even the implication of churlishness, rather than have submitted to it. But finding the occupants of Seymour's Home to be such as they were, it was only in accordance with her pitiful and tender nature that she should have made friends with them. Mrs. Sanboy, who had not lost her hearing, though articulate speech was for the most part a dead letter to her, was often asked into Evy's little parlour to hear her play; or she would instigate her uncle to invite Lieutenant Crewkerne, who would gladly sacrifice his pipe to engage Evy at a game of draughts, of which he was particularly fond, perhaps as having some distant affinity to naval manœuvres. At all events, when he won a game, the old fellow was accustomed to give a British cheer in a very thin low voice, and cry, "Aboukir," as though some parallel had been established in his own mind between the two victories. Those two guests were never asked on the same evening, because they were not upon terms—one cannot say "upon speaking terms," because speaking was almost an impossibility between them—with one another. They had quarrelled on their first arrival at the Home, about thirty years ago, on a great culinary question—as to who had the first right to the use of the kettle in the common kitchen—and the breach had never been healed. Mrs. Sanboy displayed her hostility by hinting that the Lieutenant, doubtless by means of engines of war, such as his profession made ready to his hand, was the chief cause of the fracture of the Thames Tunnel; and the Lieutenant retorted by expressing his conviction that Mrs. Sanboy was by birth a French woman, and therefore a sworn enemy to the country: this accusation was the more gratuitous since he founded it upon her accent, which he pronounced to be foreign, a circumstance whereof, considering his infirmity, he was scarcely in a position to judge.

Even to these two persons, whom the sea of life had, as it were, left stranded, even to them, in some mysterious manner, came news from time to time concerning the great house of Heyton. They knew dimly that Evy had at one period been spoken of as the Captain's choice; and this of course intensified their interest in the family. On the late tremendous occasion of the bell-ringing, Mrs. Sanboy had almost effected a reconciliation with the Lieutenant, in spite of herself, having no one at the moment at hand save him of whom to inquire the cause of such rejoicing. The sudden recollection that he was stone deaf had, however, saved her from this exhibition of weakness, and she had waited for an informant in the person of Evy herself, and thereby preserved her dignity and animosity both intact. Her intelligence, however, was not equal to the comprehension that the subject was a painful one to her young friend. The Lieutenant, on the other hand, avoided the topic with scrupulous delicacy.

It was his habit, as is the wont of aged persons—as though they would fain see as much as possible of that world from which they must so soon depart—to rise betimes and take his morning walk before the rest of Dunwich was astir; and on his way back to breakfast he would stop and chat with such of the neighbours as, through long habit, were able to make themselves intelligible to him.

On one September morning Evy chanced to be in that little garden of the Home, in which, because it opened on the street, she seldom set foot except at some such early hour, and met the Lieutenant on his return. She noticed he did not reply to her "Good morning" with his usual cheerful smile, and also that he looked troubled.

"What is the matter, Lieutenant?" inquired she, kindly.

He could generally tell by the motion of her lips what she was saying to him; but on this occasion he seemed to be perplexed as to her meaning.

"You will come to-night, we hope, my uncle bids me say, Mr. Crewkerne, and give me my revenge at draughts."

But the Lieutenant shook his head; not with the motion that signified ignorance of her meaning, but another, which indicated negation and something more.

"I am so sorry," said he, gently; "so sorry;" and then tottered away, quite at a great pace for him, to his own quarters across the little court.

"The Lieutenant is not well," thought Evy; "I must get Dr. Burne to look at him;" and then went in to make her uncle's breakfast. She had a letter from Mrs. Storks that morning, full of kindness and general chat, which occupied her during the meal; and according to custom, in such cases, she read out such portions of it to her uncle as she thought might interest him; but he seemed less inclined to take notice of such matters even than usual. His face was not so abstracted in its expression as was often the case, but twitched and worked with nervous excitement, as she had seen it do but once before—on the morning of her aunt's disappearance from the cottage.

"Have you had any news this morning, uncle dear?" inquired Evy cheerfully (for she was always careful to conceal from him that his behaviour had any depressing effect upon herself). "I saw you had quite a batch of correspondence."

"No dear, no; no news," answered he, quickly. "A letter from Mr. De Coucy, asking after you very kindly, and one from Mr. Paragon, notifying that he has sent me three brace of partridges—very good of him, I'm sure."

Poor Mr. Paragon! Perhaps he thought there was a chance for him still, which a little present of game would make no worse, and would, at all events, suggest the fact of his existence. As for Mr. De Coucy, a word from him was always welcome to them both.

"I fancied you had more than two letters," said Evy, not with any particular curiosity, but rather to draw her uncle into talk, which Dr. Burne had recommended her to do.

"No darling, I have but these two; would you not like to read them?" And, rising quickly from the table, he placed them in her hand and passed out into the stone porch, where it was her custom to join him after the arrangements of the household were completed, and closed the door behind him.

Evy sighed; the letters had little attraction for her, kind as both writers were in their way, and one of them a friend she valued very highly. She reflected how small had been the healing effect of time upon her uncle; though all these months had passed since their calamity had befallen them, how melancholy and abstracted he was. Presently some one tapped at the casement that opened upon the court-yard. She looked up, and saw

Mrs. Sanboy, her white face close to the pane and exhibiting traces of unusual excitement. She piqued herself on never entering their apartment without a special invitation, and such familiar conduct was wholly unprecedented. At any other time, Evy would have smiled at such an intrusion, but just now she could not have welcomed any visitor; much more the poor wandering-witted lady, whose powers of speech had by no means fled with her ideas. She felt that morning that her place was with her uncle, and with him only. "They have patched it up," exclaimed Mrs. Sanboy in her thin shrill voice, and gesticulating like an impassioned semaphore.

Evy nodded assent. The poor lady was doubtless speaking of her favourite topic, the Thames Tunnel, into which the river had broken at the time that her own faculties had given way under the pressure of the tide of time.

"They have patched it up," she repeated. "They might just as well have done it at once, instead of taking all this time."

"Yes, yes," answered Evy, wearily, and with such an air of preoccupation that any one but Mrs. Sanboy must have seen she wished to be alone. But this good lady was of a persevering nature, and besides, a topic of amazing interest was seething within her, and demanding to be discussed.

"May I come in out of the rain—it's raining—and talk about it?" inquired she, piteously.

"No, Mrs. Sanboy; not just now; I have some business to talk over with my uncle;" and since even that statement did not seem to have the desired effect, for Mrs. Sanboy still continued her gesticulations, Evy suited the action to the word, and joined her uncle in the porch. He was sitting in his usual place at the end remote from the house, with his face buried in his hands, and seemingly quite unconscious of the autumn rain which was driving in upon his bare head.

"Uncle!"

Mr. Hulet looked up with a start that was also a shudder.

"My dear," cried he, "you gave me quite a fright. I did not expect to see you here for the next half-hour."

"Do you know, uncle, that you are sitting in the rain?" remarked she, softly.

"Had you not better come indoors?"

"No dear, no; I like the air. There"—here he changed his place to one nearer the door—"I am under shelter now; there

is room for us both, my darling; sit you down; since you *are* come, it is just as well I should tell you what I have to say at once. You saw I was troubled at breakfast time, did you not dear—did you not, pet?"

It was plain that what he had to say was not of a pleasant kind: a something not easily spoken, and which required choosing of words.

"Yes, uncle, I noticed that."

"Of course you did: you notice everything! you take such thought and care about me, and everybody, indeed, except yourself. Yes, that is my own Evy all over."

He had got her little hand in his, and was patting and caressing it, yet, with his face averted from her own, and gazing out into the misty air, in which some small white fragments, as of a torn letter, were whirling; there were one or two also on the bench and on the floor.

"If people are good, it is said that they are happy even in this world," continued the old man; "and yet you are not happy at Dunwich, my child, are you?"

"I am quite as happy as I deserve to be, uncle, no doubt," answered she, smiling, "though perhaps not so happy as you would have me. If I could only see you getting better—I mean more cheerful—then I should have little to wish for."

"Yes; well I will try to be, dear, I will try to be; but the place depresses me. I think, my darling, that we must leave it—yes—and go somewhere else."

"Go somewhere else? Leave Seymour's Home? Oh, uncle, where can we go? Surely, surely, we shall never find so quiet and pleasant a spot as this; and after all the pains and trouble that our friends have been at to secure it for us—and how are we to live, or even to remove elsewhere, without the means——"

"I have some money, darling; yes, some money," answered he, in tones he in vain endeavoured to render assuring, and patting her hand nervously with his fingers; "and at the worst the Barmbys will be only too glad to have us back again."

"Go back to Lucullus Mansion! Indeed uncle, dear, I should not like that. Why what can have caused you to take this sudden dislike to Dunwich?"

"It is not that, Evy; but something has happened, which will render it distasteful to us both—but especially to you. Captain Heyton and—and—that woman are coming to the Park next week, for good—to live there."

Then Evy knew what Mrs. Sanboy had meant by saying that "they had patched it up;" the quarrel, or the estrangement between the old lord and his nephew no longer existed, and the young heir was coming home. Now she knew why the old lieutenant had looked at her so pitifully that morning, and had said, "I am so sorry, so sorry." For the moment she felt stunned and dizzy: she had tried to convince herself that this very thing which had happened must needs have taken place sooner or later: it was, indeed, only a consequence of the reconciliation, which she herself had earnestly wished for, between Lord Dirlston and his nephew; and yet she had somehow put it from her, as an occurrence at worst in the far distant future. Now it had come to pass, or at least, was close at hand, her strength was not equal to bear it, and she burst into tears.

"Think over it, darling; think over it, my pet," continued Mr. Hulet tenderly, "and I am sure you will come round to my opinion that we must needs go. You had better be alone, I know; I felt that myself just now when I was making up my own mind. I will come back again in ten minutes or so, and then we can discuss the matter."

It was kind and thoughtful of him to go, and a great relief to her. The bitterness of her sorrow was such, that a witness of it—however sympathising—would have been intolerable. Her affection for her old lover was unhappily as strong as ever, though not, perhaps, of the same kind as it had been, when it was lawful for her to love him. That love like hers should suddenly cease, from any cause, even though it were the cruelty and unfaithfulness of the object, was indeed impossible; and Jack had been neither cruel nor faithless. He had loved her always, and would have married her, but for her own rejection of him—which must have seemed cruel and faithless too. His marriage with Judith she well understood had arisen from pique—that is from disappointment mingled with no unreasonable indignation against herself; and she had forgiven him for it. But to see him as Judith's husband was a spectacle that it would be hard indeed to look upon, and the idea of which wrung her very heartstrings. That it was not of his own will that he was coming to the Park she felt convinced; not even to be Lord Dirlston's heir would he have visited Dunwich, where he must be aware that she was living, in humble retirement,

and endeavouring—though, alas, in vain!—to forget him. He knew she loved him still, even though she had given him up, as he imagined, with insufficient cause. No; it was Judith who had urged him to come, in order that she might assume the position for which she had schemed and plotted from the first. But what was this? A scrap of written paper that she had taken up mechanically; and was folding and unfolding, as we are wont to do when weighty cares oppress us, and something awaits our decision to which we know not how to reply. A scrap of paper only, one of a hundred others into which some note had been torn by Mr. Hulet, and with four unmeaning words upon it, two under two, with no sort of connection between them,

“want money—
you must” —

There was nothing surely in these words to excite at first such surprise, and presently such indignation, as Evy's gentle face exhibited. Nothing in the words. No; it was the handwriting that thus affected her; for she recognised it as that of Judith.

And how came it that Judith Mercer, nay, far stranger, that Judith Heyton should be in correspondence with Uncle Angelo?

MODERN ROMAN MOSAICS.

NERO ON THE MODERN STAGE.

You have never, in any of the great play-houses or opera-houses of Europe, sat beneath so magnificent a dome as roofs our humble little theatre, yclept—I know not why—the Sferisterio. You may have seen Paris and London, the Scala and Vienna, with their gilded and painted ceilings glittering with a thousand lamps, but such a lapis lazuli arch as stretches from wall to wall of the Sferisterio no mortal architect ever reared; for it is the sublime blue vault which hung over the gods on Olympus, and is lit by a golden lamp for day and a silver lamp for night, and studded with myriad luminous gems, and adorned with all the hues of Iris—in a word, the sky, and an Italian sky in June!

Yes; the Sferisterio is an open-air theatre. And, if one must needs go to the play in summer, an open-air theatre is the only rational one; at least, in a climate like this, in which you can reckon on the

weather with tolerable certainty for a month beforehand. The arrangements of the theatre, as far as the audience part is concerned, are of the very simplest, not to say rudest, kind. The best seats (price about ninepence each) are simply bare wooden chairs set upon the equally bare earth. There are boxes in the wall facing the stage; there is a sort of raised terrace or gallery in the walls right and left of the stage, approached by a series of steps, which also serve as seats for the spectators. And that is all. The proscenium is very wide; and there is an orchestra in front of it for the band, divided from the bare wooden chairs aforesaid, by a rough timber railing. The curtain is a marvel of daubery. It represents the rich folds of some silken, or satin, or velvet drapery. I am sorry not to be able to be more explicit, but the artist's forte is certainly not the representation of texture. There are no footlights. At present, however, there is no lack of illumination, for the sun, although nearing the end of his daily course, is still blazing away fiercely, and we are exceedingly thankful for the shadow thrown by the high lateral wall of the enclosure. It is six o'clock p.m., and the band has just begun to entertain us with a startlingly original version of the overture to Semiramide. The discordance, the bold, frank, self-satisfied dissonance which distinguishes the playing of these artists would be a marvel anywhere but in Italy. In this country, however, they have many who rival—possibly a few who surpass—their powers of producing an unbroken series of sounds, every one of which shall be excruciatingly out of tune. Let us, distracting our attention as best we may from the slaughter of Semiramide, examine our libretto and see what entertainment is provided for us before the curtain rises.

“Nero; a comedy in five acts and in verse.”

Nero, a comedy? H'm!

Well, but let us look at the rest of the *dramatis personæ*. They include Acte, a freed woman; Cluvius Rufus, senator; Egloge, a Greek slave and dancing girl; Babilus, an astrologer; a mimic; a gladiator; a tavern keeper; a centurion; a slave-merchant; and Menecrates, the buffoon of the Emperor Claudius Cæsar Nero. The scene is laid in Rome and its neighbourhood.

A preliminary word must be said, for the benefit of such readers as might otherwise

be inclined to expect only serry strolling players in an open-air theatre. Such is by no means the case. The company which performs under the lapis lazuli dome is composed of highly respectable artists, two of whom would be pronounced first-rate comedians in any European theatre. The play, too, is one which possesses literary merits of a very high order, and which has made the tour of the principal Italian theatres with ever-increasing success. In a brief preface to his play, Signor Pietro Cossa replies to a criticism which he says has been very generally made on it: "This Nero of yours," say the critics, "is always an artist, and never an Emperor!"

Signor Cossa makes Nero himself answer this objection, who, at the point of death exclaimed, "Qualis Artifex pereo!" and not "Qualis Imperator!"

In fact, a love of art was, next, perhaps, to a love of cruelty, the most prominent trait in Nero's character. And to my thinking, Signor Cossa has shown admirable subtlety of discrimination in the manner in which he delineates the artistic temperament (vanity and all) of the man, and yet so contrives his delineation as not for one instant to excite the spectators' sympathy with either the man or the artist. In this respect the play of Nero is a thoroughly moral work. That which is base, bad, and contemptible is never presented so as to appear other than it is. It is evident that with such realistic treatment there was only one phase of Nero's life which it was possible to represent on the public stage.

However, Semiramide, dying very hard indeed, is at length despatched and put out of her misery, as we are put out of ours; a bell tinkles, and Menecrates, the buffoon, steps on to the stage, in front of the curtain, to speak the prologue. This personage—like most of those in the play—is a historical character. He filled a position in the Imperial household, which may be accurately paralleled with that of the Mediæval Court Fool or Jester. And this evening he is represented by an actor of singular ability; a thoroughly trained artist, sure of his effects, conveying every point to the audience with that apparent ease which it is so difficult to acquire, full of a dry humour, quite in harmony with his part, and possessed of considerable powers of facial expression.

In the prologue, which is in flowing blank verse, and full of point, Menecrates

apologises on behalf of the author, for having named his play a Comedy. But he says:—

* * * * *

The personage of evil memory
Who will appear before you here to-night,
Is not that Nero of old tragedies
Whose eyes glare terror, and who stalks and strides
Upon his high cothurnus; takes three steps
All duly measured, and then says three words
Picked from the direct in the dictionary.

No; he is a frequenter of low taverns with gluttons and wine-bibbers, a singer, a pugilist, a sculptor; he drives chariots and poetises! In a word the Nero of Signor Cossa is very nearly identically the Nero of Suetonius and Tacitus.

The whole character is developed with unflagging power and spirit from beginning to end of the play. We see the Emperor dictating verses to his secretary at one moment, and the next issuing orders for the confiscation of the property of Cassius Longinus, for no other reason than that Cassius is rich and Nero is in want of money. We see him making love to the Greek dancing girl, Egloge, and, with a sudden misgiving that the butterfly creature is not sufficiently impressed with the awful magnitude of his arbitrary power, describing to her how he burned Rome. We see him drunk with slaves in a tavern; wrestling with, and overthrown by a gladiator, who knows not that his antagonist is Cæsar; suddenly checking an outburst of fury occasioned by the plain speaking of a young actor, who is lamenting the degeneracy of Imperial Rome, and anathematising the vices of the Emperor, to exclaim—

This fellow is an artist! He speaks well,
And has an admirable voice. My palace
Is open to you; I, too, am an artist.

We see him selling a statue, sculptured by himself, to the luckless Senator Cluvius Rufus, for an exorbitant price; improvising verses at a banquet; trembling at the thought that he has had a magic philtre "prepared by some Thessalian witch" administered to him by Acte the freed woman: such being his only means of accounting for the influence she wields over him. And finally we behold him a fugitive from Rome, accompanied only by the faithful Acte; flying from his revolted troops who have proclaimed Galba, Emperor; flinging himself on a wretched pallet, in a hut, on the Via Nomentana, four miles without the gates of Rome, to sleep after his hurried flight, and declaiming the noble lines of Horace, beginning

"Justum et tenacem propositi virum,"—a singular and cynical irony in the mouth of Nero!—as he sinks into slumber; starting up, pursued by horrible visions of his murdered victims, chiefest and most dreadful of whom is the spectre of his mother; and, last of all, imploring the aid of one of his freedmen to plunge the dagger into his breast, which his own coward hand fears to wound, although still more terrible to him than speedy death is the dread of falling alive into the hands of his enemies.

The part, it will be seen, is no light and easy one for the actor. The versatility required is very great, the character ranging through a long gamut from the grotesque to the terrible. But the actor to whom it was intrusted—Signor Luigi Biagi—acquitted himself of his arduous task with great zeal and good discretion. If he never rose to greatness, he never fell short of artistic propriety. And there were points—especially those requiring a rapid change of mood and manner—which he made with a tact and completeness that left nothing to be desired.

The other performers were none of them below mediocrity. The lady who played Acte had a fine and dignified presence, and delivered her somewhat difficult and ungrateful speeches—she is the female Mentor of Nero throughout the play, and attempts the impracticable task of reasoning, taunting, or beseeching him, into some sense of manliness and humanity—with a large, sonorous, Roman accent, which it was a pleasure to listen to.

The audience was composed of lower middle-class citizens with their wives and daughters. The men enjoyed their cigars between the acts, and the ladies plied their fans and chatted. All the spectators were attentive, interested, and thoroughly appreciative, throughout the performance. And, now, what amount of help did the players receive from the stage-illusion and *mise en scène* which have so prominent a share in our theatrical entertainments? It may be briefly answered—"almost none." To begin with, the uncompromising daylight which flooded the stage during three-fourths of the performance, is a terrible foe to make-believe! Then, even when, during the last act, a row of foot-lights rose in front of the orchestra, and cast a yellow glare upon the boards, the decorations which they illumined were, to speak plainly, of a very common and coarse kind. The dresses, too, although

not so poor as to be ludicrous, certainly had no pretensions to represent the lavish splendour of the costumes at the court of Nero. I could picture to myself what a gorgeous show would have been made of the banqueting scene, for instance, at certain London theatres; what beautifully painted views of old Rome we should have had; and how the attire of the actors would have been designed and decorated with splendour of colour, and antiquarian correctness of detail.

Here, the actor's only aid in the illusion of the scene was the imagination of his audience. And yet I did not feel, myself, nor did I perceive that others felt, any painful lack of reality in the presentment. It is all very fine talking, but no one at a play—not even in the most archæological or realistic of theatres—bona-fide believes himself to be seeing a fragment of actual human life. That it is like, yet not the same, is the secret of the whole charm of stage-plays. The imagination is exalted, the emotions are excited, we laugh and cry; but, at the bottom of our hearts, do we ever for a moment forget that what we are witnessing is a result of artistic mimicry? Our very delight in the abilities of a skilled actor answers the question in the negative. What pleasure would it give us to make the acquaintance of Daddy Hardacre, or Messrs. Box and Cox, in real life? But when we see such artists as Robson was, and Buckstone is, presenting the peculiarities, passions, and absurdities of these personages, with inimitable skill and artistic colour, we enjoy the sense of the actor's talent, and the sort of quintessence of the character which he gives us, in the same way that we enjoy a Dutch painting of a tavern or a kitchen, which it would certainly give us no gratification to enter in the flesh. I have always thought that if that story of the bird pecking the grapes were to be accepted as a true one, Xeuxis must have been but a mediocre painter after all. A wax-work modeller would achieve as perfect an illusion. And sometimes in the apotheosis of upholstery which characterises certain modern plays and play-houses, I have been tempted to believe that, even though the birds should peck the grapes, we are running a risk of suffocating the imagination of our audiences under loads of smart carpets and real furniture; and that it is not all to the advantage of the actor who understands his art, to be surrounded by a mass of elaborate detail,

instead of a simpler background whereon to paint his picture.

But, dear me, they are putting out the lights! All the lights they can put out, that is to say; for there are sundry lamps up aloft there which twinkle even brighter and brighter as the night deepens. I must put on my great-coat. These Roman breezes are treacherous. And *scusi signore*, but can you oblige me with a light for my cigar? Mille grazie!

Well, I have seen "Nero, a Comedy," performed for the delectation of the Populus Romanus, and heard the Ave Maria bells, from the Christian churches near at hand, interrupt the bacchanalian strophes of the rose-crowned Emperor! 'Tis truly a wonderful world, my masters; and the great wheel of Time makes marvellous revolutions!

FORGETTING A LANGUAGE.

FACTS frequently come under public notice relating to insoluble mysteries connected with memory, its trustworthiness on some occasions and failure on others. As all newspaper readers are aware, great importance has recently been given to the question whether or not a man can forget a language which he has once learned, and whether a disputed case of personal identity can be either strengthened or weakened thereby. That the knowledge of a language can be effectually driven out of the head for a time is beyond dispute; the difficulty lies in deciding whether this oblivion is ever permanent, or whether it is traceable to temporary mental maladies. Forgetfulness of languages is only one among many kinds of lapse of memory, some of which are strange and surprising, wholly inexplicable in the present state of science.

From the very nature of the phenomenon, most of the recorded instances apply to persons who know, or have known, two or more languages; in some cases the native tongue had slipped out of the memory, in others that (or those) acquired later in life.

A Highland woman, accustomed to speak English, was placed under the care of Dr. Macintosh, at Edinburgh, for an attack of apoplexy. She so far recovered as to look around her with an appearance of intelligence; but the physician could not make her understand anything he said to her, nor could she answer the most simple question. He, therefore, hit upon the expedient of directing one of her friends to

address her in Gaelic, which she immediately answered with readiness and fluency. How one language can thus be expelled from the brain, and the other retained, is a mystery; the English was in all probability acquired later in life than the Gaelic, and, perhaps, less perfectly; this is the only obtainable clue. The woman recovered the lost language when health returned.

A Lutheran clergyman, settled at Philadelphia, informed Dr. Rush that Germans and Swedes, of whom he had a considerable number in his congregation, when near death always prayed in their native languages; though some of them, he was convinced, had not spoken those tongues for fifty or sixty years, ever since childhood.

A German lady, married to an English gentleman, spoke English during the greater part of her married life; but at one period, during a protracted illness, she used her native tongue, and could not make herself intelligible to her English attendants except through the aid of her husband as an interpreter.

Dr. Rush mentions the case of an Italian gentleman, who died of yellow fever at New York, and who underwent a remarkable series of mental changes during the malady which terminated his life. He spoke English, which had for some time been his familiar language in America, in the early stage of his illness; during the middle period this was driven out of his brain by French, which he had learned before English; and on the day of his death he spoke only his own native Italian.

A case has been recorded by Dr. Pritchard of a lady who, when suffering under an attack of delirium, spoke a language which nobody around her could understand. It was at length discovered to be Welsh, or something similar. None of her friends could form any conception of the time or manner in which she could have acquired a familiarity with that tongue; but after much inquiry it was ascertained that, in her childhood, she had had as nurse a native of the French province of Brittany, the dialect of which is derived from the same Cymric stock as Welsh. The lady had during those early years learned a good deal of the dialect, but had entirely forgotten it in later life, until her attack of illness produced some inexplicable change in the mental action. This case was in every way remarkable; for the lapse of memory was in the native tongue, while the language brought vividly into action was

that which she had only heard during some of her child-years. In all probability it was not really Welsh, but something like it.

The same physician gives the particulars of another instance, wherein an English lady, during the progress of recovery from an apoplectic attack, suddenly began to address her attendants in French, and did not resume her native English utterances until convalescent. Here, as in the last-mentioned case, a secondary language for a time overpowered the primary. In what way a former state of mental action is thus revived is a mystery, which physicians and metaphysicians are alike unable at present to solve.

Abernethy, the great surgeon, had to attend a man who was born in France, but had spent the greater part of his life in England, and had for many years almost entirely lost the habit of speaking French. An injury in the head brought him under the care of Abernethy, who observed that the man spoke scarcely anything but French during his illness; the other language was for a time in oblivion.

There was a case at St. Thomas's Hospital, some years ago, in which real Welsh, not merely a foreign dialect derived from the same stock, was resuscitated. A patient was in a state of stupor, owing to an injury in the head. On his partial recovery he spoke a language which nobody in the hospital understood, but which on further inquiry was found to be Welsh. Tracing back the man's history, it was ascertained that he was a Welshman, but had not been in his native country for thirty or forty years. During the greater part of his life English had driven Welsh from his mind; but under the influence of his illness Welsh had re-asserted itself, and had in its turn driven out the intruder.

Sometimes erudite men lose their acquirements, in a partial degree and for a temporary period, in a very inexplicable manner. Dr. Beattie mentions the case of a gentleman who, when suffering from the effects of a blow on the head, lost his knowledge of Greek, as if it had been a concrete something which the blow had knocked out in its entirety. In other instances a special foreign language seems to be selected by the brain, not for expulsion, but for intensified reception. Dr. Gregory met with a case in which a clergyman, while labouring under a disease of the brain, spoke nothing but Hebrew. This, it was found on inquiry, was the last

language which he had learned; it overpowered alike his English, Latin, and Greek when his mind was temporarily thrown off its balance.

In all the above described instances there was a knowledge of two or more languages, and a virtual suppression of one of them during a morbid condition of the brain. The main difference was this: that some of the patients temporarily lost their original native tongue, whereas in other cases an acquired foreign language was the one which suffered eclipse. How far a man can really forget a particular language during all the later half of his life, can never be known unless he suffers under some kind of malady in the mind or brain; something else then assumes the real mastery over him, and memory undergoes strange evolutions. Other curious instances of forgetfulness are worthy of notice, not relating to a complete language, but to words and names which form the elements of a language when built up into a system.

Dr. Abercrombie records an instance of a gentleman who uniformly called his snuff-box a hogshead. When reminded of the error he probably recognised it, but his tendency was nevertheless in this direction. His physician hypothetically traced the oddity to an early and long-continued association of ideas; the gentleman had been a tobacco merchant in Virginia, and had had his attention well occupied with hogsheads of tobacco and boxes of snuff. This may not be a sufficient explanation, but it was the only one that suggested itself; as he made no similar blunder with other words. Certainly a greater difficulty was presented by the gentleman who always called coals paper and paper coals—systematically, as it would appear, transposing the meanings of the two words. Both substances, it is true, are used in lighting a fire; but this fact does not suffice to solve the puzzle.

An inability to remember the names of things sometimes presents itself in a remarkable way. A gentleman, engaged in extensive agricultural affairs, could not remember the spoken names of things, but recognised them directly when written. He arranged his daily duties accordingly, with a degree of success that could hardly be expected under such strange circumstances. He kept before him in his business room a list of the words which were most likely to occur in his intercourse with his workmen. When any one of his men

wished to communicate with him on any subject, the master listened attentively to what was said; the sound of the words did not convey to his mind the idea of the things or commodities signified, but it did suggest to him written words which he, therefore, proceeded to consult; the sight of the letters forming those words at once gave him the necessary clue to the meaning. The process was noteworthy; the sound of a word, when spoken, suggested the shape of the word when written, and this shape suggested the idea or mental picture of the thing signified. This appears to have been a permanent peculiarity of mind, or, at least, of long continuance, unconnected with any particular malady. In another case, which came under the notice of Dr. Gregory, a lady, consequent on an apoplectic fit, lost her memory of names, but retained it for things. Although a good housewife, she could only direct her servants and tradespeople by pointing to the things concerning which she meant to speak. All went on well in regard to the other words of a sentence; but when she came to the names of things, memory failed her, and she could only convey her meaning by pointing.

A singular variation from this type is a forgetfulness of the names of persons—not that mere heedlessness which leads some persons to speak of Mr. Thing'emy or Mr. What's-his-name, but a real inability to call to mind the particular word or name belonging to a particular person. A gentleman, after a brain attack, knew his friends perfectly, but could not remember their names. Walking one day in the street, he met an acquaintance to whom he was very anxious to communicate something relating to a mutual friend. After various ineffectual attempts to make him understand, he at last seized him by the arm, and dragged him through several streets to the house of the person of whom he was speaking, and pointed to the name-plate on the door. Not until he had appealed to this reminder could he recall the proper name; the features or the incised name would suffice, but without one or other of these the recollection refused to do its work.

Many vagaries of memory present themselves, which could with difficulty be grouped in any systematic way. There is one case on record in which a vivifying of the memory for poetry occurred in a remarkable manner. An eminent medical man told Dr. Abercrombie that, during a

fever, but without any accompaniment of delirium, he, on one occasion, repeated long passages from Homer, which he could not do when in good health. The result of former study showed itself at a time when the mind was a little unHINGED, brightened by some mysterious flash. The same authority was told by another friend that, during a fever, he had a vivid recollection all at once of the circumstances of a journey to the Highlands which he had made long before; the whole came before him again, including many-minute particulars which he had entirely forgotten since the period of the actual journey itself.

An instance of an affecting kind is mentioned by Dr. Conolly, relating to a young clergyman who sustained an injury of the head just when he was about to be married. He became permanently deranged, and lived in this condition to the age of eighty. One thought, and one only, seemed to remain in his poor shattered mind. He talked of nothing but his approaching wedding, and expressed eager anticipations for the arrival of the happy day.

A surgeon was thrown from his horse while riding in the country, and was carried into an adjoining house in a state of insensibility. When he had recovered his senses he described the accident distinctly, and gave minute directions concerning his own treatment. In particular, he requested that he might be immediately bled. The bleeding was repeated, at his own desire, after two hours; and he talked connectedly regarding his feelings and the state of his pulse, exchanging opinions thereon with the medical friend who attended him. In the evening he was so much recovered as to be able to be removed to his own house; and his friend accompanied him in the carriage. During the ride a singular change took place in the condition of the patient's memory. As they drew near the house, the friend made some observation as to the necessity or desirability of caution in approaching the wife and family, to avoid giving too sudden a shock; when, to his astonishment, he discovered that the patient had lost all recollection of having either wife or children. This condition continued during the following day; it was only on the third day, and after further bleeding, that the circumstances of his past life began to recur to his mind—one idea suggesting another, until the mental man was himself again.

Dr. Abercrombie was once called upon

to render medical aid to a boy who had fallen from a wall, and struck his head against a stone which lay at its foot. He was carried home in a state of insensibility, from which he soon recovered, but with his memory twisted a little awry. He had no recollection of the accident which had befallen him. He felt that his head was hurt, but had no idea how he had received the injury. After a time the facts dawned upon him one by one. He recollected that he had struck his head against a stone; but could not recall to mind how he had come to do so. After another interval he recollected that he had been on the top of a wall, and had fallen from it and struck against a stone; but could not remember where the wall was. After some time longer, he recollected the locality of the wall, and the minor incidents of the mishap. The memory seems to have buckled to its work step by step, using each stage as a starting-point for further advance.

The same gradual process was displayed by a gentleman, mentioned by Pritchard, who suffered a severe injury in the head by a fall from his horse. After a slow recovery, it was found that he had lost all recollection of the accident; he knew that he had been ill, but the cause of the illness he had to learn from others. Even some of the incidents immediately before the disaster were equally driven from his memory. After the lapse of a considerable time, his recollection of the incidents began to return; but this was only by repeatedly riding to and around the spot where they occurred. The sight of the various objects gradually recalled the circumstances of the journey during which the accident had occurred, and then of the accident itself.

Memory alike of persons, things, and words has sometimes been blunted or blinded by temporary malady, and then recovered by degrees. Wepfer relates that a gentleman, recovering from an apoplectic attack, was found to know nobody, and to remember nothing. After several weeks he began to know his friends, to remember words, and to learn or re-learn a little of his native language and a little Latin. When urged to read more than a few words at a time, he said, "I formerly understood these things, but do not now." It was a hard thing to bear, this consciousness of a former power no longer possessed.

Sometimes the thing forgotten is not one particular language, but the whole range of events within a particular number of months or years. Very curious in-

stances of this have been placed upon record. In one instance a morbid state of the brain had brought on complete oblivion of all the events of four years, leaving the mind possessed of recollections concerning earlier and later facts. A shock, not amounting to a mental injury, has been found in a similar way to expel the recollection of a portion of time.

One instance of forgetting a language (the last which we have room to notice here), has been narrated by Dr. Rush, and is unquestionably very curious. An American student, of considerable attainments, was stricken down with fever. On slowly recovering, it was found that he had lost all his acquired knowledge. When his health was restored, he bravely resolved to begin over again, and pick up that which he had lost. He took up the Latin grammar, went through the elementary part, and was beginning to construe; when, one day, in making a strong effort to recollect a part of his lesson, the whole of his lost impressions suddenly flashed upon his mind; and he found himself at once in possession of all his former acquirements.

MARS.

The wild wind wails across the wintry waste,
The mallard whizz, shrill-crooning, from the sedge,
The willows bending, shiver in the blast,
That heraldeth the birth of boisterous March.

Hardy, yet tremulous, the violets blue
Peep from their sheltering green; the burnished
blooms

Of crocuses slow venture from the mould,
And quavering bells of snow-drops, pure and white,
Ring music on their stems,—breeze-melodies,
Of rustling petals, subtle elfin-tunes,
Felt but not heard. Brave robinet gives way,
Sweet winter-minstrel, to spring's darling thrush.

Pink blush the almond-trees, with tender bloom,
As glows the cheek of bashful white-veiled bride,
Touched by her bridegroom's kiss. The helméd farsee
On yonder common, is a-yellowing
With countless golden crests; grey rabbits run
In blithesome troop, from out the covert-side,
And sport them in the sunshine. Once again
The magic touch of Nature wakens Earth!

LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

HAMPSHIRE (ELVETHAM, BRAULEU, AND WINCHESTER).

IN our search through Hampshire for legends and historical traditions, we pause secondly at Elvetham, near Hertford Bridge, the old residence of the Earl of Hertford, now belonging to Lord Calthorpe. In this village, ever since 1591, there have been garnered up countless reminiscences of a four days' visit paid, in that year, by Queen Elizabeth to the earl. It was a feast of

almost as much splendour as that celebrated one at Kenilworth, yet it is seldom mentioned by historians, and would now be almost forgotten but for the traditions of the village, and the preservation of one little pamphlet recording its various incidents. Yet perhaps (as we hope to show) no festivity in the reign of Queen Bees furnished more remarkable proofs of the poetry and romance of that hospitable age. The feudal hospitality displayed by the earl contrasts singularly enough with the rustic character of the entertainment; but the earl had the good taste to attend as carefully to the quality of his poetry as of his pastry, and ransacked the Greek mythology as anxiously for masquerade characters as he did his woods for venison, or his brooks for trout. The almost idolatrous homage for the Sovereign is shown in many of the poetical speeches written for the occasion; and this homage is blended with such praise of the Queen's beauty and over-strained admiration for her person, as only an imaginative and chivalrous age could have shown.

The earl spared no money in preparing for the royal visit; and a detail of his preparations furnishes us with interesting traits of the social life of the times. Three hundred workmen were, it seems, employed for days beforehand to erect extra buildings on a hill-side in Elvetham Park. First, there was built a room of estate for the nobles, and at the end a withdrawing room for her Majesty. The outside walls of the latter were covered with boughs and clusters of ripe hazel nuts; the inside was hung with arras, the roof worked with ivy leaves, and the floor strewn with sweet herbs and rushes. Next to this chamber, offices were built for the spicery, larder, "chandlerie," wine cellar, ewery, and pantry. Beyond this rose a large hall for the entertainment of the chief knights, ladies, and gentlemen, and besides these, bowers for the queen's footmen and guards; another bower was for all comers; a second for the steward and his gentlemen that waited, with tables twenty-three feet long, besides a buttery, a pitcher house, a pastry with five ovens, a kitchen with four ranges; another kitchen for all comers; a boiling house, a scullery, and cook's lodgings, some tiled, some covered with canvas, and some boarded.

Between this hill and the mansion a great pond in the shape of a crescent had been dug. And in this pond were raised three islands—the Ship Island, the Fort Island,

twenty feet square, and the Snail Mount, twenty feet high and forty square. In the pond floated boats for musicians, and a goodly pinnace garnished with twelve flags.

At three p.m., on the 20th of September, 1591, the Queen being expected to supper, the earl collected his mounted retinue, and drawing them into the chief thicket of the park gave them their last rehearsal, reminding them with what quietness, diligence, and duty they were to work her Majesty's content, to their own honour, credit, and the increase of his love and favour towards them. This done, the earl, with his three hundred men, most of them wearing gold chains about their necks, and in their hats yellow and black feathers, jingled off to meet the Queen on her way from Odiham.

The Queen entered Elvetham Park between five and six p.m., and between the park gate and the house a poet saluted her in a long Latin oration in heroic verse, this kind of thing when thrown into English—

O sweet Elisa, grace me with a look,
Or from my brows this laurel wreath will fall,
And I, unhappy, die amidst my song.

Behold where all the Graces, virtue's maids,
And lightfoot Hours, guardians of Heaven's gate,
With joined forces do remove these blocks
Which Envy laid in Majesty's highway.
Come, therefore, come under our humble roof,
And with a beck command what it contains;
For all is thine, each part obeys thy will.

Sing songs fair nymphs, sing sweet triumphal songs,
Fill ways with flowers, and th'air with harmony.

At this cue, six virgins behind the poet, who was clad in green, wore a laurel garland and bore an olive branch, began to pretend to remove Envy's blocks out of the Queen's way, and succeeded tolerably well. These maidens (the three Graces, and the three Hours), who were clad in varicoloured taffeta sarcenet, and wore garlands of flowers on their heads, carried baskets of sweet herbs and flowers upon their arms. The poet's Latin speech, written in a scroll, being placed in the Queen's own hands, the six virgins, after performance of their humble reverences to the Queen, walked before her to the house, singing a six-part song, of which the last verse ran,

New birds record new harmony,
And trees do whistle melody;
Now everything that Nature breeds
Doth clad itself in pleasant weeds,
O beauteous Queen of second Troy
Accept of our unfained joy.

All very tiresome and pedantic, but better, after all, than long speeches from perspiring

mayors and the clumsy presentations of stereotyped bouquets. Soon after the Queen had entered the house, small cannon were discharged on Snail Mount and Ship Island. As to the supper, the liberal cheer, the good waiting, &c., the local pamphleteer is fairly lost for words; but we gather that the knives and forks were busy, and that the wine went round freely. After supper a notable concert of six musicians, retained for the occasion, discoursed such excellent music, that in "grace and favour thereof" the Queen gave a new name to one of the pavans (a slow stately dance), made by the well known Mr. Thomas Morley, organist of St. Paul's.

The next day, Tuesday, St. Matthew's festival, the forenoon was so wet and stormy that the maskers did nothing but grumble and bite their lips and look out of window, conjecturing. Yet it held up for the honour of Hampshire before dinner time, when the Queen and all her nobles dined in the banquetting room on the hill-side. After dinner the earl had a large canopy of state raised at the pond's head for the Queen to view the sports. The canopy was of green satin lined with green taffeta sarcenet, fringed with green and silver, supported by four silver pillars, and decked with four white plumes spangled with silver. Four of the earl's chief gentlemen held this canopy, and all round the pond-head tapestry was strewn, some "devises" being expected. There were rumours, indeed, of a procession of sea-gods, for which all the best swimmers had been chosen a month since, and it was not unlikely that Sylvanus and his satyrs were also cracking nuts and abusing the sea-gods somewhere in the woods.

At about four p.m. the Queen took her seat expectant, and, no doubt, full of good-natured curiosity at what the Hampshire poets would achieve, and what pretty dainty fancy would be set before her by the earl. Before she had well observed this, the fort in the pond was surrounded with armed men, and the Snail Mount displayed horns of wild-fire; while from a bower built on the further brink of the pond came a train of sea-gods wading breast high towards her. The prophet and pastor Nereus, came first, in red silk, with a cornered cap on his curled head, and after him five Tritons with grisly heads and varicoloured beards, all sounding trumpets. Then followed Neptune and Oceanus, leading between them the aforementioned pinnace, which contained three maidens

playing Scotch jigs on their cornets, and conducting the nymph Nereæ, of whom Sylvanus, the god of the woods, was enamoured. Two other boats followed, drawn by a gang of sea-gods, breast high, in "ugly marine suits" and armed with huge wooden squirts, "to what end," as the Hampshire chronicler slyly observes, "shall appear hereafter." The Tritons sounded half way, and then the cornets began. "Oh," says the chronicler and poet, rapturously, as if the glory of that moment could never be forgotten, "the melody was sweet, and the show stately."

Just before the dripping monsters reached the Queen, Nereus made a signal, and one of his clan threw a somersault from the Ship Island directly before her Majesty into the water, and then swam complacently to join his approving company.

Now as it was well known to the earl's servants that Nereus and Nereæ had both jewels to present to the Queen, the interest culminated as Nereus began to spout his sonorous verses.

Fair Cynthia, the wide ocean's Empress,
I, watery Nereus, hovered on the coast
To greet your Majesty with this my train
Of dancing Tritons and shrill singing nymphs.

And with me came gold breasted India,
Who daunted at your sight leapt to the shore,
And sprinkling endless treasure on this isle,
Left me this jewel to present your Grace,
From him who under you doth hold this place.

Nereus then presented the jewels in a cunningly woven purse of green rushes, and the maidens in the pinnace began a song, the end of every verse being replied to by lutes and voices, as if they had been echoes, from a distant boat—this kind of thing:

'Tis fair Elisa's matchless grace
Who with her beam doth bless this place,
Echo—doth bless this place.

All this was very pretty, tasteful, and intellectual, and needed poetry in the contrivers, and appreciation in the auditors; and the Queen, with her ruff and red hair, no doubt nodded very gracious approval, as she critically eyed the jewel and secretly estimated its value.

But now the Tritons sounded their horns, and out came Sylvanus and his wood sprites. Sylvanus, like Robinson Crusoe, wore an apron of kid's skin, his body and face were dyed with saffron, his head was hooded with a goat's skin. He bore in his right hand an olive tree. His followers, who were covered with ivy leaves, carried bows made like darts. Then no doubt Sylvanus, hot, uncomfortable, and un-

certain of his part, with one eye on the prompter in the ivy leaves, began—

Sylvanus comes from out the leafy groves
To honour her whom all the world adores,
Fair Cynthia! &c.

and then, anticipating Burns, the rustic poet, stated the fact that Nature having made Cynthia, broke the mould to end the pattern. Another odd thing was that Apollo had just let fall a scutcheon inscribed, "Detur dignissimæ," which he begged to tender to her Majesty, and which he did. Then seeing his love Neræa, Nereus offered Sylvanus his hand, in token of the plighting vow soon to be taken, upon which ill-bred Nereus pulled Sylvanus head and crop into the pond, where the sea-gods ducked him, to the intense delight, no doubt, of the Queen and the court, who all loved good horse-play. Sylvanus crawling dripping to land, shouted, "Revenge, revenge!" and he and his men began to throw darts at the Tritons, who replied with volleys from their squirts. Finally Nereus stopped the combat by a complimentary line to the Queen on her love of peace, and Neræa presented her sea jewel (probably a pearl) shaped like a fan to the Queen, and then begged the Queen to give the pinnace a name.

That it may dare attempt a golden fleece,
Or dive for pearls.

Her Majesty then named the pinnace the Bonadventure, and the Tritons sounded their trumpets till the woods rang again.

The third day, about nine a.m., when her Majesty opened a casement of her gallery window, three excellent musicians, disguised in ancient country costume, greeted her with a three-part song of Coridon and Phyllida.

In the merry month of May,
In a morn by break of day,

Much ado there was, God wot,
He would love and she would not.
She said never man was true,
He said none was false to you;
He said he had loved her long,
She said love should have no wrong, &c.

And Phyllida with garlands gay,
Was made the Lady of the May.

After dinner, about three, ten of the earl's servants, all Somersetshire men, marked out the form of a tennis court in a square green court before the Queen's window, and stripped to their doublets, five to five, played with the hand-ball at what they called "bord and cord," the Queen being so pleased that she watched them for an hour and a half.

After supper there were fireworks on the island, one hundred guns being fired from the Snail Mount, and one hundred from the Ship Island. There was a globe of fireworks as big as a barrel, a castle of fireworks, running rockets on lines fired at the fort, fire wheels, "pikes of pleasure," and balls of wild-fire which burned in the water.

During the fireworks a banquet, all in glass and silver, was served in the lower gallery in the garden, and all that Elizabethan cooks could do was done. Two hundred gentlemen bore the thousand dishes, lit by one hundred torch bears. As for the set pieces of sugar work, there were lions, unicorns, bears, horses, eagles, falcons, cranes, bustards, herons, swans, hernshaws, snakes, adders, vipers, frogs, toads, worms; mermaids, whales, and dolphins.

On the fourth day her Majesty (who, by-the-bye, seems to have been kept pretty close to her work) was no sooner at her gallery window looking out into the garden than three corsets began to play fantastic dances, upon which the fairy queen entered the garden dancing with her maids. Having stuck a silver staff in the ground and placed on it a garland formed like an imperial crown sent by Oberon, the fairy king, to Elizabeth, her speech began—

I that abide in places underground,
Aureola, the Queen of Fairyland,
That every night in rings of painted flowers,
Turn round and carol out Elissa's name,

and so on, after which the fairy queen and her attendants danced about the garland, singing a song of six parts to the music of lute, bandora, bass viol, cittern, treble viol, and flute. The song, melodious enough, ran thus:—

Elisa is the fairest queen,
That ever trod upon this green;
Elisa's eyes are blessed stars;
Inducing peace, subduing wars;
Elisa's hand is crystal bright,
Her words are balm, her looks are light;
Elisa's breast is a pure hill,
Where virtue dwells and sacred still;
O blessed be each day and hour,
Where sweet Elisa builds her tower.

This song and dance so pleased the Queen, who was insatiable of such compliments, that she heard and saw it twice over, and then dismissed the actors with thanks and a gracious largess.

An hour after, the Queen and her nobles left Elvetham. As she passed through the park, Nereus and all the sea-gods (rheumatic enough, we should think, by this time) were sitting mourning at the pond-

head; while, on the other side, Sylvanus and his rough followers were conspicuously disconsolate; while the Graces and Hours were also wringing their hands in the most "doleful dumps." Then the poet (booted to show he was no mere ballad singer) stepped forward and delivered a poetical speech in this vein—

See where Sylvanus sits and sadly mourns
To think that autumn, with his withered wings,
Will bring in tempest when thy beams are hence;
For how can summer stay when sun departs?

And to each verse the refrain ran—

For how can summer stay when sun departs?

"Sun departs" is perhaps rather lame. Yet what good verses for a mere local entertainment! "Autumn, with his withered wings," is worthy of Keats.

At the park-gates "a concert of musicians," hidden in a bower, sang "O come again" with excellent division—

O come again, Heaven's chief delight,
Thine absence makes eternal night, &c.

The Queen expressed herself so highly pleased with the whole entertainment—beginning, middle, and end—that she told the earl, "he should find the reward thereof in her especial favour."

And now, as the old quiet settles down on Elvetham mansion and park, we turn to a very different scene. From the great Queen, under her satin canopy, we pass to an old hag, cowering over a few smouldering sticks—our scene now is a hovel, and not an earl's mansion. No glittering train surrounds our crone, her only companion is a ghostly cat. She is a Pariah, shunned and hated, but feared; the power of exciting fear indeed in those that hate her and thirst for her blood is the only solace of her wretched life. In the churchyard of Beaulieu, near the ruins of the great abbey and the old refectory, now turned into a parish church, is the grave of Mary Dore, the Witch of Beaulieu. This old crone, who died about 1750, was believed by the superstitious Hampshire people to have had the power of blasting corn, destroying cattle, and vexing her enemies with cramps and blains. If she muttered at the urchin who gibed and mocked her, or pelted her pitcher at the well, the parent trembled for its life; if the keeper who chided her for picking up sticks in the woods fell ill, he trembled to think of Mother Dore's last scowl. Frightened people, looking through her window at night, saw tall, black shadows talking to her; and who could they be but evil spirits? The very flowers withered where she trod?

What did she do in the churchyard at night? Did she not kiss that child of the blacksmith's, who died a week after? Woodmen were ready to swear they had seen her change herself into a hare or a cat, just as they had laid their hands on her for wood stealing. In the reign of King James, when to use invectives, or to disinter the dead, to utter charms or sorceries to kill, hurt, consume, or lame any one, was death, old Dore would have been made short work of, and not buried with quiet awe. Old John, Duke of Montagne, covered her grave with a stone, inscribed with allusions to her magical powers, and surrounded it with a neat railing. Stone and rail are now gone, for the Witch of Beaulieu and all her spirits had no power to resist Time. She and her grave moulder unnoticed in the still "God's acre," and even Fear has forgotten to shudder as he passes the spot.

In the grounds of this beautiful abbey we come upon one of those spots called, by tradition, "The Vineyards." The name helps to confirm the old belief that the English monks often made their wine from their own grapes. The fields are on a gentle declivity, with a warm southern exposure, just the place for the vine to uncurl its tendrils and ripen its purple fruit. When one thinks of Bordeaux and Lyons, one rather shudders at the vintage of Hampshire; yet there is no doubt that tradition is here correct; for brandy was made in the last century by Lord Beaulieu's steward, from grapes grown in these very fields on the southern slopes. The foreign monks, no doubt, brought with them the foreign art. An old antiquary has indeed proved from Domesday Books that, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, wine was manufactured in Essex. William of Malmesbury extols the Gloucestershire wine; and an old MS., quoted by Stow, mentions wine made from Windsor vines, and drank at the Castle in the reign of Richard II. Barnabie Googe, an Elizabethan writer on Husbandry, praises the Nottingham wine, and mentions that Lord Cobham had growing about his house as good vines as are in many parts of France. Still, if the monks of Beaulieu had asked us, we should, perhaps, after all, have preferred the vintage of Gascony, and have politely refrained from breaking into their small stock of special home-made wine, out of our high feeling and our "curtesie."

Let those who desire legends of the saints go to Winchester Cathedral. There

on the north side of the nave, under the sixth arch from the west end, they will find what Milner called "the crux antiquariorum"—the old square font of the twelfth century, which has puzzled antiquaries for hundreds of years, is a square rude block of old dark marble, supported by a central shaft and four smaller pillars, and is covered with sculpture. The crux is whose miracles does the sculptor record? Round the bowl are doves pecking at grapes, wild beasts and birds flapping their wings or at rest; but what do these typify? They signify, the wise say, the baptismal change from unregeneracy to regeneracy. What saint's miracles, then, do the human figures represent? There is a figure with an axe killing three men; a bishop with his crozier resting on a recumbent youth; and three men in a boat praying and supplicating. It was Milner first, who after the study of the "Golden Legend" and the Lives of the Saints, proved the many miracles to be those of St. Nicholas of Myra. The pious sculptor has shown him rescuing from a life of shame the daughter of a poor nobleman; stilling a storm during a voyage to Egypt; restoring to life a seaman who has been killed by falling from a mast; healing sick persons at Alexandria; rescuing three young men from the axe of the executioner; and lastly, after death, preserving from drowning a nobleman's son, who was on a voyage to Myra to present a silver or gold cup to the Cathedral. St. Nicholas is the special saint of children, and, as the German Saint Claus, figures in many a Christmas legend. Our readers must all have seen the good old fellow in effigy, with his arms full of toys, and rime upon his fine old beard.

In the Lady Chapel of Winchester cathedral another range of strange monastic legends is recorded, legends which give us a clearer notion of the monkish faith than we could get from a thousand mass books or breviaries. In one compartment of this interesting chapel there is a band of paneling under the window, and below twenty-four paintings, in two rows, of the miracles of the Virgin. The legends are curious as having been in some cases stolen by modern poets, opera writers, and versifiers.

The first represents the story of the wild young man who was won to monastic life, and the ignoring of life's greatest duties, by an image of the Virgin bending her finger to prevent his removing a ring of

his lady love's, which he had placed there for safety while he played at ball.

The second tells the story of the protection and honour conferred by the Virgin on an ignorant priest who knew and could sing only one mass—but that in honour of her.

The third depicts the Virgin saving a young Jew, who had partaken of the Eucharist, and was in consequence thrown into a furnace by his enraged father.

The fourth depicts Pope Gregory carrying in procession St. Luke's portrait of the Virgin, to allay a fearful pestilence. On the right of the picture the Destroying Angel sheathes his sword.

Number five shows a widow restoring the image of the child Jesus to the Virgin, which she had taken away on the loss of her only son, and restored when he was given back.

In the next the Virgin is assisting a female pilgrim to St. Michael's shrine.

The seventh shows the Virgin directing the erection of a church, which the Emperor Constantine had ordered to be built in her honour.

Next comes the story of a female devotee devoted to the worship of the Virgin, who died, having confessed all her sins but one, and was restored to life at the Virgin's intercession, that she might perform that last duty, and so crown her beatification.

This is followed by the Virgin near a foot bridge, saving a monk who had slipped in, and had ejaculated a prayer to her. Two fiends, already prepared with instruments of torture, are receding from her bright presence.

The tenth legend represents the miserable end of two dissolute Brabançons, who threw stones at an image of the Virgin.

In the eleventh we see the Virgin delivering some monastic votaries from a storm at sea.

Number twelve represents a beautiful legend. A priest of a chapel dedicated to the Virgin was, on one occasion, unable, from illness or some other weighty cause, to celebrate mass. But the candles suddenly lit themselves, the censers swung, the bell rang, and lo! Christ himself stood at the altar as ministrant priest, surrounded by a glorious assembly of saints, angels, martyrs, and all the company of heaven.

The thirteenth depicts the restoration (thanks to the Virgin) of the injured arm of St. John of Damascus, as a proof of his innocence of the charge of corresponding with the infidels.

In the fourteenth the Virgin, perhaps

straining a point in her infinite goodness, is delivering a thief who had always venerated her from the gallows, which he had richly deserved. And in the very next legend the Virgin, again lenient to her votaries, is justifying a clerk of doubtful life, and commanding him to be buried in consecrated ground, which, but for this gracious interposition, would have certainly been denied him.

The sixteenth is rather ludicrous and Ingoltsbian, for it represents the Virgin assisting a peculiarly cool painter to paint a most unpleasant and unwilling sitter, i.e. the Devil, and she is urging the disciple of St. Luke to paint him blacker and uglier than usual, which the Devil takes in very ill part, looking rather like Mr. Fildes' convict being photographed.

Number eighteen, now defaced, formerly represented how a robber knight, on the eve of being carried off by fiends, was saved in the very crisis by a prayer to the Virgin.

These curious paintings are of German or Flemish work, and, according to Mr. J. G. Waller and the best archæological authorities, "some of the compositions and many of the figures are very graceful."

Between the site of Hyde Abbey, Winchester, and the river Itchen lie some water meadows whose rank grass is intersected by silvery threads of runnels, and braided with osier beds. This is the scene of the legendary duel between that stout champion Guy, Earl of Warwick, and the Danish giant Colbrand. There was long pointed out a turret on the north wall of the city from whence King Athelstane anxiously watched the combat. As late as James I., Guy's axe was shown in the treasury of the cathedral. Formerly there was a carving of the great and little man on the city wall, which of course proves the truth of the story; and the meadow has ever since the fight gone by the name of the Danemede, though there are people unbelieving enough to say that this means in Saxon only "the meadow in the valley," but then there is always that sort of people. Moreover, if, as Milner says, there are two mutilated statues of a very tall and a very little man fighting, preserved in the chapel at Guy's Cliff, the duel is entirely proved.

The people who would disbelieve this story would probably also disbelieve the tradition that, in 1776, some workmen in Winchester Cathedral discovered the tomb of King Canute. There lay the King, with a circlet round his head, on his finger a jewelled ring, and in one hand

(to pay no one knows what fee at the gates of Death) a silver penny. It is true, there is a chest with Canute's supposed bones (one of six chests standing at the parclose of the presbytery) still. The antiquaries tell you that those chests were forced open by Cromwell's soldiers, who, in ribald contempt of royalty, living or dead, scattered the royal bones, with shouts, all over the cathedral, and, at the same time, ransacked the grey marble tomb of Rufus, but found only a pinch of snuff-like dust, some tarnished shreds of cloth of gold, a large gold ring, and a silver chalice.

CHILDHOOD IN JAPAN.

THE Japanese, as a race, are gradually attracting more and more attention all over the world, for, notwithstanding their former rigid exclusiveness, not only are they now admitting much of our western civilisation into their own country, but numbers of their youth are constantly being sent to Europe and the United States of America for educational purposes. Under these circumstances, and because for many centuries the character and habits of the nation have been to the outer world as a sealed book, we venture to hope that a brief account of some of their customs and usages, with respect to children, may not prove unacceptable to our readers.

A Japanese baby need be constitutionally strong, for it is by no means overdelicately nurtured; its mother frequently carries it out in the open-air in a state of complete nudity and with its head shaven. Amongst the lower orders, the women, when at work in the fields and on other occasions, may be seen with their infants fastened, almost like bundles, between their shoulders, so that they may be as little as possible in their way. In the houses they are left to their own devices much more than with us, and there is no need to be alarmed about their tumbling down-stairs, and eternally coming to grief against fenders, coal-boxes, mantelpieces, and similar objects of terror to a fond English mother, for such things do not exist in Japan. The thick mats, which constitute almost the only furniture of a Japanese house, are a splendid playground for the small atoms of humanity, for there they can roll and sprawl about to their hearts' delight, without any risk or fear of injury. There they play about with the

fat pug dogs and tailless cats, without any restraint and to the great benefit of their tiny frames. They are freely supplied with toys and other infantine amusements, as Japanese parents have the reputation of being very kind to their offspring.

One curious custom in connection with a Japanese baby is that some of the clothes that it first wears are made from a girdle which its mother has worn previous to its birth, the material being dyed sky blue for the purpose. The Record of Ceremonies* says that "twenty-four baby robes, twelve of silk and twelve of cotton, must be prepared (for the new comer); the hems must be dyed saffron colour;" and that when the child has been washed, "its body must be dried with a kerchief of fine cotton unhemmed." For the peace of mind of parents of moderate means, it is devoutly to be hoped that baby robes are less expensive in Japan than in England!

Accounts differ slightly as to when the Japanese baby receives its first name. Some say that it is on the seventh, while Humbert asserts that it is on the thirtieth day after its birth. According to the latter authority, there is no baptism of the child, properly so called; it is simply, in certain cases, presented in the temple, which its parents affect, and without any ceremony of purification. The father gives three names to the priest, and he writes them on separate pieces of paper, which are mixed together, and then, with certain incantatory forms, thrown up in the air. The first that falls is the chosen name. This is written out by the priest on consecrated paper and given to the child's parents to preserve. The priests, at these times, are usually very liberally dealt with by parents in the matter of presents, and they are expected to keep accurate registers of all the children who are thus presented in the temple. This is the only approach to a religious ceremony, in connection with the naming of a child. The occasion is celebrated by family visits and feasts, and the child receives certain presents, "among which," says Humbert, "two fans figure, in the case of a male, and a pot of pomade in that of a female child. The fans are precursors of swords, and the pomade is the presage of feminine charms. In both cases a packet of flax thread is added, signifying good wishes for a long life."

Mr. Mitford supplies a somewhat different version of the ceremony of naming

a child; for he quotes a translation of a Japanese MS., which says that "on the seventh day after its birth, the child receives its name; the ceremony is called the congratulations of the seventh night. On this day some one of the relations of the family, who holds an exalted position, either from his rank or virtues, selects a name for the child, which name he keeps until the time of the cutting of the forelock, when he takes the name which he is to bear as a man. The second name is called the 'cap-name,' which is compounded of syllables taken from an old name of the family, and from the name of the sponsor. If the sponsor afterwards change his name, his name-child must also change his name."

According to ancient custom, baby clothes ought to be left off on the seventy-fifth or the hundred-and-twentieth day after birth, and at the latter date the child (in theory, though not in practice) is weaned. At the ceremony which takes place on this day, "if the child be a boy, it is fed by a gentleman of the family; if a girl, by a lady." The account of the proceedings on this occasion, as given by the Japanese Record of Ceremonies, is decidedly amusing to the European mind, but is somewhat too long for quotation here.

When he is three years old, the Japanese infant is invested with a sword belt, and four years later with two diminutive swords, if he belong to the privileged class. The child's head is completely shaved until he is close upon four years old, and then three patches are grown, one at the back and one at each side. On this occasion the Record of Ceremonies ordains that "a large tray, on which are a comb, scissors, paper-string, a piece of string for tying the hair in a knot, cotton wool, and the bit of dried fish or seaweed which accompanies presents, one of each, and seven rice straws—these seven articles must be prepared." In another year's time the child is put into the loose trousers peculiar to the privileged class, and he is then presented with "a dress of ceremony, on which are embroidered storks and tortoises (emblems of longevity; the stork is said to live a thousand years, the tortoise ten thousand), fir-trees (which being evergreen, and not changing their colour, are emblematic of an unchangingly virtuous heart), and bamboos (emblematic of an upright and straight mind)." Soon after the child has reached

* See Mitford's Tales of Old Japan. Vol. 2. Appendix.

his fifteenth year, a fortunate day is chosen on which the forelock is cut off, and at this period, being considered a man, he is entrusted with swords of ordinary size; and on this occasion in particular great family festivities and rejoicings take place in honour of the auspicious event. The lad then comes of age, and, casting away childish things, adopts the dress of a grown-up man in every particular. Japanese youths are said to be quite equal to the occasion, and, even at this early age, to adapt themselves most readily to the habits of manhood.

At the stages in his life which we have alluded to, the child has a sponsor, and certain wine-drinking customs and prescribed festivities have to be carefully attended to.

Some Japanese must have a string of names, awful to contemplate, if strict custom be always adhered to; for, besides the name which he receives shortly after his birth, Humbert tells us that "he will take a second on attaining his majority, a third at his marriage, a fourth when he shall be appointed to any public function, a fifth when he shall ascend in rank or in dignity, and so on until the last, the name which shall be given him after his death, and inscribed upon his tomb—that by which his memory shall be held sacred from generation to generation."

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LXVIII. SATISFACTION.

I FOUND myself again in the street, outside the gaming house. How pure and fresh the night air seemed! What did it matter that it was raining heavily?

"Are you hurt, Duke? Have you lost anything?" asked Mole, panting asthmatically after his exertions. "Here, come under shelter. We need not get wet through, anyhow."

He drew me under an archway leading to a stable-yard, some fifty yards' distance from the scene of our late adventures.

My toes had been much trodden on, and I felt that my legs and ankles were bruised with kicks. The bow of my cravat had been wrested round to the nape of my neck, and my clothes were soiled and crumpled and even torn in places. Some unfriendly or unwitting hand had thrust down my hat nearly over my eyes, seriously

to the injury of its gloss and form. But, otherwise, I had not suffered. My purse and watch were safe.

"It was fast and furious while it lasted," said Mole, presently, when he had recovered his breath a little. "There are always men in those places who are ready to make the best or the worst of any little disturbance."

"A little disturbance!"

"I only escaped the Baker's fist by half an inch," he continued. "His blow landed on the edge of the door-post. I hoped he liked the result. Some one, I know, felt for my watch, but abandoned the attempt. Perhaps he guessed the truth—that the article is not quite so valuable as it looks. There was a precious set there to-night. Who were they all? My dear boy, how should I know? Every sort and condition. Some I recognised, but not all; that could scarcely be. Gentlemen—you could see that for yourself. Yes, and blackguards, too; very much so, indeed. Honest and dishonest, especially the latter. You see the green table is like the hunting-field—it brings classes together who would not, perhaps, meet much otherwise. It certainly has that merit. And so, after a fashion, it promotes social intercourse—also fights, and robberies, and scoundrelism generally. A precious set, as I said. The ring was well represented, and the turf; the King's Bench Prison, the Fleet, and the Insolvent Court; St. James's, and St. Giles's, too, I shouldn't wonder. The Army and—no, not the Church, perhaps, on this occasion, although there's no knowing. For the Fine Arts—were not we there: you and I, Duke, and Sir George? And the peerage—but you saw, of course. Sir George had him by the throat. 'Don't strangle the man!' You heard them cry that? An old quarrel, to my thinking. Sir George was there on purpose to meet that man. That's the fact; you may be sure of it. He could have gone there for no other reason."

Was this so? I asked myself. Indeed, it seemed very probable.

"Hush!" He brought me more beneath the shadow of the archway. Two other refugees, apparently from the gaming-house, had also sought shelter from the rain. They seemed wholly unconscious of our presence, as they stood together conversing in a low tone.

"I know the tall one," Mole whispered. "Colonel Delmar of the Coldstreams; a

friend of Sir George's. The other man is a stranger to me. Keep quiet."

"It's an unlucky affair," I could hear one say. "Most unlucky, all things considered. It can only bring discredit on all concerned. But there really seems to be no alternative."

"Apology in such a case is out of the question, of course," said the other man presently. He spoke with an Irish accent.

"Then the thing must go on. A blow was struck, no doubt."

"Blows were exchanged, as I understand. I did not see all that happened. It was a sort of drunken brawl, I take it. And then the place—the circumstances. It's a very awkward business." Their voices sunk to a whisper.

Mole stole cautiously forward to hear more, if possible. The colloquy lasted some minutes further; but little of it was audible where I stood, owing, in some measure, to the plashing noise of the rain, which had increased in violence. Then, a hackney coach passed. The two men hailed and entered it, leaving us still in shadow.

"There's to be a duel, Duke. So much is certain. You can easily guess who are to be the principals in the affair. Sir George and Lord Overbury. So far as I could learn, the details are not arranged. At any rate, the meeting will not be for more than four-and-twenty hours. The place——" He hesitated, and seemed, I thought, trying to read my face in the darkness. "But no matter for the place," he resumed, hurriedly.

"They did not mention it?"

"I could hear nothing, very distinctly," he replied—with an air of evasion, as it seemed to me. "And now, my young friend, I think you must have seen about enough of what's called 'life' for one while, and had better make the best of your way home, and get to bed."

"You're sure there's to be a duel, Mole?"

"That may be taken for granted. After what has happened, a duel is a matter of necessity. So the code of honour rules—if I know anything about it, and I don't know very much, perhaps. But gentlemen must differ at times; and then, I suppose, they must proceed to settle their differences in the old established way. Who—what—is to prevent them? Not you or I, most certainly. The law? Well they risk that. When the law stands in people's way, they're apt to climb over it, or break through it, or get round it, as

best they may. The law must take care of itself in such case, and avenge the violence done it—if it knows how."

In those days duelling was judged to be more reasonable and defensible than now it is. It was already declining, perhaps; but public opinion had not, as yet, pronounced very decidedly upon the subject. It was still held by many to be a sort of safeguard of civilisation, promoting good breeding and decorous manners.

The thought of a duel between Sir George and Lord Overbury disquieted me gravely. Knowing what I knew of the relations existing between them, however, it seemed a natural and inevitable thing. It did not occur to me to disapprove it. Still less was I prompted to invoke the action of the law with a view to its hindrance, even had such a step been possible to me. My own feeling against Lord Overbury was most bitter. That his misdeeds merited the severest chastisement, I was well assured. Indeed, boy as I was, with few chivalric pretensions, perhaps, or little superfluous courage, I was stirred by an ardent longing to stand in Sir George's place, and inflict punishment upon the man whose conduct to my mother had been so shameful and so cruel.

I quitted Mole with an understanding that we were to meet again very speedily.

I lay awake for some hours waiting to hear the re-entrance of Sir George. He did not return to Hafley-street, however, and Mole did not re-appear until the evening of the next day.

I was nervous and anxious, oppressed with a dread of impending trouble, tortured with doubts and misgivings. I hoped to see Sir George; yet with no very clear intention as to what I should say or do if we met. I could scarcely expect him to speak to me of the coming duel. Yet he might do so; knowing that his life was about to be imperilled, something he might wish to say to me, something he might have to charge me with, if but a message, a kind word or a tender pressure of his hand. But he never came. I began to feel at last that I was indeed his son, loving him as a son should. If this duel were to involve his death! I trembled at the thought.

The evening brought Mole. He looked grave and his manner was unusually staid. He could not come sooner, he said. He had been much occupied all day long. Yes, he had something to tell me if I would only be patient. The duel was to be on

the morrow—early—as soon as it was light.

He had been speaking in a whisper, but he checked himself suddenly to go to the door of the studio, listen on the landing outside, and make sure that there was no one to overhear him. Then he resumed:—

At Chalk Farm. Was Sir George a good shot, did I think? Probably not. At any rate he had been practising for some hours, so Mole had ascertained, at a Shooting Gallery in the Westminster Bridge Road. In Mole's opinion, he had never before fired a pistol. Mole admitted, however, that he might be mistaken on that subject.

For the sake of convenience and to avert suspicion, he was sharing Colonel Delmar's lodgings, in the Albany. It was not likely that he would return to Harley-street until after the duel.

This was the sum of Mole's information. Of Lord Overbury's movements he had learnt nothing. He mentioned, moreover, that his lordship had taken part in many duels, and was reputed to be a dangerous adversary. Still it was probable that his intemperate method of life would affect the certainty of aim for which he had once been famous.

We arranged to proceed in the direction of Chalk Farm in the morning—so as to learn, as soon as might be, the issue of the duel. To be in readiness to start, Mole improvised a bed in the upper studio—making free use of its draperies and hangings.

For hours I could not sleep. I was still hoping to see Sir George again—for ever fancying that I heard him moving to and fro in the lower chambers of the house. It was but fancy.

Some uneasy rest came to me at last. It was still dark, although there were glimmerings of early morning twilight about the room when Mole entered to rouse me. He was but half-dressed; I could just note the white of his shirt-sleeves, and I could hear the rattle of his braces trailing behind him. He was bare-footed, I knew, by the padding sound of his steps on the floor.

"It's precious cold, Duke," he said, with chattering teeth, "and there's a thick fog; but it will be clearer in the open, I dare say. Make haste and get up. It's about time we were off. However, if they've got this fog out towards Hampstead, they can't do much. I don't see my way to breakfast. We must manage that

by-and-by, as well as we can. I've got a flask of brandy with me, that's one comfort. We shall have to walk, you know. A coach is a matter of chance at this hour. I wish I'd thought of that overnight. One always forgets something."

We started northward, hurrying along the silent streets, in which the lamps were still burning, and beating our hands together to warm them. The ground was white with frost. We crossed the New Road, and made for the pasture land, which had been partly enclosed and planted to form the Regent's Park.

The fog was still very thick, but there seemed promise of its clearing as we left the houses behind us; there were even now and then gleams of hazy sunlight discernible towards the east.

"We're late, I fear," said Mole, as we heard the clock of Marylebone church striking the hour, the thick atmosphere muffling the sound. "We must push on. I think we're in the right path, but this mist is very bewildering."

The ground was rough and broken, and our progress was far from rapid. We said but little. Nervous anxiety and terror kept me silent. I could only question Mole now and then about our road. It was certain, from consideration of the time that had elapsed, and the fact that we had not ceased to move on, that we must be near to the scene of action.

"We've borne too far to the left, I'm thinking," said Mole, pausing for a moment. He breathed with difficulty, and was evidently much fatigued; he removed his hat to dab his forehead with his handkerchief. "It seems pretty clear down yonder. Are those figures moving about under that row of trees?"

We were crossing a field of rank grass, having forced a passage through the hedge, and jumped a ditch. I seemed to be back at Purrington!

The land was marshy, with merely a thin frozen crust of firm surface. I found my feet sinking in to my ankles.

"Surely that's Chalk Farm," said Mole. He pointed to an object some two hundred yards in front of us.

The sun feebly pierced the mist for a moment. I could just discern a white-washed gabled house, with what looked like a large black barn behind it. There were trees on either side, with sloping ground below.

"We're just at the foot of the hill. Hush! What's that noise? There are

voices behind us. We are followed. Keep close to the hedge, and don't speak."

I obeyed this injunction. Two or three men ran past quite close to us. I could plainly hear their hard breathing as they went by.

"Peelers!" said Mole. That was the nickname of the new police in those days.

"We must take care or we shall get into trouble. Come on as quietly as you can."

Just then we heard pistol shots on the low ground to our left, closely followed by much shouting—and afterwards, from some distance, the sounds of the creaking of harness and the rattling of coach wheels. Then all was silent again.

"It's over," said Mole. "We're too late; but we may learn something a little further on. The fog's cleared off the lower land there. They must have fought just under that line of trees yonder."

CHAPTER LXIX. CHALK FARM.

As we advanced we met the police returning. They had with them a prisoner. I pressed forward anxiously. But I soon perceived that the man was neither Lord Overbury nor my father.

"They felt bound to do something, I suppose," Mole said, in a low voice. "So they've captured Jack Rumsey. What brought him here, I wonder? But perhaps we need not ask. Curiosity. It seems certain that the others have got clear away. But what was the good of taking Jack? He'll be discharged, of course; or held to bail to answer a charge of aiding and abetting a breach of the peace—something of that sort. But they can't prove anything against him, really. Perhaps he came moved by fidelity to his patron, Lord Overbury—to help him, after a rough fashion, if occasion arose. It's possible. We shall know more about it, by-and-by."

The police passed on with the Baker in custody. We watched them until they were out of sight, and then descended to the row of trees, close under whose shelter, as we decided, the duel had taken place.

There was no one to be seen. The spot, sheltered by the slope of the hill on one side, and screened by the trees on the other, was now quite deserted. But on a little natural platform of smooth ground we discovered footmarks. The white frost on the turf had been disturbed in places. Here, some twelve paces apart, the combatants had been posted, probably; there

were traces of measurement by footsteps upon the grass. Here, no doubt, the seconds had stood close under the shadow of a leafless oak. And further on were the dints of coach wheels upon the elastic ground.

"Just the very place for a duel," said Mole, reflectively. "Many a man has got his quietus here. But no harm has been done this morning, as I understand the matter." The scene appeared to have a sort of fascination for him. He assumed the attitude of a duellist; standing erect sideways, and making every effort to reduce his form to the slenderest proportions possible. Then he went through the action of slowly raising an imaginary pistol, keeping his elbow close to his side and firing at a supposititious antagonist. He even imitated with his mouth the "clicking" sound of the lock.

"I have never been 'out,'" he said, gravely, "but I haven't a doubt that I should be able to comport myself 'upon the ground' with extreme propriety. You see there's a good deal of dramatic effect about a duel; and so far, I've had just the right sort of training. But you're looking very white and faint, Duke, my lad; do you know that? It's been a little too much for you, I dare say. And then, of course, you're anxious about Sir George. I'm always forgetting that he's your father. He forgot it so long, himself; and I'm sure you must have a difficulty sometimes in remembering it. We'll go on to Chalk Farm. We may learn something more there. At any rate, we can get breakfast. I've no doubt. And really this duelling's exhausting work: involving getting up in the middle of the night, and a long walk across country on a cold morning. I was wondering what was the matter with me. I've discovered now—I'm hungry! Look, Duke, how the sun's breaking up the mist; it's like rolling from the stage a scene that's done with—or like wiping off a scumble of paint from a picture. Isn't it now? Cheer up, Duke. Lean on me if you're tired. I've quite got my breath again—and it's but a step from here to the house."

We learnt little at Chalk Farm—in part a small farm-house and in part a rural tavern—finding no great willingness to afford us any information. Pistol shots had been heard from the lower ground, but nothing had been seen, we were told, owing to the density of the mist. A substantial breakfast was set before us, to

which Mole did every justice. For my part, I was too sad and sick at heart to eat.

We remained at Chalk Farm for an hour or two. The sun had now risen, and the day was very bright and pleasant. We looked on London stretching out below us beyond the intervening expanse of green fields, with the dome of St. Paul's rising above it, as though built in the clouds. The place was very still, save only from the cheery sounds and echoes of farm labour. In a field behind the house the ploughshare was at work, designing in rich brown hues its regular pattern of ridge and furrow. I remember tossing crumbs from the window of the inn parlour for the behoof of a robin red-breast.

From one of the servants of the house Mole elicited that, in the early morning, two gentlemen had remained for some time hidden behind the farm stables; that then, finding all safe, they had stolen away across the fields to the west of Hampstead. The description given did not enable us to connect these certainly with the duel, still less to identify either as Lord Overbury or Sir George. But it seemed likely that, whoever they were, they felt themselves implicated in the affair, and were avoiding the observation of the police.

We quitted Chalk Farm, and, striking into the high road, bailed the mid-day stage-coach from Hampstead, and returned to town. Mole promised to obtain all the information he could, and to meet me in the evening at his favourite tavern, the Red Bull, in Vinegar Yard.

I passed a miserable day enough. I hoped every moment that Sir George would return to Harley-street. But he never came. His absence was indeed explicable enough. A policeman had called enquiring for him: withdrawing, however, when he found his errand vain. He continued, however, as I afterwards ascertained, to watch the house for some days.

A mysterious paragraph in an evening newspaper invited public attention to the "hostile encounter," as it was called, at Chalk Farm. The initials only of the parties concerned were furnished, but these conveyed sufficient information.

Mole had something to tell. He had seen Jack Rumsey, who had been bailed by his friends, and who was subsequently—although there was really no substantial charge against him relative to the present instance, whatever his former infringements of the law might have been—bound over to keep the peace for six months.

The Baker had, as a bystander, seen the duel from a little distance. He had accidentally learnt the arrangements from his patron on the previous night. Whatever his evidence may have been worth on such a question, he described Lord Overbury's conduct throughout the duel as perfectly unimpeachable. He had come upon the ground in a state of strict sobriety, and had behaved like a thorough gentleman, placing himself entirely in the hands of his second, Major O'Gorman, as it seemed, an Irish Member of Parliament. "I know 'un well," the Baker had stated; "his lordship could be a real gentleman when a' chose, and a' could be a right-down blackguard, too. Well, this turn a' were a gentleman, and no mistake. No one's ever made doubt of's pluck; but of's manners I've oft heerd folks question. I can't abide fire-arms myself, and wouldn't face a pistol for any money. But 'twer different with his lordship, as 'tis, may be, with most gentlefolks. There was ne'er a fault to find with 'un"

The duellists had fired together upon a given signal. To Jack Rumsey's thinking—but he admitted that he had been half-hidden by a tree, lest he should be seen, and for fear he should himself be hit, and, moreover, the fog had still been thick—Lord Overbury had fired in the air. His adversary's aim had been direct. "As cold and calm as ice a' were," said the Baker. "Never saw such a man before. I shut my eyes when the shooting come. I always did when a lad, trusted with an old musket and scaring the rooks off Farmer Jobling's wheat."

Lord Overbury had been hit in the shoulder, but not seriously, it was believed. Jack saw the doctor, as he supposed, run out to him from under the shelter of the trees. Then came a cry of alarm. The police were seen approaching across the fields. The party dispersed, Lord Overbury moving without difficulty to a hackney coach that had been in attendance at a little distance. The other party went off in another direction. In his alarm and confusion Jack had hesitated, and finally taking a wrong turning, found himself in the arms of the police. That was all he had to tell. It was the first duel he had ever witnessed, he said, and it should be the last. He greatly preferred a prize fight, holding it to be a much fairer way of settling a dispute. The best man won and took the battle money.

The duel occasioned some stir and com-

ment, but after a little while it seemed to escape from public attention. Duels were not then of unusual occurrence. And probably some other matter—though I forget what now—came presently to engross regard. The general mind is sieve-like, and cannot hold much for any length of time.

From all I could ascertain, it appeared clear that the principals and their seconds had quitted the country, designing probably to remain abroad until all danger of their arrest had ceased. It was thought that after a certain lapse of time the authorities would not concern themselves further about the matter. It was possible, of course, that the duel might be renewed on the other side of the channel; but no breach of English law would be involved in that proceeding. And if, as Jack Rumsey had stated, Lord Overbury was really wounded, the seconds might reasonably hold that a due measure of satisfaction had been obtained by his adversary.

I remained in the house in Harley-street. All who enquired there for Sir George were informed that he had left England for the Continent, and that the period of return was uncertain.

One morning I discovered Propert busily engaged in cording a large box. He was startled by my approach, and his manner struck me as confused and embarrassed.

"Well, the fact is, sir," he explained rather sullenly, "the game's up. Sir George won't come back. One must look after one's own interests. I'm going into the country for a bit of a holiday, that's the truth, sir, and after that, I must see about getting another service. So I've packed up my things, sir, all in readiness, and the carrier's going to call for them, this evening. I've nothing in the box, I do assure you, sir,"—and here he tightened its cording—"that isn't strictly my own. For that matter, if you suspect me, sir, you're quite welcome to make a search." Here he took care to turn the lock, however, and to thrust the key into his pocket. "There's nothing in it, really, but rubbish and trifles, though it seems heavy, I don't mind owning. But you see, sir, I've been a good many years with Sir George, and in service things accumulate somehow. Sir George was always liberal as to his cast

clothes, and articles of dress—he was inclined to be fanciful and extravagant in that way, sir, and if a thing didn't quite suit his taste—a waistcoat, or a pair of silk stockings, or dress shoes, or what not—he'd say, 'Here, Propert, take this out of my sight, and do what you like with it; only get rid of it, and don't let me set eyes on it any more.' I've heard him say that a many times, sir. But the things don't amount to much, sir, after all. Servants' perquisites are worth little enough when they come to be dealt with. It's surprising the fuss as some folks make about them when all's considered. Bless you, there's nothing but trifles and rubbish here." And he gave the box a scornful kick.

I did not question his statement. Yet when afterwards many small articles of value, the property of Sir George, were missing, I could not restrain a suspicion that they had departed in Propert's possession. Otherwise how could the absence be accounted for of the gold snuff-box, presented by Cardinal Gonsalvi; the diamond rings, received from the Pope, from the Emperor of Russia, and the King of Denmark; the bonbonnière of precious stones set in gold, given by Charles the Tenth, and other tributes to Sir George's merits and services awarded him by royal and illustrious personages? In any case these vanished about this time, and were not subsequently recovered.

"I'll wish you good bye, then, Mr. Nightingale, if you'll allow me, sir," said Propert, as he departed. "And if I may make bold to offer you a word of advice, sir, I'd say: don't stay here long yourself, sir,—unless, of course, you don't mind any little property you may have here being seized, sir. For—take my word for it, sir, there'll be another execution in here before very long, sir. Folks have got wind of Sir George's affairs, and its wonderful how greedy some of them is after money, sir. They'd sell up their own father, I do believe, sir, if he be but owed them a trifle. Good bye, sir, and my humble duty to you, Mr. Nightingale."

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGERED," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXV. UNDER HER THUMB.

WHAT could it mean—what could it portend—that the woman of all others in the world who had shown herself to be Mr. Hulet's enemy, and whom he himself seemed to shrink from and avoid like a pestilence, should have written him a letter? Evy strove, though it was hard to do so, to put herself and her own wrongs out of the question, and regard the matter as respected her uncle only. In the first place, what was the meaning of this mention of money? Was it possible that Judith had offered them pecuniary assistance? If this had been done at the time when their misfortunes had occurred there would have been nothing unseemly, nor, considering the source from which she had derived her wealth, even surprising in such a proposal, although at that very time Evy well remembered her uncle's passionate exclamation of disgust at the notion of receiving such assistance. But that now, after the cruel treachery which she had exhibited, Judith should venture to insult them both by a pecuniary gift was a reflection that brought the colour to Evy's very forehead. And yet, what context could these words have which did not imply as much? Moreover, had not her uncle mentioned, but a few minutes ago, that he had the means of moving from Dunwich, if not of living elsewhere. And who could have supplied those means, or offered to do so, but Judith herself? Doubtless, if Mr. Hulet had stooped, or showed an inclination to do so, to accept help from such a hand, it was for Evy's own

an idea, even in that supreme moment of humiliation and shame, she forbore to think harshly of her uncle. At the very worst, he had only been mistaken, weak, and fond; he had judged that the presence of Captain Heyton and his wife at Dunwich would be insupportable to her, and at all costs—at the sacrifice even of self-respect—he had decided to remove her from their neighbourhood. She had only to tell him how entirely he had misread her feelings—what pain and shame he was inflicting upon her by such a course of conduct, and he would cast back this insulting gift in the teeth of the giver.

He was returning for her decision even now; she heard his quick, yet faltering, step coming through the parlour, and his hesitating hand upon the door, and had but just time to cast the piece of paper on the floor, when he once more stood before her.

"Well, my darling; you have thought it over?" said he, tenderly.

"Yes, uncle."

There was something in her tone, not only of calmness and decision, but of rigidity, which at once attracted his notice. He looked at her with anxiety, almost with alarm, ere he continued—

"I knew it must be so, love. We could not remain here, of course, now the Heytons have returned. It would be most painful for you—for both of us, indeed—and not, in fact, in good taste——"

Evy was thunderstruck.

"Uncle Angelo, you astonish me," cried she. "Whose fault is it that they are coming here? Not ours, but theirs!"

"It is their home, Evy."

"And is not this our home?—as much our home as Dunwich Park is Judith's?"

face, as she had noticed it to do before at the mention of that name. He opened his mouth to speak; but no words came.

"Besides, uncle," continued she, "you knew as much as that when you agreed to come here."

"She—they had decided to live abroad, you know," gasped he. "I never thought that the old lord would have received them."

"That may be so; but it was always liable to happen. We have ourselves, of late, been expecting nothing less; and yet until this morning you have never spoken of our being driven away from hence by such an event. Have you any reason, uncle, for this sudden purpose beyond the tender solicitude which I know you always feel upon my account?"

"Yes, Evy, yes," answered the old man nervously. "I consult my own feelings also when I say that it is best to leave this place."

"What, to give up our home, our means of existence—I say nothing of our self-respect, of the moral cowardice which such an act implies——"

"Hush, hush, dear," interrupted Mr. Hulet, hurriedly. "You are going too fast. We are not without means; I possess—or, at least, I can procure sufficient money to live elsewhere, humbly, it is true, but——"

"But from whom?" broke in Evy, with indignation. "Is it possible, Uncle Angelo, that you can stoop to accept such aid as has been offered you this morning." Here he raised his hand appealingly, and gazed at her with such a deprecating air, as at any other time would have melted her heart within her; but the tide of her feelings was too strong, and hurried her away. "See, I found this on the floor"—here she picked up the scrap of paper that she had thrown down as he entered the porch—a piece of a letter in Judith's hand;

*"you shall have it—
leave Dunwich——"*

"No, this is not the same, but its fellow; the other was"—here she picked that up also, and fitted the two together—"Great heaven! what does this mean? *Want money—you shall have it, but you must leave Dunwich.* Does she dare to threaten us, then? Is this infamous girl, not content with her falsehood and treachery, bent on driving us from the poor home that charity has given us, because she feels our presence here a reproach to her?"

"Yes, Evy, yes," was the old man's unexpected reply.

He had sank down shuddering upon the opposite bench with an expression of helpless despondency. "When she commands I must needs obey her."

His tone was not one of mere deprecation nor even of shame; its abject degradation and despair froze Evy's blood within her. She had long suspected, as we know, that Judith was in possession of some fact that led her to believe—and the disclosure of which might lead others to do so—that the late Mrs. Hulet had died by her own hand. Was it possible that she was holding this over the widow in *terrorem*, and that he, though conscious of his own innocence, was submitting through fear of public opinion to ignominious terms of her dictation? When she called to mind Judith's words, at the moment when she was about to give her evidence before the coroner; the conversation she had overheard between her and Mr. Hulet in the garden; the insolent independence of Judith's manner towards her uncle after his wife's death; and finally that remaining sentence she had just read, and of which she had now no difficulty in guessing the completion—"if you want money you shall have it, but you must leave Dunwich"—she could doubt no longer.

All these things convinced her that her unhappy uncle's sensitiveness to opinion, and perhaps remorse for his matrimonial disagreements, had rendered him a prey to Judith, and that he did not dare to brave a revelation—which though it might be founded on a mistake (and Evy firmly believed that it was so), yet for him would have all the damning force of fact. Evy's indignation against Judith was excessive. She was resolved, if arguments of hers could effect it, that her uncle should not budge an inch at her rival's insolent command; but she foresaw that the task of persuasion would be difficult. The first thing to be done was, plainly, to discover the limits of this woman's power over him.

"Dear Uncle Angelo," said she, in quiet but earnest tones, "when you tell me that you must needs obey Judith, I cannot but conclude that she has taken some cruel advantage of you. I am quite sure that it is not *right* that you should be in a position of subserviency to any such person. Now what is not *right*, we ought not, no matter what sacrifice is entailed upon us by resistance, to endure."

He shook his head and groaned, "Alas! there is no help for it, Evy."

"Nay, there is always help against wrong-doers, if we ask it of God," answered Evy, gently; "and He often sends it through very humble instruments. If you would give me your confidence, dear uncle, in this sad matter, perhaps even my poor wits might be of service to you. There must be some means of extrication from the net which this woman has so craftily cast about you; you cannot deserve to be her slave, you know."

"You are wrong, my poor child," groaned the old man; "I do deserve it. Would to Heaven that I could say that I did not."

This was no little shock to Evy; her mind had hitherto refused to credit her uncle with actual blame with respect to his wife's death, whatever of petulant impatience he might have to answer for in his conduct towards her; but this confession that he "deserved" to be in the power of Judith Mercer argued something far more serious and deplorable. At the same time she knew him to have a very tender conscience in all things relating to the event in question, and it was quite possible that he might be taking an exaggerated view of what had, after all, been but a weakness.

"Of our own deserts, Uncle Angelo," pleaded she, "we are few of us good judges. Most of us, it is true, think ourselves better than we are, but others, through sensitiveness, or on account of some calamity that has accidentally occurred through their mere errors, are unnecessarily remorseful."

Here he lifted up his face to look at her; she fancied that a little light was gleaming in the gloom that overpowered it; was it possible that her words had let it in?

"I have heard Mr. Mellish say, dear uncle," continued she, earnestly, and watching him with keen attention, "that though we cannot exaggerate our sins to God, it is very easy to do so to ourselves; that there is such a thing as being too self-conscious. At all events, of one thing we may be certain, that base persons who have come to the knowledge of our sins or weaknesses, and who are our enemies, will exaggerate them for us, and do their best to get us punished for them, or still worse, if they have the chance, will turn such knowledge to their own advantage by the menace of disclosing it."

Mr. Hulet shuddered and closed his

eyes. That she was on the right tack she felt convinced. It was plain, indeed, that her words had little comfort for him; but to comfort him was not so much her object as to awaken his sense of self-respect, and to rouse him to resistance; to drag him, as it were, from beneath the wheels of degradation, and place him on his feet, erect, if not defiant.

"I have heard and read, dear Uncle Angelo," continued she, "that of all weaknesses, that is the most calamitous which induces us, through fear of the menaces of such wicked persons, to become their slaves; for though the error which has placed us in their power may be in reality venial, we are often rendered culpable by obedience to their cruel caprices: and in any case, that it is better to let them do their worst at first—to let them divulge what they know—than to live on in an abject and submissive state; to submit to the extortionate interest, as it were, which we pay for a debt that is never discharged, and for which we are always liable."

"Evy, Evy, do not torture me," exclaimed Mr. Hulet, suddenly: "all this is true, as none—God help me—can be more aware of than myself; but I am bound hand and foot, and cannot stir a finger save by another's leave. Death, Death only can release me from her bonds, and Death would be welcome!"

He was silent for a moment, while Evy looked at him silently too, with terrified amazement. "Come, child," cried he, starting to his feet, "we are losing time, and this woman, who is more peremptory than any crowned tyrant, bids us depart quickly."

His face had a vacant look, his eyes a wandering stare, that she had never observed in him before. His limbs, too, trembled, as though ague or palsy shook them.

Dreadfully alarmed, and only sustained by the thought that it was near the hour at which Dr. Burne almost always dropped in at Seymour's Home, on his usual morning round—staying twice as long to chat with his former patient as he had done of old when he was paid for his visits—Evy besought her companion to sit down. "If we are to go, dear uncle, it is certain you will not have strength to do so, if you excite yourself thus."

Moved by this entreaty, or, perhaps, because his strength was unequal to sustain him on his feet, Mr. Hulet resumed his seat.

"There is no such very great hurry," to be sure, he murmured: "we have still some days to turn about in; she will not be home till Saturday, she writes."

There was something in that spectacle of the abject submission of her unhappy uncle, in the insolence of the message quoted, and perhaps in the use of the term "Home," which Judith had applied to the place which ought to have called Evy mistress rather than herself, which roused Evy's indignation to the uttermost.

"It is a degradation to hear such words!" exclaimed she, passionately. "I love you, Uncle Angelo, more than my life, for I would lay that down to serve you, but I love honour better. Go, if you will—for I will not believe you must—from Dunwich at the bidding of this worthless woman; but as for me, I will not go. She has betrayed my friendship, wronged me more than ever woman wronged her sister, but she shall not put her foot on my neck. And here I stay."

"Oh, Evy, Evy, you don't know what you say," answered Mr. Hulet, pleadingly; "it is your presence here, not mine, that she objects to; she hates you, and she dreads to look upon you."

"Then I remain here," said Evy, firmly; "I remain here all the more, to defy and daunt her."

"But the penalty," pleaded the old man, in agonised tones; "the penalty to me, dear Evy, if she tells my secret."

"What is your secret? Surely I am as safe a repository of it as she who now possesses it. What is it, uncle?"

"Don't ask me, darling; for Heaven's sake don't ask me," answered he, clasping his hands imploringly; "to know it myself, and to know another knows it—even though she be one whose good opinion I value not—that is bad enough; but to think that my own Evy, my pet, my darling, should share such knowledge, and therefore no longer love me! No, no—think what you will of me—I am safe then; but tell you, Evy, I never will."

"But the penalty, uncle," urged the wretched girl; "at least tell me the extent of that. What can the penalty be, out of fear of which you are prepared to give up this quiet home, and friends, and self-respect?"

"I'll tell you, then," groaned Mr. Hulet; "I'll whisper it in your ear, and then you'll understand that we must go, and will never speak about the dreadful thing again. You know my picture in the

room yonder; our ancestor with the headman's axe, and the poor king; he was a bad man, but he suffered cruelly for it. I am sorry I ever spoke of him as I used to do. It's a frightful thing, whether one is innocent or guilty, Evy, to be brought out on a scaffold to be put to death. Well, that is what may happen to me!"

"But you are innocent," cried Evy, clinging to his coat, and questioning him with feverish eyes. "Oh, pray, dear uncle, tell me—no matter what may happen—that you at least are innocent."

"Alas, Evy," groaned the old man, his chin falling forward on his breast, "I cannot say I am."

CHAPTER XXXVI. PROSTRATE.

"LET us go: I am quite ready, let us go," were the faint but impatient words that Evy Carthew spoke, after that dreadful revelation which Mr. Hulet had made to her. She was no longer in the stone porch where she had heard it, but in her own little room in bed, though in her eagerness for flight, and solicitude for her uncle's safety, she was at first unconscious of the change of scene. Even when the kindly tones of Dr. Burne, who was sitting by her pillow, replied to her, humouring her wandering fancy as he deemed it after his professional fashion, "Yes, yes, dear girl; and so you shall, all in good time," she did not recognise his voice, but answered, "How can you hint of delay, uncle. Let us start to-day, no matter whither, so long as we leave Dunwich." Then the door opened, and a low and broken voice inquired, "Is there any change, Doctor?"

"A little, my dear Hulet," was the quiet reply. "Her speech is stronger, but her mind is still astray."

Then Evy knew that she had been ill; how ill, she could only guess from her sense of personal weakness, which was intense; the question that more interested her was, How long? How much precious time, which should have been spent in preparation for departure, had been lost through her weakness? her inability to withstand the shock of her uncle's awful confession?

For the actual facts of the case began to dawn upon her; she must have fallen down, in some sort of swoon or fit, and been carried insensible to her room. Her head ached sadly, although she had a bandage of some kind about it, which felt soft and cool.

"Evy."

She opened her half-shut eyes, though with some difficulty, like one who pushes against a door that slowly "gives;" Mr. Hulet was leaning over her with haggard anxious face.

"Evy, darling: do you know me?"

"Yes, uncle."

"Thank God, thank God," he murmured, "there is still something to thank God for."

"Have I been long ill, uncle?"

"Yes, dear—lie still, lie still, my darling," added he earnestly, as she made a piteous effort to lift her head, "or your wound will bleed afresh, and I shall lose you yet!"

"But the time, the precious time, uncle. Can I not be moved to-day?"

"Not to-day, darling; in a few days, when you are stronger."

"But did she not say she would be here on Saturday?"

"Hush, hush," he whispered: "Dr. Burne is here, my child. Do not be impatient, for that will only retard your recovery. She must hear of what has happened, and will make allowances."

Evy closed her eyes, and uttered a low moan. It had been wrung from her by the sharp sense of humiliation, but the Doctor attributed it to another cause.

"You must not talk to her any longer at present, Hulet—she is too weak; she may be safely left now, though Mrs. Mellish is only waiting for my report to come and sit with her; in the meantime do you go to bed and get some rest, for I can see you need it."

Yes, indeed, he did need it; Evy could see that, as the old man once more bent down to kiss the cheek she had not the strength to turn towards him. And yet in his white and wasted features there was a look of grateful joy, that almost awoke hope within her.

"Have I been very ill," she whispered.

"At Death's door, my darling; but thanks be to Heaven the crisis is over. God has not utterly forsaken me after all."

So it was on her own poor account alone that her uncle had cause for congratulation. Other things were as they were. The cloud was still hanging over him as before, destined to darken both their days. And what if it were to burst!

"To be brought out on a scaffold and be put to death—that is what might happen to me."

These words sounded in her ears over

and over again, as she lay upon her sick bed alone, with the persistency of the ticking of a clock, only to be varied at times by another sentence: "Innocent? Alas, Evy, I cannot say I am."

They were "never to speak about the dreadful thing again;" that had been agreed upon between them; but she could none the more forbear to think about it; indeed she could think of nothing else. To be put to death upon a scaffold was to be punished for Murder; no less. But had Uncle Angelo then, over whom this penalty impended, committed murder? It was as reasonable to suppose yonder sun, the fountain of light, to be a black and frozen mass (simply because it had a cloud upon it) as to credit one so gentle and warm-hearted as Mr. Hulet with so heinous a crime. Her common sense and experience revolted from so monstrous a supposition, and made alliance against it with her love and gratitude. On the other hand, he had himself confessed his guilt. At that thought her brain was filled with fire; she seemed going mad—or, perhaps, returning to that state into which his words had driven her. And yet, when she grew calm again, she did not shrink with loathing from kind Uncle Angelo, or hold him from her, as she would have held a murderer—a man, too, who had put to death a weak defenceless woman—at arm's length. Reason demanded that she should believe him guilty, who himself had admitted his guilt; but instinct refused to credit it. Her mind was tossed this way and that; now at the top of the wave, she felt secure of his innocence; and now again, in the trough of that sea of doubt, all was dark save for a strip of blue sky. She had adjured him to declare that he was innocent; and he had replied—and with a look of anguish she could never forget—"Alas, Evy, I cannot say I am." That was not quite the same, surely, as though he had answered "No, Evy; I am guilty." It was but a gleam of hope, but in her darkest moments she never lost sight of it. But whether hope or fear had the mastery of her for the time, the one thought that was still uppermost and which overmastered all, was to be up and away from Dunwich; to be putting miles and miles of land or sea between her uncle and his enemy: to be with him somewhere, out of the reach and risk of that dread penalty of the law.

Presently there was a soft knock at the door, and Evy strove to cry "come in,"

which, to her surprise, she could not compass. Her voice, it seemed, could rise no higher than a whisper. The visitor, however, entered as though no such permission had been expected, and came and stood beside the bed-head. It was Mrs. Mellish—the very person whom above all others Evy yearned to see, and yet at the sight of her, and quite unaccountably to herself, her tears began to flow. "I am come, dear Evy," said the Rector's wife, embracing her tenderly, "to keep you company a little while; but you must not excite yourself, or I must go away again."

"I am not excited, dear Mrs. Mellish, but I don't know how it is," answered Evy, piteously; "I cannot help crying."

"That is because you are so weak, my darling, after your illness. I say 'after' because, thank Heaven, you have turned the corner, you know."

"What has been the matter with me?"

There was a short pause, during which Mrs. Mellish looked embarrassed. "Brain-fever, darling; it is all over now, but still you must not excite yourself by talking."

"I only want to ask a question or two on matters which are troubling me."

"Very good, darling; I will answer them, and talk to you as long as you like, but you must not talk to me; those are the Doctor's orders."

"Do you think it is possible, dear Mrs. Mellish, that I shall be able to be moved from here in a few days—on Friday for instance?"

"I don't see why you shouldn't, darling, if you can pick up a little strength. I should think it would do you good to get you on to the sofa yonder, so that you could lie close to the window and look out. Friday is this day week: you ought to be getting round by that time."

Friday is this day week! If she had heard aright, she must have been ill-insensible indeed—since Monday, then. And yet, even now, it seemed it was useless to dream of getting away from Dunwich for days to come. "Is it true that the Heytons are coming to the Park on Saturday?"

There was another and longer pause, during which Mrs. Mellish looked more embarrassed than before.

"My dearest Evy," said she presently, "you don't know how ill you have been, nor for how long. The Heytons came last Saturday, and have been at the Park nearly a week."

"My poor uncle," murmured Evy mechanically. What apprehensions, she was

thinking, must he have suffered during that time; how terrible for him to have been dwelling in the very shadow of the hateful woman who had the power to send him to the gallows.

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Mellish, "it was sad to see him, while you lay here between life and death, and never your dear self: but now he will be another man. Doctor Burne tells me that he has gone to bed for the first time since you were taken ill, and is now asleep. Your recovery, darling, will be such good news for so many people. Even old Mrs. Sanbov has been inconsolable about you, and I have nearly cracked my voice in telling the Lieutenant every morning that you were much the same."

"Have you seen either of them yet—I mean the Heytons?"

"Yes, dear; they were both in church on Sunday, and, besides, the Rector and I had to call at the Park, you know. I really think, dear, you have had talking enough for to-day," added Mrs. Mellish, softly; she naturally felt that this subject, above all others, was one to be avoided.

"Please to tell me about Mrs. Heyton," pleaded Evy, pitifully, "you don't know how I crave to know. How does she look? what does she say?"

"Well, she looks abominably good-looking, my darling; there is no denying that. And yet—though that goes such a great way with him, and though she is most attentive and deferential—I don't think the old lord takes to her. As for the rest of the household, I am told that they find her most peremptory and imperious; and between you and me, I think her husband has also made the same discovery. The Rector met him pretty coolly. I promise you."

"Not on my account, I hope," said Evy earnestly, "Captain Heyton is in no respect to be blamed."

"Hush, hush, you are not to talk, you know," put in Mrs. Mellish. "I am not going to argue with you about that, or anything else, my dear; but if the Captain is not to be blamed he is certainly to be pitied. I asked my husband (who is generally right about such matters) 'Don't you think the bridegroom is henpecked?'"

"No," said he; "not yet; but it will come sooner or later; that woman is a termagant, and perhaps something worse."

"What did he mean?" asked Evy, quickly.

"I don't know exactly. One must re-

member that he was prejudiced against her at starting; but he thinks her without tenderness. There is some story of her having struck the gatekeeper's child with her riding whip for letting the gate swing back too soon, but I cannot believe it; the child is a cripple, you know, and a woman who would do that would do anything. However, she is always on horseback, and even goes out with the Captain before breakfast, cub hunting. She is quite a Diana Vernon, they say, and clears five-barred gates. I only tell you what I hear, you know; I saw her but for five minutes at the Park, during which she patronized me as the clergyman's wife most magnificently; and at church, on the previous Sunday, they both looked, I noticed, though in a different way, at the Seymour's Home pew, and seemed much relieved to find that neither your uncle nor yourself were present."

"How do you mean in a different way," enquired Evy.

"Well, you know, it may have been fancy, Evy—and it is true enough that I ought to have been thinking of something else, instead of watching them—but it seemed to me that Mrs. Heyton had made up her mind to carry off matters with a high hand. Directly she took her seat, she looked boldly down into your pew—which she could not mistake, since it has the name on it; whereas, the Captain, who looked very white, stole a furtive glance at it, as it were, and then, finding you were absent, seemed to breathe more freely; or at least the colour came back into his face. You will call me a sad gossip: but you asked me to tell you all I knew about them, Evy."

"Yes, yes, that is right; I want to know all. Do you think Mrs. Heyton has heard that I am ill?"

"Well, the Captain knows it, for he has called in person on the Doctor every day to ask after you; so I conjecture that his lady does; though to be sure, on the other hand, it is possible that she may imagine you are afraid to meet her (she is insolent enough for anything) and are keeping within doors on the pretence of illness. At all events, she has not sent to inquire after you, we may be quite sure, not she," and Mrs. Mellish smiled in derisive scorn. The fact was that the Rector's wife had as keen a relish for gossip as any of her sex, and had longed for months to discuss this particular topic with Evy. She had not done so, as we know, out of consider-

ation for her feelings, but now she had received permission, and even an invitation to do so, she scarcely knew where to stop; compulsory abstinence had made her so very keen. She was by nature a partisan—almost always it must be owned on the right side—and it gave her a genuine pleasure to paint Judith as she found her: or perhaps a trifle darker; nor did she doubt that such a picture would be welcome to her young friend. Whatever might have been the case, in this last particular, under other circumstances, her tidings of Judith's insolence and imperiousness, and especially the idea Mrs. Mellish had thrown out, that the former might think her to be shamming—perhaps at her uncle's suggestion—as an excuse to remain at Dunwich, and thence conclude that he was defying her, filled Evy with inexpressible terror.

"If I were only to get up," moaned she, making a feeble effort to raise herself; "I am sure I should feel better; don't you think I might get up?"

"Oh, no, dear Evy, that is not to be dreamt of, at least to-day. We will see what Dr. Burne says about it to-morrow; but there is certainly a great improvement."

"Yes, yes, I am a good deal stronger; and it is so kind of you to come and talk to me."

"Well, now, if you really do feel that, and you are sure it does do you no harm, Evy, I should like to ask you a question—only one—upon a matter of no great importance you will say, and not a pleasant subject either, but about which I am very curious. When your poor aunt died at Balcombe, there was an inquest, was there not?"

Evy closed her eyes in assent; she could not speak, but shivered from head to foot.

"Well, there was no hitch about that inquest, was there? The verdict was Accidental Death, was it not?"

"Yes."

"Well, so I thought;" but Mrs. Mellish's tone was by no means one of conviction; it was evident she had perceived that the subject was distasteful to her companion.

"Why do you ask?" inquired Evy, with an effort to appear indifferent.

"Oh, only from curiosity. Lady Wapshaw came to the Rectory yesterday with some stupid story about poor Mrs. Hulet. How she had been unhappy in her marriage, and so forth; and that she had disappeared

in some mysterious manner. All nonsense, I suppose."

"Yes," said Evy. Then, after a long pause, "Lady Wapshaw has been to call at the Park, I suppose?" inquired she wearily.

"Oh, yes, dear; so has everybody for that matter. They couldn't do otherwise, you know," was Mrs. Mellish's soothing reply. But Evy showed no sign of discontent: tired out, as it seemed, by the unwonted talk, she had closed her eyes and spoke no more.

And yet Evy was not asleep. She was thinking of Lady Wapshaw and her scandal, of which she could but too well guess the origin. No better medium than her ladyship could possibly have been chosen to disseminate a malicious story. Was it Judith's plan to make Dunwich intolerable to them; or had she a worse design; was she sowing the seeds of suspicion in people's minds, in order to prepare them for the denunciation that was to come at last?

FROM GAY TO GRAVE.

We all know that great laboratory of sweet scents and pretty sights in the Strand, whence M. Rimmel sends forth perfumes by the gallon, soaps by the ton, cards and valentines by the hundred-weight; and most of us have spent our money in the tempting wares that call to us by our two senses of sight and smell to go in and buy. But we have not all had the pleasant privilege of seeing over the manufactory, noting how the work goes on from cellar to garret in the two huge houses devoted to it; how much material is used, and how much turned out; how many hands are employed, and what kind of labour they do; thus forming some estimate of the extent and importance of the business. This pleasure was accorded to the writer of these lines one afternoon shortly before St. Valentine's day, when every room that could be spared in both houses was given up to these oftentimes useful and always pretty and innocent, sweet-scented acts of commemoration by which the memory of the sainted bishop is kept alive, and the faces of the young made glad by the same.

Valentines everywhere! of all sorts and sizes, of all prices and for all purposes; from the child's penny card, with its pretty posy of roses and lilies in the middle and the quaint little love-legend beneath, to

rich lace fans, pearl-handled and jewelled, worth ten pounds and more; from the scented paper sachet, with doves or flying cupids caged within a gold or silver border, or veiled beneath a covering of gauze, to a velvet glove-case, "discouraging sweet music" when opened; being a glove-case in intention and a musical box in fact. It would almost seem as if the whole valentine-sending world must surely be supplied from this one centre. There can be no room left for others! What within the list of ladies' requirements cannot be found here? Not to speak of the valentine pure and simple, the "animated flowers," the "love's photograph,"—which is simply a mirror under lifting flowers—the doves that carry letters, the bouquets that mean as much as an essay, the mere prettinesses without more intention than to be pretty, we have here gloves and brooches, and fans of all designs—from the inexpensive flower-fan, which, when shut is a beautiful bouquet, when open a serviceable fan, to the ten-guinea Watteau picture; we have golden charms and satin neckties; head-dresses of feathers, of ribbon, of Brazilian feather-flowers, of marine flowers from Trebizonde—let us hope not with the fatal effects of that other produce of Trebizonde of which Moore speaks:

Even as those bees of Trebizonde,
Which from the sunniest flowers that glad
With their pure smile the gardens round,
Draw venom forth that drives men mad!

—or, if making men mad, then only in that perfunctory way which is called mad with love or mad with admiration. But beside these we have also Japanese ornamental hair-pins as well as Japanese brooches, Indian jewellery, Genoese silver filagree, gold locketts and bracelets, rings and crosses, Bohemian garnets, orient pearls, topazes, turquoises and the like, to any extent. These "practical valentines" are real gifts wherein the sender shows his taste, discretion, and liberality.

It was pleasant to see the crowds of happy-looking girls working at their delicate trade. Here was one gumming round to the pictured foundation the plaited paper hinges by which the pierced outer cover is raised, preparatory to fastening on that glittering lace-like outer cover itself; here was another handling a dainty square of white satin or moiré silk, with the flowers and figures painted by hand, and cunningly painted too. Her companion to the one side was manipulating a bunch of feather

flowers, she to the other was sewing on pearls or ribbon bows, as the pattern demanded. A rosy-cheeked, brown-haired girl was peeping at her own bright eyes, while securing the little square of mirror that made the "photograph" already spoken of; and all looked amused and interested in their work; a band of one hundred and fifty contented and well-to-do young women, nicely dressed and nicely mannered. We fancy they could scarcely be otherwise than contented and well-to-do, under the kind and genial management of that famous house, the first, we believe, to employ women at all in the manufacture of perfumery. A house, famous indeed in more senses than one; for one of the two in which M. Rimmel carries on his business was that of the Duke of Beaufort—"Beaufort House," which the conductors, and some of the contributors too of ALL THE YEAR ROUND knew something of a few years ago.

It was treading familiar ground to go up and down the well-worn stairs, and over the old rooms which had once been filled with papers and presses, compositors, turnovers, and devils, type and sticks and formes and leads, and where the scramble had been among pie and pica, sanserifs and bourgeois, slanting italics and square romans. Now there are gallons of scent and miles of soap; rooms full of fancy boxes, to hold so many tablets or so many bottles—full of thin wooden boxes, to hold so many fancy boxes—full of stout and serviceable packing cases, to hold so many thin wooden boxes; packing cases set as close as building bricks, and directed to all parts of the habitable world, from Monte Video to Calabria, from Faroe to the Fiji Islands, and from Russia to Jamaica.

To all warm countries more rose-water goes than anything else that M. Rimmel makes. The "darkies" are fond of pouring rose-water over their heated skins; consequently gallons and gallons are sent out to every part of the equatorial world, in bottles costing the local merchants three shillings and sixpence the dozen, to be charged, may-be, a shilling a-piece to the retail purchaser. This commoner kind of rose-water and other of a finer quality, as well as the perfumes, are stored in the cellar, in vats containing two or three hundred gallons each. A tin, whence the bottles were being filled, was a mere nothing, said the master with a smile. It was only ten

gallons of Ess bouquet. About ten thousand gallons are generally in ordinary storage, to be recruited as fast as they are emptied. But as all liquid perfumes improve by keeping, so that the spirit in them may be subdued and the ingredients more thoroughly amalgamated, the mother quantity is never suffered to get low, and there is a perpetual distilling going on—as all the inhabitants round about and the passers-by from afar are aware.

Of soap too, it would seem as if all the washing-world, using scented tablets, must be supplied from these premises, where open-lathed shelves, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, are filled with squares of various scents and colours, in rooms and iron closets heated to a tropical atmosphere for the purpose of drying the still soft material. Some of these soaps are of common quality; some the best that can be made; but in the commonest can be found no trace of that abominable cocoa-nut oil, which no perfume can disguise, but which lingers on the skin, no matter what the concealing scent has been, and in spite of repeated washings. The German soap-makers are extraordinarily fond of this cocoa-nut oil; and most of our own cheap soaps are poisoned by it; but M. Rimmel keeps his perfectly free from it, and his cheapest tablets therefore do not *afficher* their users with the unpleasant odour only too well known to those whose sense of smell is acute and educated.

It is odd to see the different stages of these scented, polished, pleasant tablets: how, from bubbling masses of brick-dust red, dull chocolate, or flesh-pink, which men stir up like soup in cauldrons, they become great, consolidated masses, the shape of the vat in which they were boiled and cooled and thereafter taken. These huge masses are cut by wires into perfectly even slabs, and these again are cut into bars. The bars are put into a wooden trough with even divisions, and a man runs a wire along the top and down the grooves as quickly as a piano-player running his fingers along the keys. These squares are then taken to the drying-room; and, for their last touch, are put into a press; and come out the smooth, stamped, handy tablets we know. About two tons of soap are made a day, of which much is exported; soap and rose-water being agents of civilisation of more account than would appear on the surface. To keep the body

clean and to make it pleasant and lovely to the senses—are not these first steps in the great ladder?—representing more than the mere material advance from a surcoat of palm oil and red earth as the best detergents known, or a pat of butter put on the top of the head and suffered to melt in little rivulets adown the body as the sovereign remedy against sun-cracks and heat-blisters. Toilet vinegar and rose-water, pomades and soaps, and even the more questionable adjuncts of face-powder and restorative washes, are better than the dirt and unpersonableness—in other words, the brutalisation—of savages. So that we may, without being too fanciful or far-fetched, regard the house of sweet odours in the Strand as one of the agents of civilisation, helping in the great task of refining and educating to the full as much as the more serious labours of missionaries.

Leaving this gay place, thronged with smiling buyers and bright with gold and colour, we then crossed over to Leicester-square, and went to see the French hospital in Lisle-street hard by. It was a sudden, sharp transition from the prettiness and merriment of life to its sorrow and its pain; from occasions for affluence to get rid of some of its superfluity, to occasions for benevolence to serve humanity, and, in so serving, to honour Him by whom this same humanity exists. It was, in truth, “from Gay to Grave,” if not quite “from lively to severe.” For there is no severity in this clean, pleasant, well-managed little Home for the Sick; nothing but tenderness and kindness, good nursing, liberal appliances, and loving cares bestowed on these poor exiles from their own brighter homes, by compatriots also exiled, but able to give what their poorer brethren need, and rich in the health and strength wherein these have failed. The French hospital, with its dispensary attached, was founded in 1867, and has thus been only about six years at work. During that time it has afforded relief to nearly one thousand in-patients and twenty thousand out-patients, belonging to no fewer than twenty-one different nationalities.

Both hospital and dispensary are greatly helped by gratuitous labour. All the medical officers attend for charity, and the salaries of the seven paid officials (an assistant-secretary, a dispensing chemist, three sisters of charity, a night nurse, and a porter) amount to the not very ruinous

sum of two hundred and twelve pounds. The management of the hospital must be singularly economical, seeing that the cost of each patient is only two shillings and twopence halfpenny per day, including “a good and plentiful diet, wine, coals, washing, and medicine.” During the last year, the expenditure was one thousand five hundred and five pounds, two shillings, and twopence; for which sum one hundred and fifty-one patients were nursed in the hospital, and three thousand two hundred and thirty-seven relieved outside. The patients represented fifteen nationalities; so that we may fairly give to this unpretending little establishment a larger name and more extended influence than belong to others of infinitely more appearance and of greater wealth and substance.

There is nothing of the ordinary hospital about this quiet little Home for the Sick in Lisle-street. It is an ordinary house converted, not a special building expressly constructed. Hence its small rooms, with their two or three beds at most, have more the character of the home and less that of the hospital than is possible in those long, populous wards where there is no privacy and but little quiet. In Lisle-street there are single-bedded rooms for those who can afford to pay a trifle towards the expense: thus, too, supplying one of the most grievous wants of our more magnificent establishments, which give nothing for the help of the well-to-do poor who have no appliances at home for efficient sick nursing, yet who can afford to pay for themselves, and who do not wish to be kept on charity.

It was pretty and pleasant to see the bright faces that smiled up to the Sisters and the Honorary Secretary as we went through the rooms and spoke to the poor patients snugly ensconced beneath their scarlet coverlets, over which the fair, clean linen was folded with French neatness. The linen of the hospital is one of its strong points; and the good Sister who accompanied us opened the press to show us piles on piles of sheets and pillow-cases, towels, and napery for the table, all folded in the French way, and white and fragrant as French linen generally is. Some of the poor creatures could not speak a word of English, though others spoke it quite fluently; and one could not help thinking what a blessed thing it was for these sick exiles, practically dumb and friendless in a strange land, that they have this little

oasis of home to go to in their day of need ! One fine-looking fellow with bright eyes and a dark, swarthy, bearded face, down with some injury to his legs, knew only "good-bye," said smilingly when we parted. He seemed to be in great pain and desperately ill, and when in repose he was a grave sad-looking man ; but the wonderful responsiveness of his nation came like light over his face when we went up to him and some of us spoke to him gently, and made him feel that human sympathy is apart from nationality. One young lad was up and about, and soon to go out into the world again, cured of his malady. He was English ; and looked as merry as a cricket in his hospital dressing gown, standing by the fire reading. One fair-faced gentle-voiced woman was one huge mass of tumours. She had been in many times, but this time, she said, was her worst attack. Another, parched and restless, with a wet cloth on her forehead, her pinched features and sunken eyes betokening more than temporary disease, looked too ill to notice even the Sister who did some little friendly office for her, or the kind and cheery Honorary Secretary, whom, else, all the patients welcomed with word and look as one to whom they owed more than is ever made public—one who, in the midst of his own overwhelming business, has always found time for deeds of charity and unflagging efforts to help those who cannot help themselves. Certainly there is a warmth, a spontaneity, a childlike effusiveness of pleasure in serving, and gratitude in being served, among our French brethren that is somehow more encouraging than the colder, more concentrated, less expressive methods in use among ourselves. The very Sisters, for all their grave profession and faithful self-devotion, laughed, talked, and nodded with more gaiety of manner than belongs even to English frivolity. Gaiety, be it remarked, not frivolity ; the gaiety which springs from a happy temperament and a pure conscience, which does not confound gloom and godliness together, nor think that the best way to advance religion is to make it repulsive, and threatening rather than consoling ; but though gay yet always earnest, and purposeful if cheery.

From the hospital we went to the French schools, always under the same guidance. But we were too late for the classes. We saw only the breaking up, with the young creatures gathering in

groups about the passage, some of them waited for by the parents and elders belonging, some of them waiting for their own younger comrades. In the nursery or crèche up-stairs, the little children left for a small charge by their mothers during the day, were still unclaimed. Some of them were asleep in the small curtained swinging-cots of the darkened sleeping room ; some were made happy with toys standing on the board that is their table and defence both in one, as they sit in their miniature arm-chairs ; and others, fractious or weakly, were being nursed on the lap, or held in the arms of the kind nurses and Sisters in charge ; and over all reigned that unmistakable air of sincerity, of doing the work well for the sake of the work itself, which seemed indeed to be the ruling spirit of these two establishments.

It has seldom been the lot of the writer to spend a more agreeable afternoon. First, the brightness and prettiness of the busy manufactory, where elegancies and refinements are turned out by the van load, representing so many of the "artificial wants," by which civilization is produced and upheld ; then the clean, quiet, homely hospital, with its unobtrusive charities and far-reaching benevolence ; and finally the schools, where saintly women devote their lives, as in the hospital, to the service of man and the love of God, and where the good that is done is equalled only by the evil that is prevented. It was an afternoon rich in suggestion and in pleasant thoughts ; a glimpse into France as she is on a foreign soil. And it was all essentially French ; pretty trifling, kindly charities ; effusive generousities, warm hearts and open hands ; with here ecclesiasticism and there artistry, here faith and there fashion—as it has ever been in *la belle*, and as it ever will be while the Gallic temperament remains what it is, and the problem of how to make the best of both worlds has come to no better solution than it has received in the country of Saint Louis and the Empress Eugénie—Saint Vincent de Paul and M. Worth. A perfumery on the one hand and a hospital on the other, is a better division of opposites than the famous "palace and prison" of Venice. If the contrast is sharp it is not unwholesome ; and the French saying, "*le plaisir fait le cœur si bon !*" might have a worse illustration. At all events, the success of the one makes the other possible ;

for we fancy that many of the golden grains that filter through those perfumed waters, that scented soap, those fanciful trifles of valentines and cards and sachets and glove-cases, run into the coffers of school and hospital, and that multitudes benefit by the gain of one.

THE RUBY AND THE ROSE.

HE was the lord of Merlinton tower,
And I was but of low degree;
She had her beauty for her dower,
Nor other treasure needed she:
He came, when hawthorns were a-flower,
And strove to steal my love from me.

Oh! she was sweeter than the wind
That bloweth over Indian Isles;
As April bright, than June more kind,
Fawn-wild, and full of winsome wiles.
And I, alas! had learnt to find
My only life beneath her smiles.

He sent my love a ruby rare,
That might have graced imperial brows.
No gem had I. To deck her hair
I sent her—but a simple rose;
And prayed her, on a night, to wear
The gift of him whose love she chose.

“Come, queen of all my heart’s desire!
Crown me or slay! My soul is stirred
To challenge fate. My pulses tire
Of fear’s chill tremor. Sing the bird
Of hope for him who dares aspire?”
A lover’s scroll, and wild of word!

We watched her coming, he and I,
With utter dread my heart stood still.
The moon’s wan crescent waned on high,
The nightingale had sung his fill,
In the dim distance seemed to die
The echo of his latest trill.

The flower-trailed gate, our trust of old,
Gleamed whitely ’neath the clustering bloom
Of the dusk-starring jasmine. Cold
His shadow fell, a ghostly gloom
Lurked where it lay. Oh heart o’er bold!
Hast thou but hastened utter doom?

A still cold smile slept on his face,
That all my hope to anguish froze;
Then, in the silence of the place,
We heard her flower-pied porch unclose,
And—in her hair’s silk-soft embrace,
There nestled warm a ripe-red rose!

LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

HAMPSHIRE.—THE OLD AND RIGHT MEMORABLE ROMANCE OF SIR BEVIS OF HAMPTOUN AND THE FAIR JOSAYN.

BEAUTIFUL Southampton, ninety years ago a mere humble Hampshire town, with but a small flock of thirteen vessels, and only three of those bound to foreign ports, is now a commercial Dives, with a vast fleet of great ocean steamers, and a busy population that has risen since 1800 from seven thousand nine hundred and thirteen to some fifty-five thousand. In 1781 this young Hampshire giant was not even

one of the English towns that was liable to window tax, not having more than four hundred houses liable to that mischievous impost. It has now, however, a goodly array of more than seven thousand residences, with power and will enough to add to their number. In 1858 the annual exports of Southampton were computed as worth five millions of money, and the duties on the port trade alone, says Mr. Woodward, brought in one hundred and twenty thousand pounds to the customs.

But after all, let us sweep away the musty past, kings and crowns, Cromwell’s men and Rupert’s mad Cavaliers, to make room for the great, the imperishable legend that has struck root into the very stones of Southampton, and against which Time himself whets his remorseless scythe in vain. Round the ale jug and round the wine bottle Sir Bevis, the mighty champion, has been talked of for centuries, and will be talked of, just as they talk for ever of Clive at Shrewsbury, and of Havelock at Charterhouse. Bevis of Hampton is, in fact, one of those indelible, indestructible, persistent fabulous heroes that the Hampshire world positively refuses to forget. Time has passed this legend by long ago as inerasable.

Even the very school-boys above and below Bar know that Bevis of Hampshire was the son of old Sir Guy of Southampton, by the Strand; and that he fought stoutly against those proud invaders the Normans, and “whacked” them at Cardiff. That he slew a dragon they do not forget, nor can the grisly giant Ascapard, whom Sir Bevis found such a precious “*pièce de résistance*,” ever fall out of the city memory as long as his painted image stands by the venerable Bar Gate. Nothing perpetuates a legend more than a traditional spot. There is then an end of all incredulity. Now is there not, close to Southampton, Bevis Mount, formerly the property of the canons of St. Deny’s Priory, and afterwards the residence of that brave general, the Earl of Peterborough? and is it not well known to every honest and intelligent Southampton person that Bevis and Ascapard used to play at quoits there with huge lumps of rock, and send them whizzing and splintering into Southampton Water? Were not, too, Bevis and his wife buried near calm Solent, and is not his sword Morglay (the sword of Death) still to be seen in Arundel Castle? Age of the electric telegraph, the Flying Scotchman, the wild

Irishman, and subterranean railways, is it possible that such an old fourteenth-century story can still linger among civilized people? Nineteenth century, you are a conceited, stuck-up fellow. The story of Sir Bevis is not dead yet, and is likely long to enjoy a green old age.

Having thus fairly snubbed the nineteenth century, let us refresh ourselves with a brief summary of the brave old Hampshire story, which Chaucer in his *Sir Thomas* calls affectionately a "romance of price." It will, we are sure, amuse our readers, not only from its quaintness and adventure, that made it read and sung for centuries by English and French minstrels in hut and in castle hall, but also for its valuable and curious allusions to the rough and homely customs of the fourteenth century that hardly come into ordinary historical reading. Whether Sir Bevis was a Saxon chieftain warring against Normans, as the Saxons believed, or a Norman warrior wrestling against infidels, though a question fought over for ages, is no concern to us now. But the habits of our fourteenth century ancestors are and will ever be subjects of enquiry. It was all very well for Puritanical George Wither (shame on him for a Hampshire man!) to call Bevis of Hampshire "trumpery." But the fine old romantic story, scenes from which adorned the tapestry of Henry V.'s chamber, and the walls of Henry VIII.'s palace at Richmond, is not to be lightly "poooh-pooohed" in that manner, by any sour despiser of the pleasant ways of Giant Country and Fairy Land.

The old Hampshire story runs thus. Sir Guy, Earl of Southampton, father of Sir Bevis, our hero, married late in life a young and beautiful princess of Scotland, who proved unfaithful, and employed her lover, young Sir Murdour, brother of the Emperor of Germany, to ambuscade old Sir Hugh, and to send her his head as a pleasant little souvenir, which he did. Bevis, then aged seven, was sent to Saber, a paternal uncle, a good sort of individual, who at the unnatural mother's order to murder the child, pretended to kill him, but really sent him out on the downs as a herdsman's boy. Bevis bore these hard lines bravely, till one day, as he lay among the sheep, he heard minstrel's songs and the sound of revelry arising from the old castle in the mist below. This was rather too much for the sensitive but stalwart boy. The German minstrel's

fiddle-string had touched a tender chord: away with sheep-hook, up with oak cudgel, off with wallet, and down like a wild deer he dashes to his dead father's old castle door. The porter calls him names, and in vain tries to push him back; one stiff blow from the young rosy fist sends the porter sprawling, and in a moment more the boy has denounced his wicked mother, and knocked down Sir Murdour with a murderous blow of his oaken cudgel. In vain the cruel countess urges her knights to seize the child; they dislike dangerous blows in the teeth, and stand dumb with astonishment at so precocious an elf.

Bevis is scarcely home and cool from these affrays, before the wicked countess is announced, and frightened Saber is only just time to jam the brave boy into a cupboard. The countess scolds and reproaches Saber, confutes his shuffling evasions, and demands her child. Bevis, no whit scared, instantly jumps out and confronts this Norman Clytemnestra, who at once orders her attendant knights to drag the wilful child to the port, and sell him as a slave to any captain preparing to sail for Heathennesse. No doubt troublesome lovers and refractory claimants were sometimes disposed of in this way, in those times.

After many ups and downs at sea, Bevis arrives at the court of Ermyrn, king of an uncertain Saracen country. The queen is dead, but his daughter Josayn is beautiful, and wears gold shoes, and has cheeks that remind one of the effect of blood dropped on snow, and she falls rapidly in love with the young Christian slave, whose naïve answers so please King Ermyrn that he at once offers him the succession of the crown, and what was twice as good, the white hand of his most fair daughter, one condition only being added—that he shall renounce Christianity in the usual Saracenic manner. With great imprudence, and all the zeal of Exeter Hall, the lad refuses the offer, and makes disagreeable allusions to Mahommed's personal character and descent. King Ermyrn, however, being a good easy-going sort of fellow, forgives this, and at once appoints young Bevis his chamberlain and standard bearer elect. He was now fifteen.

The old Adam, or rather old Guy, soon breaks out. One Christmas Day, as Bevis is out riding with sixty Saracenic knights, they began to ridicule him for neglecting

to reverence such a festival. Bevis, disliking the general tone of their remarks, and their ugly infidel faces all grinning at him at once, offers to joust and unhorse the whole company, one after the other, although he is not yet a knight. They then fall on him treacherously, like cowardly beggars as they were, and Bevis kills the whole kit, much to the indignation of King Ermyrn, who at once begins to meditate most alarmingly on the painful subject of bow-strings and axe edges. But good Josayn obtains the boy's pardon, and salves his wounds, and kisses him from eye to chin.

The next exploit of young Bevis to win his spurs is an attack on a wild boar, who has taken to human flesh, and is the scarecrow of all that part of Saracendon. Bevis, blowing his horn, sets out in search of this boar, and tracks him at last to his den by a trail of human bones. His hunting spear breaks, for the brute proves as tough as a marble rock, but eventually, as the boar begins to pant, Bevis craftily runs a sword down his vast throat, and gives him his quietus. But the danger does not end here. On his way back through the royal forest, with the boar's head stuck on a stump of the spear, Bevis meets twelve jealous keepers in armour, who insist, in the meanest manner, in claiming the huge trophy. Bevis, disliking this sort of thing extremely, beats out the brains of nine of these impertinents, and on his return to King Ermyrn is welcomed with open arms.

Hunting, love, and war, these were the three great topics of the Norman minstrel, so the next adventure of Bevis turns on hard knocks, and we presently find Bradmond, King of Damascus, sending in a bullying sort of way to signify his intention of instantly espousing the fair Josayn, and if refused, of laying waste Ermyrn's country with fire and sword. Ermyrn, naturally put out at this, proceeds to call together his barons, and raises at a wave of his spear twenty thousand good men, and for Saracens tolerably true. At Josayn's entreaties Bevis is at once knighted, he puts on his quilted acqueton, his glittering hawberk, and his shining helmet; and his fair lady presents him with a good sword, whose name was Morglay.

There was no better under the sun,
Many a land that sword hath won.

And she also gives him a thorough good horse that had been christened Arundel.

One swing, and Bevis is in his war saddle; one smile from Josayn, one blast of the horn, and Bevis is lost round the left hand turning of the street.

The insolent and furious Bradmond, relying on his giant standard bearer, Radoson, laughs aloud when he discerns Ermyrn's rude army of only twenty thousand men.

The two armies skirmish at first coquettishly.

But when they broke their first array,
Grim and bloody was the fray,

as you may pretty well guess. Bevis, after breaking his spear in Ensign Radoson's diaphragm, follows up that performance by a series of surgical experiments with Morglay, which soon make him universally feared, and probably respected, and Bradmond quickly spurs homeward, laughing on the wrong side of the mouth, but carrying behind his saddle two captive knights. But, bless you! Bevis is after him like a telegraph, and, with one blow, knocks him from his horse, and releases the two profusely grateful knights. Then, again turning his attention to Bully Bradmond, he scares with a flash of Morglay, and only releases him on condition of his swearing allegiance and fealty to King Ermyrn.

On his return to court, Bevis becomes a lion of the first water (to use a perhaps almost too strong metaphor), and is embraced by the King. The adorable Josayn, disarming him with her own hands, arrays him in a most expensive robe, and, by her father's express order, waits on the young conqueror at table. That evening Josayn, in rather a bold way, tells her love to Bevis, who informs her plainly that he is no match for a king's daughter; but that she should marry a prince or a sultan, for, as he very justly observes—

I am a knight of a strange land,
I have no more than in I stand.

Upon which Josayn, with an outburst of love, more natural than prudent, remarks that she would rather have him, almost entirely deprived of habiliments, than all the wealth in the land of Mahoun. Bevis not replying, Josayn first falls down and weeps sorely, and then arises in a rage—

"Go from my chamber, go," she cries, "thou were fitter to hedge or to make a dyke than be dubbed a knight" (a fourteenth-century lady, all over!) "and sit with sunny, bright-haired maidens. Out of my way, churl! and Mahoun send you ceaseless care and sorrow!"

"My damsel," says Bevis, presently,

rather hurt at this outburst of Saracenic tamper in his angel—

“ I am no churl,
My father was both knight and earl.”

The affair, however, goes on from a slight tiff to a bad tiff; and then to temper, retort, abuse, and, at last, a storm. Bevis returns all his presents and retires to his bedroom; and the lady, with a scornful look, flings herself out of the room, but only, like a true woman, to repent the moment she got shut up in her own room. She instantly sends her confidential chamberlain, Boniface, to Bevis to apologise for her bitter words. But Bevis is not easily moved to relent: he throws the messenger a huge bolster full of gold, but refused to see Josayn again. His stern anger soon melts the female Saracenic heart. Weeping, she comes to her lover's door and prays for pity.

“ Mercy,” she cried, “ my leman sweet,”
And then she fell and ‘gan to weep,
“ Forgive me that I have missaid,
My false gods I will forsake,
And Christendom for thy love take.”

Bevis turns, and gives her one look, then raises her, and clasps her in his arms. “ On that covenant I will love thee, fair Josayn.” And so he did. Unfortunately, those two false-hearted knights he had rescued from Bradmond's clutches lurk in the room, and see and hear all this, and go and tell the king at once, like mean, sneaking spies, as they were, that his daughter has forsaken Mahoun for Bevis's sake.

The moment that news reaches him the base Saracenic mind of King Ermyn turns all to gall, and he at once resolves on the death of the presumptuous Christian hound. How he tore his beard and swore to his false gods our readers have often seen in the burlesques of these later days. For safety, for Bevis is rather a tough customer, it is resolved to send him as ambassador to King Bradmond, bearing sealed letters, urging his instant beheadal. Consequently, suspecting nothing of the plot against him, off goes Bevis; and after three days' travelling through uninhabited country and forest, he meets a palmer dining off three baked curlews (The peculiarity of the meat of the curlew is that it tastes like good broad-cloth) and hungry Bevis is asked to dinner. The palmer turns out to be a Mr. Terry, son of Bevis's uncle and good foster father, Saber. Unable to bear the tyranny of Sir Murdour and his wicked

wife, Saber had retreated to the Isle of Wight, which he had defended for Bevis's sake against all the cavalry, infantry, engineers, and bombardiers of the usurper. The palmer, in fact, has been sent with a general roving order to Heathennesse to find the lost heir and bring him back to England. Crafty Bevis, however, not disclosing himself, pretends to be a friend of himself, and sends Mr. Terry back to promise his good friend Saber speedy succour. Terry picks up the remains of the diabolical roast curlews, and they part: Bevis riding on unsuspectingly to Damascus—of all places in the world—on his business to King Bradmond. He finds the palace, a moated building, gilded all over, and approached by a bridge, with sixty bells hung beneath to announce the approach of any traveller; and at the bridge-end is a tower painted with gold and azure, and on it perches a golden eagle, whose eyes are like darting jewels.

Unfortunately, as Bevis draws near this first-rate residence, he comes upon a crowd of brown Saracens, preparing a sacrifice to their idol Mahoun. This is too much for the missionary spirit of Bevis of Southampton, who at once shoulders his way to the idol, tears off its golden crown, throws it in the mire, and reproaches the heathen hounds. A thousand hands dart out to seize him; but Bevis, drawing his sword, remarkably soon divides a dozen heathen throats.

Bevis, however, has no sooner delivered his credentials to King Bradmond, than he is thrown down into a deep dungeon tenanted only by two most unpleasant dragons, but, with the stump of a staff, Bevis soon proves one too many for them. There, for seven long years, Bevis fasts and pines, keeping body and soul together on daily handfuls of bran.

In the meantime Josayn, deceived by false stories, has been compelled by her unprincipled and ungrateful father to nominally marry Inor, King of Mountbrant, the marriage witnesses being his royal highness the King of Babylon and his eminence the Soldan of Persia. Among the marriage presents to King Inor were the good horse Arundel, and the useful sword Morglay; but Arundel, disliking his new master, who was awkward and timid, spills him in a thicket and nearly breaks his back. (What a natural touch in the Norman, minstrel is the bad riding of the Saracen dog!)

Bevis in this interval, cured of a snake

bite by an angel, grows gradually so weak that his two keepers one day make resolve to put an end to him, Bevis, however, like blind Samson, by a last exertion of strength, kills one murderer with his fist and another with a sword. But, the jailors dead, no bran is dropped down (what an awful reminiscence of some Norman baron's dungeon!) and Bevis can only crouch and pray for death. But, thanks be to Heaven, a miracle! The chain that fastens him to the rock suddenly snaps, he seizes the rope by which the jailors had descended, and he is free. Hearing laughter in the king's stables, Bevis breaks open the door, kills a dozen of the frightened grooms who take him for a ghost, being so wan, and his hair trailing on the ground, arms himself from a heap of handy army saddles, mounts the best horse, and rides off with hot speed to the drawbridge.

"Halloa, you lazy knave," he shouts to the porter, his blood beginning to circulate again, "you sleep away in your kennel till you have let that Christian dog we had in hold escape; let down the portcullis, knave, as you value your head.

Down rattles the drawbridge, over clatters Sir Bevis, and away he gallops as fast as he can into the dark forest. He is scarcely gone, however, before, with a clatter of spears and shields and a flutter of flags and mantles, out clatter King Bradmond and all his knights, gallantly led by Sir Graundere on his unrivalled charger Trenchefys, who are soon up with the bold fugitive. One dig, straight at the heart, and down drops the fierce but unready leader, and quick upon the saddle of Trenchefys leaps Sir Bevis, and hey for merry Engleland.

Hotly pursued by King Bradmond and his army, Bevis, on reaching the sea, boldly pushes in and swims to the opposite shore. Naturally fatigued by this exertion, Bevis, when the horse reaches dry land and shakes himself, shakes off, but eventually pulls himself together, and at last reaches a promising-looking castle on the wall of which stands a fair lady. For the love of Heaven Bevis beseeches her for a "meal's meat." The lady replies that her husband is a giant and an infidel, and he had better try further on. Bevis answers that he is dying of hunger, and that dine there he will, either as a guest or by force. The giant, hearing a disturbance, comes to the door at this crisis, with an iron door-bar in his hand, and by no means in the best of tempers.

"Where did you steal that horse?" he roars to Sir Bevis; "that is my brother's, Sir Graundere." "God wot," says Bevis, "I won it in battle when I made Sir Graundere a deacon; and if you don't take extremely good care I'll make you a priest before we part."

Upon which cue for combat a combat begins, with the usual results. The giant's first clumsy blow misses Bevis and kills Trenchefrys; then he transfixes the shoulder of Sir Bevis with a javelin, who retorts by slicing off his head. Bevis then rushes into the castle, shouting for dinner, and the fair lady tastes all the dishes before him, and stanches his wounds, and our gallant hero does dine at last.

On the dead giant's best horse—for Bevis is a perfect Dick Turpin in the matter of horses—the knight now rides off to Jerusalem to confess his sins and receive absolution. Hearing on his return road of Josayn's marriage, and more cut up than any of his giants had been, Bevis goes off to Mountbraunt castle disguised as a poor palmer. Arrived there he mingles with a crowd of pilgrims waiting for their daily dole. Josayn welcomes him as a pious mendicant, and enquires eagerly of him about Sir Bevis. The disguised man proclaims himself a friend of Bevis, sent into various countries to search for a good steed called Arundel. The queen at once leads him to the stable, and at the sound of Bevis's voice the brave horse snaps seven chains, and runs to him. Sir Bevis throws himself into the saddle, and Josayn cries for joy, for she knows it is he, and they at once prepare for flight. The lovers are soon off and away, and hide in a cave in a forest, where Bevis kills two lions.

Soon after this tussle, the lovers both mounted on Arundel, are met by a mighty and strong giant, one Ascapard, thirty feet long, and wielding a young oak for a club. This son of Anak is soon converted by Bevis, who drubs him within an inch of his life, and then makes him his attendant page.

On the sea shore they find a dromond (merchant ship), and clearing it of obnoxious Saracens, Ascapard takes up Arundel and the two riders under his arm, puts them on board, and off go the happy couple and the giant "buttons" to Cologne, where Ascapard is christened. During the ceremony, in a tub made expressly, Ascapard is so nearly drowned that he leaps out, declaring that he is being "too much christened." At Cologne Bevis

slays a dragon, being restored during the conflict by a holy well, into which the dragon slips him.

From his grace the Bishop of Cologne Sir Bevis now obtains the loan of one hundred knights to sail to Southampton and revenge his father. Sir Murdour is joined by the king of Scotland and a large army from Germany, and a battle royal ensues. Old Saber behaves well, and eventually Bevis fells his enemy, and makes him captive, and Ascard takes the emperor of Germany and boils him to death in a great cauldron of pitch, turpentine, and hot lead. The wicked countess, after this, unwilling to survive, throws herself from a tower and is killed. The Southampton people, seeing Bevis is best man, rush out, of course, to welcome him, and the Bishop of Cologne is presently sent for to wed the long parted lovers.

And all the castle rocked and rung
With their mirth and with their song.

Unfortunately the writer of the romance of Bevis of Hampton, like many of our dramatic writers of the present day, does not know where to stop, and naturally lands in anticlimax. After he has finished the story of this Hampshire Samson spiritedly enough, he unwisely launches forth again. King Edgar makes Bevis his Earl Marshal, but the son of Edgar, a vain young man, trying to steal Arundel, is killed by the indignant horse, and his father vows revenge. To escape his doom Bevis leaves England, with his wife and his nephew Mr. Terry. At this crisis the ungrateful giant and page boy, Ascard, turns traitor, and offers King Inor to betray Josayn to him, if he has only the help of sixty Saracens. In a forest abroad Josayn is seized with the pains of childbirth, and in the absence of Bevis and Mr. Terry is delivered of two knave (male) children. At that moment Ascard stalks upon the scene and carries off the helpless mother. On Bevis's return he swoons with grief, but on recovery wraps the babes in the ermine mantle which Josayn had dropped, mounts faithful Arundel, and calmly pursues his journey. The children he leaves to the care of a forester and a fisherman, and they are duly christened "at the church stile."

And now old Saber turns up again in his green old age. He and his wife both dreaming that some great disaster had befallen Bevis, he and twelve of his best knights, armed as pilgrims, had taken the road to Mountbraunt. Overtaking the traitor Ascard, Saber rescues Josayn,

kills the giant with a blow of his pike-staff, while his knights polish off the sixty Saracen hounds. Josayn then dyes her skin yellow and green, and accompanies Saber for near seven years in search of Sir Bevis, whom at last they discover.

But Bevis is soon in the saddle again. King Inor, extremely irritated at the loss of Josayn, has begun to burn and ravage her father's country. The Southampton hero instantly raises an army to succour poor King Ermyn, and with Saber, his wife and children, rushes to his help. The king receives him with enthusiasm, and he and all his people, being forgiven by the hero, then embrace Christianity, and are all christened together. King Inor is soon taken prisoner by the resistless Bevis, and for his ransom pays the tidy little sum of sixty hundred pounds of gold, besides handing over four hundred silk beds, with gold quilts, four hundred gold cups, and four hundred "maselyn" ditto. Ermyn on his death-bed crowns Guy, the son of Bevis, and Saber then starts for England, merry, merry England.

All is going on well now in Germany where King Guy reigns, when a rascal thief, named Rabone, steals the faithful steed Arundel. Saber, ever ready, disguises as a pilgrim and goes to Mountbraunt in search of the brave animal, and meeting Rabone leaps up behind him and kills him with a single blow. Saber is pursued on his flight home by the whole Saracenic army; but Bevis comes to his rescue and lops down the Saracenic turbans in the good old style. Inor is then advised by a misjudging friend named Bradnor, King of Syria, to end this disagreeable and protracted affair, and in the name of Termagaunt to challenge Bevis to single combat. If Bevis won he is to have the kingdom of Ermony (Armenia forsooth) for his trouble. The single combat takes place in an island on a lake, and, as might be supposed, mistaken King Inor falls under the edge of the terrible Morglay. Inor's troops are also slain to a man, and Bevis, wearing the stained war armour of his dead foe, takes Mountbraunt, where all Saracens who refuse to joyfully accept Christianity, the religion of peace, are at once religiously put to death.

And now it would seem that a peaceful and contented old age awaits our Hampshire champion; but no, fate will not let him alone. News comes that King Edgar has deprived Robert, Saber's son, of all the castles Bevis had bestowed upon him, in order to enrich

his wicked favourite, Sir Bryant of Cornwall. Bevis instantly levies a formidable army, and embarks for England. And here the Norman minstrel's geography rises into imagination. Bevis lands at the well-known Southampton, and marching on encamps at a place not familiar to us in poetry, i.e. Putney. Here he leaves his troops, and taking with him only twelve knights repairs to King Edgar at Westminster, and falling on his knightly knees requests humbly the restoration of his estates.

Edgar is inclined to yield; but that bad man, Sir Bryant, the king's steward, persuades him that Bevis is a dangerous outlaw and deserves death. The king, convinced by his unjust steward, issues a proclamation at once to the citizens to shut their gates, barricade every street, and seize Sir Bevis alive or dead. Bevis, arming himself and men, at once sallies from his inn intending to cut his way out of the city. He very soon meets the rascally Sir Bryant at the head of two hundred soldiers, and the two at once join issue. Bevis, mad at the sight, uses Morglay with tolerable effect, cleaving Sir Bryant to the saddle, and slaying all his luckless two hundred followers; but in "Goose-lane," a narrow place where he gets hemmed in, Bevis, well-a-day, loses his twelve faithful companions, but in the "chepe," or the market-place, where there is a fair stage, he gets on better, cuts off heads as if they were poppy tops, while Arundel kicks and bites, and clears the ring at the double quick, as we may say. In the meantime Josayn, hearing Bevis is dead, sends her sons to seek him, and off they rattle to Putney with a good four thousand men. Sir Guy, mounts on an Arab horse and takes the sword Aroundight, with which Lancelot de Lake slew the fiery dragon; while Sir Miles bestrides a horse as swift as a swallow.

The allied forces cross the Thames by night, unopposed, and setting fire to Ludgate, force their way into London in search for Bevis. They find him exhausted, but unhurt, though he has been fighting a whole day and a night. There is Arundel, too, up to his fetlocks in blood, and surrounded by dead Londoners. It is just daybreak, and a citizen, well-armed, has made Bevis bend to the saddle-bow, when Sir Guy rushes down like a thunder-bolt to rescue his father, and gives the burgher such a blow that his sword cleaves through helm, hauberk,

saddle, and horse, and flashes fire from the pavement. Bevis and Arundel both cheer up at this, and come out stronger than ever, especially when Sir Miles also arrives, and victory turns at last to them. Having slain sixty thousand Londoners, Sir Bevis and his gallant sons retire to the Putney camp considerably exhilarated.

King Edgar, touched at this, makes peace, offers his only daughter to Miles, Bevis's other son, and crowns him King of England. Sir Guy is established in Ermony; while Bevis and Josayn settle down comfortably at Mountbraunt. The moment Josayn dies, news comes that the faithful Arundel had dropped dead; and a few moments afterwards, Bevis dies, too, as he stoops to kiss the pale lips of his dead wife. Sir Bevis and Josayn are buried under the high altar of a church, dedicated to St. Lawrence, erected by their grateful subjects to their memory; and there their relics continue to work miracles to this day. And thus, says the tired minstrel, laying down his harp, and taking up the wine-cup, smilingly—

Thus endeth Bevis of Hamptoun
That was so noble a baroun.

And it, perhaps, was a pity, our readers will think, that the worthy creature had not ended sooner.

CHINESE STREET LIFE.

FROM various causes the Chinese spend more time out of doors than we do in England, and shortly after daybreak the streets of flourishing towns are thronged with people, and present a very animated appearance. Besides the ordinary population, who are passing to and fro in the pursuit of the business of every-day life, there are large classes of the people who live in the streets all day, and gain their livelihood in different ways from the passing crowds; and it is respecting these that we propose to give some information in the present paper.

Very prominent indeed in Chinese street life are the beggars, who literally swarm in most towns. The greater number of them take to begging as a profession, either because they are too lazy to work, or because they can get more money so than by honest toil; in these respects they differ but little from their brethren in other countries, but, on the whole, they are far more remarkable as a class, and for audacity and importunity we have

never met their equals in any part of the world. They are of all ages, young and old, and in all sorts of conditions, some blind, others lame, many again maimed in various ways, while others are afflicted with leprosy. Some are poor, miserable creatures, weakened by sickness, or much more commonly brought to a very low ebb by opium-smoking or other vices, but a very large proportion are strong sturdy fellows, who simply won't work. It is quite notorious that Chinese beggars resort to self-mutilation to excite sympathy; they will maim themselves in various ways, cause ulcers to form on their bodies or limbs, and persistently keep them open, &c., &c., but the following is one of the most extraordinary stories that we have ever met with:—Four men were seen one day crawling on their hands and knees one after another on the ground, and calling on the passers-by to give them money. They had lost their legs a few inches below the knee; the stumps were thoroughly cicatrised, but were pyramidal and very tender, the cicatrix of the skin being drawn tightly over the bone. On inquiring into the cause of this surprising loss of the limbs, the men said it arose from an accident which occurred at a fire, where their legs had been burned off. It was ascertained, however, that beggars in the northern province of Shan-tung were in the habit of removing their limbs for the purpose of exciting sympathy, and that the operation was performed by a beggar who made it his profession. He takes off the leg by first tying a piece of cord tightly round the calf, and when the time arrives for so doing, the cord having gradually cut through the flesh, he saws through the bone! Many die under the operation, but those who live are considered worthy of congratulation, as having gained by this voluntary mutilation an increase of fortune from the contributions of the benevolent. Many beggars also destroy their eyesight, in order to render themselves the objects of greater pity; and, among other ways of attaining this end, they insert lime under the eyelids, thus voluntarily subjecting themselves to most acute torture. They have also been known to destroy the sight of their children, when young, for a similar purpose. In short, the Chinese beggar seems to stop at nothing, which he thinks will have the effect of attracting the attention of the charitable to his forlorn and miserable

condition. The consequence is that, especially in Peking and other northern towns, they frequently present to the eye a most loathsome and frightful spectacle, and one which cannot fail to strike even a casual and unobservant visitor with awe, at the depth of degradation to which these wretched specimens of the human race must have sunk, before they could have been induced to inflict such fearful injuries on themselves.

Beggars very often visit shops in large numbers, uttering loud cries for pity and relief, and we have frequently heard a single member of the fraternity raise such a hideous din in a shop, putting a complete stop to all business, that the distracted shopkeeper was only too glad to yield to his demands and give him a few copper coins, when his tormentor would depart and repeat the process at a neighbouring establishment. It seems very odd to a foreigner that the shopkeepers, when thus annoyed, do not call in the aid of the native police, but we believe that they rarely, if ever, do so, from a superstitious feeling that it is unlucky to interfere with beggars in the pursuit of their vocation. They often abuse and scold them violently, but they never lay hands on them or expel them *vi et armis*, unless they catch them trying to steal or doing something else contrary to custom. Many, as we shall see presently, purchase permanent immunity from annoyance by the payment of periodical blackmail. The clothing which the beggars wear is decidedly scanty and very dirty, and such as would not be tolerated for a moment in more highly civilised countries. In warm or mild weather they seldom have more than a piece of old matting thrown over their shoulders, and in the piercing cold of a northern winter we have many a time seen beggars with nothing at all to cover them but a filthy sheepskin, in which they shake and shiver in a manner painful to behold. Some beggars carry a wooden bowl, or a kind of bag slung from their necks, to hold the money, &c., which they may collect in the course of their wanderings.

Like most classes of labourers in China, the beggars are very clannish, and are associated together in guilds, all of which have their head-men, who exercise a species of control over them. These head-men are well-known, and are registered at the office of the magistrate; they were originally appointed by the authorities to lessen the trouble of keeping the beggars

in order, and they have now become a recognized institution, and their office is, we have heard, hereditary in certain families. Like numbers of other Chinamen, who, outwardly at least, hold a respectable position in life, these worthies live on perquisites, and the contributions of the fraternities which they superintend. In the "Social Life of the Chinese" which we have quoted on previous occasions, we find an amusing account of the manner in which the affairs of the beggars are regulated. "A head-man of the beggars" we are told, "may make an agreement with the shopkeepers, merchants, and bankers within his district, that beggars shall not visit their shops, warehouses, and banks, for money, for a stipulated time, and the beggars of the locality are obliged to conform to the agreement. Religious mendicants, refugees, exiles, &c., from other provinces, who take to begging for a living, do not come under these regulations. The head-man receives from each of the principal business firms, with which he can come to an agreement, a sum of money, as the price of exemption from the importunities of beggars; and in proof of this arrangement he gives a strip of red paper, on which is written, or printed, a sentence to the effect that 'the brethren must not come here to disturb or annoy.' This paper is pasted up in a conspicuous part of the shop or bank, and the money is taken away and professedly distributed among the beggars concerned, though there is little doubt that their chief appropriates the lion's share to his own use. After a business man has made this agreement with the head-man of the beggars, should any native (*i. e.* local) beggar apply for the usual pittance, it is only necessary to point to the red slip of paper and bid him begone. If he will not depart at once, he may be beaten with impunity by the master of the establishment, which beating the latter would not dare to give, unless he had the proof of an agreement at hand; and it is said that the head-man might, if the beggar repeatedly violated the agreement, flog or beat the culprit to death, and no notice would be taken of the matter by the higher authorities."

Jugglers are also a very noticeable feature in Chinese street-life; their tricks and performances are numerous, and the following are but a few of them. One common trick is for a man to lie down on his back, and keep a large earthen jar

spinning round on his uplifted feet. Another man will hold a stick in his mouth, at the end of which is placed perpendicularly a short stick, surmounted by a plate, which the performer contrives to keep spinning round at a great rate and apparently without any effort. The "plate-trick," as it may be called, is also sometimes performed in a rather different way; the juggler keeps a small saucer spinning at the end of a long rattan cane in a remarkable manner. Merely by a dexterous use of his wrist he sends the saucer whirling round, in whatever position the cane may be—and occasionally it is almost horizontal; he even passes the cane behind his back, and under his leg, and a skilful performer rarely lets the saucer fall, so long as he keeps his eye fixed on it. Again a man, surrounded by a large crowd, may be seen playing with several large rings; these are thrown up into the air separately, and caught in the hand, when they appear to be linked into each other like a chain. Another juggler will be found throwing three sticks up in the air, one after the other, and always giving a tap on a drum alongside, as he catches a stick, the other two being meanwhile suspended in mid air. "At other times," says the writer before quoted, "the street may be rendered impassible for the time-being to any but daring foot-passengers, by the exploits of a man who has taken possession of it, and is playing with a ball of iron or lead, weighing several pounds, and attached to the end of a strong but small rope, some twenty or thirty feet long. He is engaged in forcing the ball forward, and drawing it back, by means of the cord, in a line parallel with the ground, and about as high as his neck. The ball passes and repasses by him very swiftly, nearly as quick as he can stretch out and draw in the hand which holds the cord. The wonder of the performance consists in the apparent ease with which the difficult feat is done, the speed of the ball, and the precision with which it flies backwards and forwards without its being touched. If the performer were to whirl the ball round his head at the distance of the end of the cord, there would be nothing wonderful in the operation; but he forces it backwards and forwards in a parallel line with the ground, with nearly the same speed and certainty of motion that he could attain by giving it a circular motion round his head. If the ball should strike against his head in the course of

the performance, it would, in all probability, crush it or dash his brains out; and if it should impinge on the heads of any of the people in the street, the result would be the same; every one, however, carefully gives the ball a wide berth."

Sword-swallowing is a common trick, and in this the performer holds his head well back and forces two blunt swords down his throat. The "needle-trick" is probably the most dangerous to the performer, who puts several needles into his mouth, and also some thread, separately; after a time he pulls out several threads, each having needles strung on it. The juggler sometimes attempts to perform this trick once too often, as will be shown by the following summary of a case, admitted into a foreign hospital, at Shanghai, some few years ago:—The juggler first pretended to swallow twenty needles, singly, and then a piece of string on to which they were to be threaded, and afterwards drawn out by a hooked wire. On passing down the hook this time, however, the needles had slipped too low, and both hook and needles became fixed in his throat; after several trials he got eight or ten of the needles out, and was then taken to the hospital. With much difficulty the hooked wire and four needles were taken out, but the remainder could not be reached, and though every possible remedy was tried, the man died after five days' suffering.

The Chinese are great gamblers; at any rate, the lower classes are inveterately so; and one instance we can call to mind which happened within our own personal knowledge, will show how very reckless some of them are. A coolie in our service, whose duty it was to sweep out rooms, carry water, &c., and whose wages were some twenty or twenty-five shillings a month (out of which he remembered he had to find himself in everything), lost by gambling in one single night, during the new year's holiday, no less a sum than twenty pounds; and to such lengths do these men go in indulging their gambling propensities, that Europeans are often obliged to discharge them in self defence, for their only hope of paying their debts obviously lies in theft. In most towns there are regular shops where gambling is carried on, and besides these there is a great deal of street gambling, which is commonly on a small scale, the stakes being mostly considerably under a penny, and the play, if such a term can be applied

to it, is frequently only for sweetmeats or some such trifles. The itinerant vendors of dumplings, &c., often allow their customers to indulge their passion for gambling, by giving them a chance (small, it is true) of getting a meal for nothing. One method of street gambling is by means of three bamboo sticks, about a foot long, to one of which a piece of red string is attached. A man seats himself by the wayside, and holds these in his hand in such a way that it cannot be seen to which stick the string is tied. The person who wishes to risk a few "cash" (eighteen or twenty of which go to a penny), places his venture on the stick which he fancies, and if by a stroke of good fortune it should prove to be the one with the red string, he gets back his money and twice as much again; it may be added, however, that the gambler seldom has much luck, for, as in thimble rig, the odds are immensely against him. Another mode of street-gambling reminds an Englishman of the much-loved, but now happily almost extinct, "pleasure fair" of his youthful days. The instrument in this case consists of a species of dial-plate, divided into either eight or sixteen equal parts, by lines drawn from a stick in the centre; on the top of this stick revolves a piece of wood, very much like the hand of a clock. The Chinese attach to this hand a piece of string or thread, which hangs down to the board, or nearly so, but in other respects the apparatus, and the way in which it is used, are much about the same, as in the case of that instrument for the acquisition of toffee, gingerbread, and other delicacies dear to the frequenters of fairs, to which we have referred. We take this opportunity of remarking that all sorts of gambling, lotteries, &c., are theoretically forbidden by the laws of China, and the Government occasionally visits transgressors with severe punishment, but nevertheless, from what we have said above, it will be gathered that the vice, in one form or another, prevails to a considerable extent among many classes of the population.

Besides the foregoing, Chinese street-life presents some other noticeable features, which, however, do not call for minute description, such, for instance, as the several classes of fortune-tellers, whose method of procedure we have explained in detail in a previous article; the peripatetic story-teller, who soon collects a crowd to listen to his tales, which are often repe-

titions of parts of popular novels; and the itinerant barbers and corn-cutters, the former of whom seem to be always doing a thriving business, for the Chinaman likes to have his head shaved, and his queue fresh braided every now and again. Then in every busy street there are to be seen the vendors of dumplings, cakes, preserved fruits, and an endless variety of comestibles; and (the costermonger's barrow being unknown in China, where, except in parts of Peking, and a very few other large cities, the streets are excessively narrow), all these men carry their stock in trade in boxes, trays, and baskets, suspended from the ends of a bamboo pole, which is slung over one shoulder, and they are thus enabled to move about from one locality to another with the greatest ease.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LXX. EXIT.

I TOOK Probert's advice, and it was as well I did so; for the day after I left Sir George's house it was stripped by his creditors.

I resumed occupation of my lodgings in Featherstone-buildings, just vacated by an articulated clerk who had completed his professional noviciate. The rooms wore their old look exactly. Not a touch of fresh paint or of whitewash had they undergone. The landlady despondently repeated her hope that I would be steady. It was as though yesterday had come back again. The only perceptible change was in the condition of the easy chair. It was a trifle less easy even than formerly, and a decided infirmity had manifested itself in one of its legs.

There was nothing really to detain me any longer in town. I was without distinct occupation. Yet still I lingered. Some vague expectation that I might again see Sir George possessed me. My steps were often turned towards Harley-street. The house he had occupied attracted me curiously, almost in spite of myself. I contemplated it often and often, always with a sort of wild hope that I should see the door open and him emerge from it. But it was tenantless, empty, and fast locked; admission to it was no longer obtainable. Its whole aspect had abruptly changed. Already it had acquired a desolate and woe-begone aspect. The shutters were all closed; there was a blind hanging awry,

half wrenched away, in one of the windows; some of the panes were broken, the others were thickly crusted with dust and soot; the ironwork about the entrance, the area railings, were rusty; the paint was peeling off the sills and sashes; the steps were soiled and strewn with refuse; even the door-plate was growing green with mildew. It was surprising how rapidly neglect had achieved its work and wretchedness seized upon the place. Here had dwelt the most esteemed artist of his time. Beauty and rank and fashion had congregated about him. Even royalty had oftentimes shone resplendent in that now darkened painting room. The King's serjeant-painter had seemed to be the spoilt child of fortune, the intimate friend of the great, the especial favourite of society the most distinguished. He was famous, courted, admired, even envied; he was prosperous, reputed to be rich. The world indeed had seemed to be at his feet for him to do what he listed with it. But now all was altered. He had disappeared and was already apparently forgotten. It was now as though he had never been.

I saw Mole frequently, but he had no further news to communicate. The general belief appeared to be that Sir George would never return to England. For some time I entertained fond hopes that he would at any rate write to me. But no letter came.

Mole did his best to cheer me up. At this time, however, he was much occupied with his own plans for the future. He manifested much indecision on the subject. Now he spoke of starting on his own account as a painter, with theatrical portraiture as his professional speciality: he thought that in such wise considerable profits were readily to be obtained. Now he meditated establishing a dramatic agency, in connection with elocutionary classes for the benefit of aspirants to histrionic honours. Presently I found him resuming his former scheme of becoming secretary to a "star" performer—Rosetta, for instance—and journeying to the United States. This seemed, indeed, the most likely of his projects, for Rosetta's visit to America, at the close of her London engagement, had really been determined on.

I had seen the actress on several occasions. She had expressed the tenderest sympathy and solicitude both on my account and on that of Sir George, for

whom, indeed, she had conceived a regard that had something romantic about it, although of this she was herself perhaps but imperfectly conscious. I noted that she had lost in some measure her old buoyancy and joyousness of manner: that she now, indeed, was almost depressed and sad. But she had experienced certain disappointments I afterwards learnt. As Mole had predicted, some contest as to the characters she should sustain upon the stage had arisen in the theatre, and she had been constrained to yield to the claims of more established players.

When Christmas drew near, I went down to Purrington. That I was warmly welcomed there, I need not say. The story I had to tell of my recent adventures was listened to with great interest. I pleaded earnestly for a compassionate consideration of Sir George's conduct, urging on his behalf the explanations he had himself addressed to me. My mother was deeply moved. Long since, I think, she had learnt to view mercifully and tenderly her husband's sins against her. The bitterness of her sufferings had passed away; the many years of neglect she had endured had not been wholly sorrowful. Patience and resignation had succeeded to pain and repining; and then had come content, and even a sort of tranquil happiness. The animosity cherished by my uncle she had never really shared; but had rather sought mutely, yet diligently, to modify and subdue it; in her inmost heart protesting strenuously against it; stimulated by it, possibly, to increase of mercy and charity.

My uncle listened to me in silence. That he was affected by what I said I could not doubt. In the milder expression of his face I read abatement of his vindictiveness. Indeed, time had surely brought him a sufficiency of vengeance, if that had been his desire. Sir George's misdeeds had been amply punished. He was ruined, disgraced, a fugitive. But what, I think, chiefly appeased my uncle arose from his old-world sense of retributive justice and atonement for wrong-doing. He approved the duel at Chalk Farm. He was well content that Sir George had shot his adversary. He would have preferred Lord Overbury's being left dead upon the ground. But still a wound was something.

He never said this in so many words, but I scarcely wrong him, I think, in attributing to him sentiments which may

seem barbarous now, but were then generally held to be reasonable and natural enough.

Rachel Monck was still at the farmhouse. She looked pale in her dress of deep mourning, and very fragile. Indeed her health had been but infirm of late, and my mother had forbidden her to think of returning to London, for some while at any rate. Imperceptibly she had become an indispensable part of my home. She was greatly loved and prized by all. The influence of her sweet and gentle nature could not but assert itself. To my mother and uncle she was as a newly-found and fondly-cherished daughter. She read to them, and tended and solaced them in a thousand ways. Her beautiful handwriting now adorned the farm books. She relieved my mother of much labour, for which her failing sight had now almost incapacitated her. It was pleasant to see Rachel seated at the open window in the little room, paying the farm servants their weekly earnings—received with pulling of forelocks and bashful looks of thanks—just as in years long past I remembered my mother doing.

In the truthful glances of her soft grey eyes I found tenderness and sympathy—affection, even, but not the love I looked for. That was not mine; perhaps never could be mine—given as it was beyond recall to the poor dead boy, sleeping in Purrington churchyard. My mother noted, I am sure, my contemplation of Rachel, which often became more rapt than I was myself fully conscious of. She spoke no word on the subject, however. But something of a new subcurrent of sympathy in her manner informed me that she had discovered the secret of my love.

We spent a very quiet Christmas-tide, not the less happy, however, on that score.

Soon afterwards came letters from Mole. He informed me that Sir George had certainly been heard of in Paris. It was thought that he might now safely return, and, the duel being pretty well forgotten, re-establish, if he so pleased, his old fame and success. Presently came tidings announcing, though with some indistinctness, the death of Lord Overbury. The letter contained a cutting from a newspaper. It stated that an inquest had been held upon the body of a man, discovered in a low tavern, much frequented by pugilists and betting men of an inferior class, in Whitechapel. He had been seized,

as it appeared, with an apoplectic fit, mistaken by his boon companions for intoxication. He had been left in a condition of insensibility for some hours; when, at length, surgical aid had been called in, it was found that "the vital spark" had flown. Remedies of all kinds had been plied in vain. Rumsey, a pugilist by profession, and known as "The Baker," had stated that, to the best of his belief, the corpse was that of Lord Overbury. But scanty particulars of the case were furnished; there seemed indeed an anxiety to hush up the matter as much as possible. Nothing was said in regard to the facts of his lordship's life, which indeed did not merit special record. It was intimated, however, that with his demise the Overbury peerage—dating from the time of George the Second—had become extinct. Further, it was stated, that at the period of his death his lordship had been reduced to a state of extreme poverty. A few halfpence only were discovered upon his body, and the expenses of his funeral had been defrayed by private generosity. I attributed this kindly action to Rosetta; but I have no real warrant for the supposition.

I must chronicle that this account of Lord Overbury's death did not meet with universal acceptance. About Purrington, indeed, there prevailed a general inclination to disbelieve it. Many residents in the neighbourhood of Overbury Hall were prepared to affirm that they had certainly seen his lordship alive and well, at a period subsequent to the date assigned in the newspaper to his death. They regarded the report which had been circulated to that effect as a mere stratagem to delude his innumerable creditors. As a peer, however, it was certain that his lordship was free from all danger of arrest. Still, it was frequently asserted that Lord Overbury, in slovenly attire, and wearing his old satyr look, had been perceived now crossing the down and now wandering about the park surrounding the great house. Reube, I may mention, was quite confident on this head, and was wont to repeat a long conversation alleged to have been enjoyed with his lordship—which increased in length and detail as Reube grew older and encountered incredulity—touching a fold of stock sheep upon the uplands towards Steepleborough. Moreover, there

was much evidence as to strange lights having been seen at midnight, illumining certain of the windows of Overbury House. In time, a conviction grew that the place was haunted. To a rising generation the Dark Tower acquired even to excess the character of awe and mystery it had possessed for me, or I had invested it with, in my childish days.

At length, however, belief in the survival of his lordship faded and expired. An alarm of fire one night spread through Purrington, and the farmers were very anxious as to the safety of their ricks and homesteads. Flames were observed issuing from the lower floor of Overbury House. There were no means at hand to cope with a fire of any importance; the nearest engine was at Steepleborough. But, strange to say, the fire did not spread, but presently slackened, and finally went out of itself, for the few buckets of water from the lake thrown upon it could not count for much. The little room in which I had first met Lord Overbury, with all its contents, was destroyed—a black cavity like a gigantic rathole was left disfiguring the grey façade of the building—but otherwise little mischief was done. There was no story afterwards, however, of the reappearance of Lord Overbury. Even those most convinced of his surviving the report of his death were content to believe that the fire had made a thorough end of him. To finish with the Dark Tower, I may mention that it remained for many years in Chancery, that it was subsequently converted into a private asylum for the insane. But when the branch line was made from Steepleborough to West Poolborough the park was intersected, the lake was crossed by an iron bridge, and Overbury House, much altered and reduced in size, was transformed into the Railway Hotel adjoining the Purrington Station.

But this happened quite in recent times, and, therefore, many years later than the events to which my narrative should properly be confined.

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AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST AIR MASSINGBERD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXVII. GREAT NEWS.

VERY slowly, by a point gained here and another there, Evy Carthew began to renew her strength; but so cruel had been the ravages of sickness, that she looked like one risen from the dead, or as Dr. Burne put it, like a beatified saint immediately after martyrdom. What puzzled him was, since she was not about to seek the skies, why she was so desperately anxious to know when she should be strong enough to go away from home.

"The only place you should go to, Miss Evy," said he, "if I had my will, should be your old home, the Cedars," which, as it happened, was then to be let.

Evy smiled faintly. "You are very good, doctor, to wish to have us so near you; but I am certain I shall not get well till I leave Dunwich."

"Tush, you were well enough when you lived here before; and there is the winter coming on, and no one—at least no one like you—to help me with my poor people."

"The rich ones will not regret our absence very much," sighed she, not without a little bitterness. "Except good Mr. and Mrs. Mellish, there is not one even to wish us God speed."

"Pardon me, there is one," replied the doctor earnestly. "Not a day has passed since he arrived in which Captain Heyton has omitted to inquire after you with his own lips."

"I was referring rather to the good folks of the village," observed Evy, trembling, but speaking very firmly;

"nor did I allude to their conduct towards myself, of which, indeed, I have nothing to complain. But it does seem harsh and hard to my poor uncle, that, as Jane tells me, not a soul has come to see him during all his trouble upon my account. It would have been the merest Christian kindness to call and inquire, even if, as you were about to say, he would not have seen them."

"No, Evy, I was not about to say that," returned the Doctor, slowly. "As to Christian kindness, we have always been so very religious in Dunwich that you can scarcely expect that, and besides—I think I must be right in telling you—there has been another reason why people have kept aloof from Mr. Hulet."

"What is that?" She knew well enough what it was, or rather to what it had reference; but she wished to learn the exact shape that these evil reports had by this time taken.

"Well, my dear, it is nothing but some stupid lying scandal I have no doubt; and as to the precise accusation it conveys, it is impossible to grapple with it; but of late weeks, an impression has certainly got abroad here that your uncle was in some measure to blame for his wife's death, that he used to treat her very ill."

"That is false," interrupted Evy.

"I have no doubt, my dear, that it is all false; but then, what with our very high principles, and our sense of 'incongruity,' and our knowledge that your uncle is a Republican, and has a Regicide for a patron saint, that makes us believe it all true, you see. It is for the very reason that it is false, dear Evy, that I would counsel you not—at any rate just at present—to leave Dunwich. Your departure will be certainly taken as a proof of your uncle's guilt;

this place, they will say, has been made 'too hot' to hold him; my earnest advice—if I could speak to him on such a subject—would be to remain here, and live this scandal down. In time, perhaps, our good folks will have something else to talk about, even more exciting; I shouldn't wonder if they had."

"To what do you refer, Doctor?" enquired Evy, mechanically; for her thoughts were occupied with another subject. "We will go to-morrow, if I have to be carried out of this," was her reflection. "Not a day longer shall my poor uncle breathe this atmosphere of lies and malice; if he comes to know that it is poisoned, it will kill him."

"Oh, I'm like the gossip in the play, my dear, I say nothing, but if there is not a flare-up at the Park some day, and before long too, I shall be very much astonished. If you were like other girls, Evy, and took a pleasure in the misfortunes of one who has behaved ill to you, I could recommend myself to you by some new Tales of the Hall, I promise you. You told me that Mrs. Heyton was an orphan, but that is a mistake, for Mr. Mellish knows her father—he spoke of him from the pulpit only yesterday."

"Her father! why who is he then?"

"The Devil, my dear, no less; she is devil-born. The old lord has been ill with his gout lately, and I have seen a good deal of her, and I am certain about the parentage; I have never been treated by anybody with such insolence," continued the Doctor with indignation; "the only satisfaction to me is that I know it is upon your account."

"Upon my account, Doctor?"

"Yes, indeed; you took it very quietly when I told you that poor Heyton comes to my house every day to ask after you; but you little guessed how he suffers for it. I sometimes think she is out of her mind; it would be a very good job for her husband if she were out of her body; I mean, as Mrs. Mellish says, when any of her obsequious pensioners pop off the hooks, if the angels were to take her, of which, as I am given to understand, there are two sorts. Well, Jack Heyton may have acted for once in his life like a fool—my impression is, he did. But he will not put up with a wife like that for long; and, I repeat, that before many weeks are out there will be a flare-up at the Park. If your uncle will be ruled by me, Evy, he will wait here and see it."

With a nod, before which the significance of Lord Burleigh's shake of the head sank into imbecility, the Doctor rose from his seat, and took his leave. It was evident to Evy that his outbreak against Judith had not been excited merely by the remembrance of her rudeness to himself, which must, however, have been excessive. He must have meant to hint to her that the evil reports concerning her uncle had their source in that implacable woman, whose own conduct, he hoped, would presently bring upon her general reprobation, and, consequently, discredit of her scandals. That the Doctor befriended her was an all-sufficient reason for Judith's dislike of him; that she should be enraged with her husband for taking any interest in her recovery was also explicable enough. But there was something that bespoke such an intensity of malice, in this stirring up of the public mind against her defenceless uncle, that almost deserved the Doctor's epithet—devil-born.

"Well, darling, and what is the report this morning?" inquired Mr. Hulet, entering at this moment; "for the Doctor was in such a hurry, and seemed in such a temper, too, that I could scarcely get a word with him."

"The bulletin is 'convalescent,' uncle," answered she, cheerfully. "I am ready to leave Dunwich at once. This very day, if you please."

"But did he really give you leave?" inquired Mr. Hulet, with anxiety.

His pale face glowed, not with pleasure, indeed, for such an expression had long been a stranger to it, but at least with pleased surprise.

"He even gave me the most excellent reasons for departure, uncle."

"Then I may positively say that we shall be away to-morrow," ejaculated Mr. Hulet, with a sigh of inexpressible relief.

"Let us go, by all means," said Evy; "but what need is there to tell others?"

"None whatever, darling; of course not."

"You said, 'may you say so,' uncle?" answered Evy, regarding him very steadfastly. "Is our persecutor, then, so very importunate?"

Mr. Hulet hung his head.

"She is, my darling. She has written to me twice already. But, if you had not been equal to it, I would not have gone. I would not have risked your life to save my own. No, no!"

"But what harm do we do her by remaining here a few days longer, or even altogether?"

"I don't know, dear; I don't know."

"She resents my presence here, whom she has so basely wronged; she is furious with her husband because he has shown some interest in whether I should live or die——"

"I dare say, I dare say," interrupted the old man, wringing his hands. "But since you are strong enough to go away, let us do so. I have not breathed freely since she came. You will want your things packed up; you must do nothing yourself; I will ring for Jane—my darling, oh my darling," exclaimed he, passionately, "what have I done to you! For one moment's crime—one instant of besotted weakness—I have ruined not only myself, for that were nothing, but——"

"Hush, hush, dear uncle; you know we were never to speak of that; I do not wish to hear it. I have a picture of you in my mind which no stain cast by others can spot or blur; I pray you do not deface it with your own hand."

"A picture of me, Evy?" answered he, in a hoarse voice. "Is it that of a man broken down, disgraced, by his own selfish pride and obstinacy? Sold into slavery by his own wicked act; smitten by his own cowardly hand?"

"No, dear uncle, no. That picture is like a crystal pool, into which you may yourself (no one else) thrust a frantic hand, and stir up doubts and fears, misgivings and suspicions, which for a moment may make it muddy and turbid; but presently they sink down, and all is clear again. If all the world should say it—if he himself should confess it—if I saw him upon the very scaffold doomed to die for it, I would never believe that Angelo Hulet was guilty of a crime. Calm yourself, dear uncle, do not, I pray you, do not kneel; it is most distressing to me, most shocking."

"I do not kneel to you, my darling," murmured the old man, "I kneel to Heaven, to thank it for your words. Oh, if I dared to tell you; but I have sworn to keep the secret; and, besides, you could not bear to hear it, or having heard it, you could never more take this vile hand as now, or kiss my cheek; or, if you did, you would shudder afterwards, as though the stain of blood——"

"Rise, rise, uncle; for Heaven's sake, hush, there is some one at the door."

He had hardly tottered to a chair before

the knock was repeated; it was not the ordinary summons which the servant was wont to give, but had a nervous and impatient sound.

"What is it, Jane?"

"Your bell rang, Miss, I think."

"It did; but why do you look so frightened?"

The woman's face was indeed a scared one, and she turned it towards her master, as if to inquire of him whether her news was to be told.

"You need not fear to speak before me," said Evy, perceiving the cause of her hesitation; "whatever tidings you may have to tell, I am quite strong enough to hear."

"Oh, Miss, but this is so terrible. Mrs. Heyton—Miss Judith that was—has been thrown from her horse out hunting—and, oh Lord, she's dying."

"Dying!" echoed Evy; the shock was a very severe one, though not altogether of the nature that Jane supposed it to be. It was very terrible to reflect that this woman, of whom she had been thinking such evil, was on the brink of death; at the threshold of that Judgment-seat where no astuteness would avail her; but her immediate sensation was one of relief. The string of the millstone that hung about her uncle's neck would surely now be loosened; he would be once more a free man."

Mr. Hulet was sitting with clasped hands, gazing on the carpet with a look of stony horror. If Jane had said "your niece is dying," instead of having thus spoken of his mortal enemy, he could not have shown a more despairing face.

"You may go, Jane," said Evy, "until I ring again."

"Uncle, dear uncle, what is the matter? This is very, very shocking news, but it is not so terrible to me as to see you thus."

"Terrible! is it so terrible? What will it be then when the people come to see me hung?"

Had the sudden sense of enfranchisement been too much for the old man's brain? Evy had heard of such an effect in the case of long imprisoned or enslaved men, and surely this man had been enslaved. Was Judith then, living or dying, doomed ever to be his curse and hers?"

"Listen to me, uncle, listen. If this news is true, remember, you are a free man. The sword hangs no longer above your head that Judith held there."

"But she is true, remember, you are a free man. The sword hangs no longer above your head that Judith held there." answered the

old man, with a haggard air; "if Judith dies—you do not understand—the sword falls of itself. Pray for her:" he turned towards Evy with passionate eagerness. "You are good, you are pure—not as I am: your prayers will be heard. Pray then, pray that Judith Heyton may live, for when you pray for her life, Evy, you will be praying for mine."

CHAPTER XXXVIII. THE MESSAGE.

THE good folks at Dunwich had now indeed got that "something to talk about," of which Dr. Burne had spoken, albeit, the precise topic was by no means such as that gentleman had anticipated. In London nothing surprises us, nothing shocks us, for more than twenty-four hours, and then only at intervals of about a minute and a half in duration. The clubs are languid about everything.

"Second Edition of the Times says St. Paul's is on fire," remarks Smith.

"The deuce it is," says Brown. "Whereabouts?"

"The dome."

"Ah, that's bad; fire burns downwards, you know."

"No, I didn't. I thought it was the other way."

"Oh, dear no; you should always light a fire from the top. Faraday, or Huxley, or somebody found that out ten years ago or so—hullo, here's Jones. I say, Jones, the dome of St. Paul's is on fire."

"Dear me, that's bad. Gad! what a way up the fire engines will have to pump!"

"Never thought of that," says Smith.

"They should keep them at high pressure," remarks Brown the scientific.

"Yes, I suppose that would do it," answers Jones, wearily. "Beg pardon for yawning, but I was up late last night. Are you dining here to-night?"

"Yes, with Smith."

"That's all right; so am I."

After which, not another word about poor St. Paul's.

Now, in Dunwich, if the parish church had happened to be burnt down, nothing else would have been talked about for weeks. And what was the conflagration of any ecclesiastical edifice, in comparison with the catastrophe that had befallen the leading lady (if so stagey an expression may be pardoned), of the whole neighbourhood, the bride of the heir presumptive of the house of Dirleton; beautiful, accomplished—"best amateur lady rider

in England, I am given to understand," says Mrs. Colville, naturally desirous not to confuse the future Lady Dirleton with any of your "horsebreakers"—who had, nevertheless, come to such fatal grief on the very first Meet of the season. The Meet had been at Dirleton Park itself. All the county had been asked to breakfast, and all Dunwich had gone to see it start afterwards for the chase. There were three hundred gentlemen in scarlet; a score of ladies in pony carriages; and about a dozen mounted beauties, in not altogether voluntary attendance upon Diana, the Hon. Mrs. Heyton. Judith in her riding habit was a spectacle calculated to exact worship from the mightiest hunter. If Nimrod had been there in person, he would have acknowledged her supremacy, and kissed her little buck-skinned hand. She was an inch and a half taller than any of her compeers, as she stood on the terrace with the rest, waiting for the horses to be brought round. When on horseback, she towered above them some six inches, for she was mounted, by her own especial desire, upon Walltopper—the self-same steed that had won the steeple-chase at Balcombe. Her cheeks did not need the glow that rushing through the air at headlong speed would presently bestow upon all faces; she looked the picture of health. And when the old Duke of Loamshire rode up to her side, perhaps to tell her so, but, at all events, to pay some old-world compliment, she had looked the picture of happiness.

Lord Dirleton had had so bad a night with his gout that he did not put in an appearance, even at the breakfast; and it was whispered by the envious of her sex, that that unfortunate circumstance did not seem to have depressed Mrs. Heyton's spirits. Gout, it is said, carries off everything else: but it also sometimes carries off its subject; and, if it did please Heaven to take Lord Dirleton, then Judith would assume what she had of late been accustomed to look forward to, as "her proper position." That she would become it, so far as personal appearance went—look every inch of it—there was no doubt. As for wits, she had in reality enough to serve for half-a-dozen viscountesses, but in that respect she always played many points under her game. Nobody knew how clever Judith was—except one person, who had paid very dearly for the information.

Where she showed less judgment—and indeed her hand—was in manner. To her superiors, as the world considered them, she was oil; to her inferiors, she was vinegar. This should not, however, be laid to the sole charge of a base nature: years of unwilling subservience, of hated submission to a patron's caprices, had doubtless helped to make her what she was. The slave is always in training to assume the tyrant's place; and she had obtained it. Still, until she had come to Dirleton Park, this had not been so patent; nor was it only increase of opportunity that had brought it into prominence. Something had happened—or had not happened—since that period, which had put the Hon. Mrs. Heyton out. A certain person who was her bondsman—just as much her thrall as though he had worn her name engraved on an iron collar about his neck, as in the good old times—had dared to show signs of contumacy. He had not defied her, indeed, for he was a sane man enough; but when she had said "Go," he had omitted to do so. And it was necessary for her comfort that he should go. She would not have about her gates, liable to meet her in her walks or rides, with worn reproachful face, one Eva Carthew, whom her husband, too, was fool enough to pity. This girl was ill, 'twas said: that might be so, or not; she was not ill enough to die, it seemed. And being alive, and yonder—her humble roof within sight of her own chamber—the place which was "so royal rich and wide," and of which Judith was the mistress, was cursed and profitless. The very air that she drew in was poisoned for her; and the poison worked within her veins, and turned her blood to gall. That was what made her cruel, hard, impatient with all about her, and where she dared, she had shown herself to be so.

From this cause, although to the great so much is forgiven, so much excused, she had made many enemies. The very servants of her household, used to the old lord's imperious ways, thought better of them, and prayed that his rule might last, and many a year elapse, before the young master, whom they had liked so well, should come to reign over them, because of Judith who ruled him. That was understood by all; she was the captain's master. He was not henpecked, for John Heyton was no fool: where he would have his way, he got it: but it was grudged to him, and seldom got. Like the sluggard knight in the great master's

story, he was averse to combat, indolent and easy-going, but once you roused his wrath, he snatched his lance, and with his visor up, rode reckless at his foe, and horse and man went down before him; and it was thought by those who knew him best, that his wrath was kindling now, and that his lady had need beware. Perhaps it was the wish that was father to the thought; there had been no quarrel between them—not a word of remonstrance had been heard to pass her lips concerning her husband's visits to the Doctor's house, nor the interest he manifested in his patient; but a coolness seemed to have grown up between them, and, at any rate, considering that they had been so lately married, the young couple were not fond.

With the village folk Judith was exceedingly unpopular. The Captain, who had had the pick of all the young ladies in the land, might have chosen better, they thought. She was not to be named in the same breath as himself—except for beauty. Even the women among them did not refuse their admiration to her in this respect; and as they thronged to the Park and fringed the lawns and terrace, they pointed out the Captain's lady to one another, and acknowledged that he might well be proud of such a mate. Then when the horn sounded and the whip—for the dogs scenting forbidden game would fain have lingered in the Park—and all the gay company on horseback and on wheels moved slowly towards the gates, you could scarcely anywhere have seen a more goodly show. In the rearmost knot of all, with her husband by her side—somewhat silent and thoughtful, it was afterwards said, as though filled with some presentiment of woe (albeit the Past can trail a shadow as gloomy as any that the Future casts before it) rode Judith, superb of carriage, and flushed with pride and pleasure; only for a moment, as the cavalcade passed Seymour's Home, and with its noise and clatter brought the Lieutenant himself into the little garden to lean on the low wall and watch it pass, did her laughing lips close up, her face grow grave. Like a queen, surrounded by her court, she had gone forth that morning, throned on that noble steed; and in the afternoon had been brought home in very different fashion; carried upon men's shoulders on a hurdle, since no other motion could her shattered frame endure. Her face was covered with her handkerchief, and hence some said that

she had fallen face foremost; that her dainty features had been so cruelly disfigured that none could recognise them; others said that she had been pitched upon her head, and with such force that even if she made shift to cling to life, her mind was gone. The wildest rumours were afloat about her. Some even averred that she was dead already, and when at nightfall something on four wheels, drawn by four horses, whirled into the Park from town, it was whispered—so mad the people were for monstrous news—that it was her coffin.

Dr. Burne might have sold his every syllable for gold, in answer to scores of eager questions, but gold could not procure even a sight of him. He had been sent for in hot haste to the Park, where two physicians from London had since joined him; and all three remained there yet, though it was night. At nine o'clock, however, it being quite dark, the Doctor passed out unrecognised through the curious crowd that hung about the gates, and crossed the street to Seymour's Home.

"Is your young mistress still up, Jane?" was his eager inquiry.

"Oh, yes, sir. It is impossible for any of us to go to bed without having heard a word—that can be relied on—of what has happened."

"I see, I see," answered the Doctor, looking at the domestic very hard, but quite unconscious of her remark.

"Is your master with Miss Evy?"

"Yes, sir; they are both together; Miss Evy has sent me out a dozen times to learn how Miss Judith—that is, Mrs. Heyton—is progressing. If she had been her dearest friend, my poor young mistress could not have seemed more anxious. But that we naturally all are. How is she, sir? If it's a secret, Doctor, nobody shall hear one word of it from me."

"Good girl. Yes, you can be trusted; now show me in."

"But you haven't told me, sir," persisted the Abigail, frantic with curiosity and bent upon becoming the most sought-for personage in Dunwich as the confidante of the Doctor. "How is she?"

"Mrs. Heyton? Hush—well, she is much the same," was the disappointing reply, with which he pushed by her, and opened the parlour door.

At first, Mr. Hulet, who was sitting by the fire, and staring moodily into its glowing depths, did not so much as stir; but

when Evy came forward to greet their visitor, he also rose in haste, and with a "God save us, is it you, Doctor?" inquired his news.

"It is bad news," answered the Doctor, slowly. "News, such as if it were of one dear to you, would wring your heart, and in any case should move it to pity."

"We do pity her," said Evy, softly.

"Will she live or die?" inquired the old man, with harsh abruptness. "That is the question."

"She will die—I knew you would be sorry when I told you that, old friend," he added, as Mr. Hulet groaned, and turned away his face. "If you could but see her, you would forgive her, whatever she has cost your darling here. Others in your case, Evy, would say, 'It is a judgment; but not you.'"

"What is it that has happened?" inquired she, looking nervously towards her uncle, "is it certain that she cannot live?"

"Nothing short of a miracle could prolong her life for eight-and-forty hours. The horse refused a fence, as I understand; she pressed him at it, and he reared and fell back upon her. The spine is crushed. She cannot rise, she cannot sit, it is pain to her even to draw breath. I have left her—lying on the spring couch that they have sent from town—a piteous spectacle. There is only one thing in the world that can give her any comfort, and I have promised to procure it."

"Great Heaven, why do you waste time here then?" cried Evy, greatly moved by this picture of her once companion's piteous case.

"Because it is here alone that what she seeks is to be found. Evy, it was only this morning that I uttered bitter words to you concerning this unhappy woman, wished her ill-fortune, nay, God forgive me, lightly spoke of what is even now about to happen—her death. For my sake—if I may ask nothing for her own—enable me to make amends for it. Her one cry is to see Eva Carthew before she dies. I promised to bring you to her."

"She shall not go," cried Mr. Hulet, in harsh and grating tones. "I will not have her do it—Evy, I charge you, do not stir."

"Is that my old friend who speaks?" asked Dr. Burne, reprovingly. "His voice is strange; his words are stranger still—I do not recognise himself in either."

"I tell you it is not decent, girl, to cross Captain Heyton's threshold," continued

the old man, without taking notice of this remonstrance, "or if you have no shame upon your own account, forbear at least upon mine. Lord Dirleton has insulted me."

"For shame, sir," interrupted the Doctor, with indignation; "what are these fine feelings worth, that they should be quoted as obstacles to the comfort of a dying woman?"

"I did not speak to you, sir; I spoke to Evy," answered the old man passionately. "I know you care nothing for my niece in comparison with your rich patient; but she is all in all to me. At this hour and in this bitter weather she would risk her life by venturing out of doors, just risen as she is from her sick bed."

"Your niece shall take no harm, Mr. Hulet, I promise you," answered the Doctor, earnestly. "A closed carriage is in readiness, and will be here in five minutes, in case she follows the dictates of her own generous heart and consents to come."

"Indeed I must go, dear uncle," said Evy, soothingly. "I cannot refuse a request so solemn. Yes; send the carriage."

"To-morrow, go to-morrow," pleaded the old man.

But the Doctor had already left the room.

"To-morrow may be too late, uncle; to-morrow I may have to reproach myself with what will haunt me to my own last hour."

"Go, then, and come back, no longer my own darling, but a disobedient wilful girl, whom I have disowned. Do you hear me?" His harsh notes failed him; and in appealing accents he added, "No, I don't mean that, Evy; I can't mean that; but you will have disowned your unhappy uncle. That woman will tell you such dreadful things about him, such unimaginable horrors, that you will shrink from him; we have heard, it is true, that she is delirious, but she will have method in her madness, aye, and malice too."

"My dear, dear uncle, be she mad or sane, what matters it? What power can words of hers have against the faith that I have painted to you but this morning."

"But the proof! Suppose she shows the proof! Oh, pause while there is yet time; while yet you have an uncle whom you love and honour. I hear the carriage-wheels. Dear Evy, promise me?"

"I promise you, dear uncle, benefactor,

father, to take all words for lies, all proofs for forgeries, that seek to show you guilty—but I must go."

Here the Doctor entered, with Jane laden with cloaks and shawls for her young mistress.

Mr. Hulet spoke no more, but sank down in his chair like one on whom Fate has spent its worst.

Evy stooped down and kissed his forehead, then hurried away, her trembling frame supported by the Doctor's arm.

PROLOGUES.

"It is singular," Miss Mitford wrote to Mr. Fields, her American publisher, "that epilogues were just dismissed at the first representation of one of my plays—Foscari; and prologues at another—Rienzi." Foscari was originally produced in 1826; Rienzi in 1828. According to Mr. Planché, however, the first play of importance presented without a prologue was his adaptation of Rowley's old comedy, "A Woman never Vext," produced at Covent Garden on the 9th November, 1824, with a grand pageant of the Lord Mayor's Show as it appeared in the time of Henry the Sixth. At one of the last rehearsals, Fawcett, the stage manager, enquired of the adapter if he had written a prologue? "No." "A five-act play and no prologue! Why, the audience will tear up the benches!" But they did nothing of the kind. They took not the slightest notice of the omission. After that, little more was heard of the time-honoured custom which had ruled that prologues should, according to Garrick's description of them—

Precede the play in mournful verse,
As undertakers stalk before the hearse;
Whose doleful march may strike the harden'd mind,
And wake its feelings for the dead behind.

People, indeed, began rather to wonder why they had ever required, or been provided with a thing that was now found to be, in truth, so entirely unnecessary.

The prologues of our stage date from the earliest period of the British drama. They were not so much designed as were the prologues of the classical theatre to enlighten the spectators as to the subject of the forthcoming play; but were rather intended to bespeak favour for the dramatist, or to deprecate adverse opinion. Originally, indeed, the prologue-speaker was his own representative. In his person, or in his name, he addressed his audience. The Deuce 'em

Colman, after a lively fashion, points out the distinction between the classical and the British forms of the prefatory address:—

What does it mean? What can it be?
A little patience—and you'll see.
Behold, to keep your minds uncertain,
Between the scene and you this curtain!
So writers hide their plots, no doubt,
To please the more when all comes out!
Of old the Prologue told the story,
And laid the whole affair before ye:
Came forth in simple phrase to say,
"Fore the beginning of the play
I, hapless Polydore, was found
By fishermen, or others, drowned!
Or—I, a gentleman, did wed
The lady I would never bed,
Great Agamemnon's royal daughter
Who's coming hither to draw water."
Thus gave at once the bards of Greece
The cream and marrow of the piece;
Asking no trouble of your own
To skim the milk or crack the bone.
The poets now take different ways,
"E'en let them find it out for bays!"

The prologue speaker of the Elizabethan stage entered after the trumpets had sounded thrice, attired in a long cloak of black cloth or velvet, occasionally assuming a wreath or garland of bays, emblematical of authorship. In the accounts of the Revels in 1573-4, a charge is made for "bays for the prologgs." Long after the cloak had been discarded it was still usual for the prologue-speaker to appear dressed in black. Robert Lloyd, in his *Familiar Epistle to George Colman* (1761) writes:

With decent sables on his back
(Your 'prologuizers' all wear black)
The prologue comes; and, if it's mine
It's very good, and very fine.
If not—I take a pinch of snuff,
And wonder where you got such stuff.

Upon this subject, Mr. Payne Collier notes a stage direction in the Induction to Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*, 1615: "Enter three, in black cloaks, at the doors." Each of them advancing to speak the prologue, the first exclaims—"What mean you, my masters, to appear thus before your times? Do you not know that I am the prologue? Do you not see this long, black velvet cloak upon my back? Have you not sounded thrice?" So, also, in the Induction to Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, two of the children of the chapel contend for the privilege of speaking the prologue, one of them maintaining his claim by pleading "possession of the cloak."

The custom of regarding the "prologuizer" as the author, or his representative, seems gradually to have been departed from, and prologues came to be delivered by one of the chief actors in the play, in the character he was about to un-

dertake, or in some other assumed for the occasion. A certain solemnity of tone, however, was usually preserved in the prologue to tragedy—the goodwill and merciful consideration of the audience being still entreated for the author and his work, although considerable license was permitted to the comedy prologue. And the prologues acquired more and more of a dramatic nature, being divided sometimes between two and three speakers, and less resembling formal prologues than those inductions of which the early dramatists, and especially Ben Jonson, seem to have been so unreasonably fond. The prologue to the *Poetaster* is spoken, in part, by Envy "rising in the midst of the stage," and, in part, by an official representative of the dramatist. So, the prologue to Shakespeare's *Second Part of King Henry IV.* is delivered by Rumour, "painted full of tongues;" a like office being accomplished by Gower and Chorus, in regard to the plays of *Pericles* and *King Henry V.* It is to be noted that but few of Shakespeare's prologues and epilogues have been preserved. Malone conjectures that they were not held to be indispensable appendages to a play in Shakespeare's time. But Mr. Collier is probably more correct, in assuming that they were often retrenched by the printer, because they could not be brought within the compass of the page, and because he was unwilling to add another leaf. In addition to those mentioned above, the prologues to *King Henry VIII.*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, are extant, and have the peculiarity of informing the audience, after the old classical fashion, something as to the nature of the entertainment to be set before them. To the tragedy of *The Murder of Gonzago*, contained in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare, no doubt, recognising established usage, provided the prologue—

For us and for our tragedy
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

Steele, writing in the *Guardian*, in 1713, expresses much concern for the death of Mr. William Peer, of the Theatre Royal, "who was an actor at the Restoration, and took his theatrical degree with Betterton, Kynaston, and Harris." Mr. Peer, it seems, especially distinguished himself in two characters, "which no man ever could touch but himself." One of these was the Apothecary in *Caius Marius*, Otway's wretched adaptation of *Romeo*

and Juliet; the other was the speaker of the prologue to the play in Hamlet. It is plain that Mr. Peer's professional rank was not high; for these characters are not usually undertaken by performers of note. Steele admits that Peer's eminence lay in a narrow compass, and to that attributes "the enlargement of his sphere of action" by his employment as property-man in addition to his histrionic duties. Peer, however, is described as delivering the three lines of prologue "better than any man else in the world," and with "universal applause." He spoke "with such an air as represented that he was an actor, and with such an inferior manner as only acting an actor, as made the others on the stage appear real great persons and not representatives. This was a nicety in acting that none but the most subtle player could so much as conceive." It is conceivable, however, that something of this subtlety existed rather in the fancy of the critic than in the method of the player. This story of Mr. Peer is hardly to be equalled; yet Davies relates of Boheme, the actor, that when, upon his first appearance upon the stage, he played with some "itinerants" at Stratford-le-Bow, his feeling, but simple, manner of delivering Francisco's short speech in Hamlet—

For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart,

at once roused the audience to a sense of his merits. "His salary was immediately increased by the manager; and he proved afterwards a great ornament of the stage."

The delivery of a prologue by an actress—that is to say, of course, by a boy in female dress, personating the character of a woman—appears to have been an unusual proceeding upon the Elizabethan stage. Mr. Collier has noted instances, however, in the case of the prologue to *Every Woman in her Humour*, 1609, spoken by the heroine Flavia. "Enter Flavia as a prologue," runs the stage direction; and she begins—"Gentles of both sexes and of all sorts, I am sent to bid ye welcome. I am but instead of a prologue, for a she prologue is as rare as a usurer's alma." And the prologue to Shirley's *Coronation*, 1640, was also delivered by one of the representatives of female character. A passage is worth quoting, for its description of ordinary prologue-speaking at this time—

Since 'tis become the title of our play,
A woman once in a coronation may
With pardon speak the prologue, give us free
A welcome to the theatre, as he

That with a little beard, a long black cloak,
With a starched face and supple leg hath spoke
Before the plays this twelvemonth. Let me then
Present a welcome to these gentlemen;
If you be kind and noble you will not
Think the worse of me for my petticoat.

It would seem that impatience was sometimes expressed at the poetic prologues and lengthy inductions of the dramatists. The prologue to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Woman Hater*, 1607, begins:—"Gentlemen: Inductions are out of date, and a prologue in verse is as stale as a black velvet cloak and a bay garland; therefore you have it in plain prose, thus —" But the alteration did not please, apparently; at any rate, upon a subsequent production of the play, the authors furnished it with a prologue in verse of the old established pattern.

The Elizabethan dramatists often took occasion in their prologues to lecture the audience upon their conduct in the theatre, exhorting them to more seemly manners, and especially informing them that nothing of an indecorous nature would be presented upon the scene. The prologue to *The Woman Hater*, above mentioned, pronounces "to the utter discomfort of all twopenny gallery men," that there is no impropriety contained in the play, and bids them depart, if they have been looking for anything of the kind. "Or if there be any lurking amongst you in corners," it proceeds, "with table books who have some hope to find fit matter to feed his malice on, let them clasp them up and slink away, or stay and be converted." Of the play, it states, "some things in it you may meet with which are out of the common road: a duke there is, and the scene lies in Italy, as those two things lightly we never miss." The audience, however, are warned not to expect clap-traps, or personal satire. "You shall not find in it the ordinary and overworn way of jesting at lords and courtiers and citizens, without taxation of any particular or new vice by them found out, but at the persons of them; such, he that made this, thinks vile, and for his own part vows that he never did think but that a lord, lord-born, might be a wise man, and a courtier an honest man." In the same way Shakespeare's prologue to *Henry VIII.* welcomes those, "that can pity," and "such as give their money out of hope, they may believe."

Those that come to see
Only a show or two, and so agree,
The play may pass; if they be still, and willing,
I'll undertake, may see away their shilling
Richly in two short hours.

But they are plainly told they will be deceived who have come to hear a merry graceless play,

A noise of targets, or to see a fellow
In a long motley coat guarded with yellow.

The prologue to Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*, entreats the audience to abstain from idle conversation, and to attend to his play, so that they may hear as well as see it.

He'd have you wise,
Much rather by your ears than by your eyes;
And prays you'll not prejudice his play for ill,
Because you mark it not and sit not still,
But have a longing to salute or talk.

Alas! what is it to his scene to know
How many coaches in Hyde Park did show
Last spring? what fun to-day at Medley's was
If Dunstan or the Phoenix best wine has? &c., &c.

In the induction the prologue is interrupted by the entrance of four gentlewomen, "lady-like attired," representative of Mirth, Tattle, Expectation, and Censure or Curiosity. The last named is charged with coming to the theatre "to see who wears the new suit to-day; whose clothes are best formed, whatever the part be; which actor has the best leg and foot; what king plays without cuffs, and his queen without gloves; who rides post in stockings and dances in boots." It is to be noted, too, that at this time the audience occupying the humbler places in the theatre are very harshly spoken of in the prologues. They are referred to as—

The vulgar sort
Of nutcrackers that only come for sport,

and as "grounds of your people that sit in the oblique caves and wedges of your house, your sinful sixpennymechanics," &c.

It is plain, however, that the rudeness of Ben Jonson's prologues had given offence, for, indeed, he employed them not merely to lecture his audience, but also to lash and laugh to scorn rival playwrights. So to the *Magnetic Lady* no prologue was provided, but an induction, in the course of which "a boy of the house" discourses with two gentlemen concerning the play, and explains that the author will "not be entreated to give it a prologue. He has lost too much that way already, he says. He will not woo the Gentile ignoramus so much. But careless of all vulgar censure, as not depending on common approbation, he is confident it shall super-please judicious spectators, and to them he leaves it to work with the rest by example or otherwise." Further the boy gives valuable advice upon the subject of criticism, bidding the gentlemen take

seats and "fly everything you see to the mark, and censure it freely, so you interrupt not the series or thread of the argument, to break or pucker it with unnecessary questions. For I must tell you that a good play is like a skein of silk, which if you take by the right end you may wind off at pleasure on the bottom or card of your discourse in a tale or so—how you will; but if you light on the wrong end you will pull all into a knot or elf-lock, which nothing but the shears or a candle will undo or separate."

After the Restoration prologues appear to have been held more than ever necessary to theatrical exhibitions. The writing of prologues even became a kind of special and profitable vocation. Dryden's customary fee for a prologue was five guineas, which contented him, until in 1682 he demanded of Southerne ten guineas for a prologue to *The Loyal Brothers*, alleging that the players had hitherto had his goods too cheaply, and from that time forward ten guineas would be his charge. Dryden is to be accounted the most famous and successful of prologue writers, but it must be said that his productions of this class are deplorably disfigured by the profligacy of his time, and that all their brilliancy of wit does not compensate for their uncleanness. Dryden's prologues are also remarkable for their frequent recognition of the critics as a class apart from the ordinary audience; not critics as we understand them exactly, attached to journals and reviewing plays for the instruction of the public, but men of fashion affecting judicial airs, and expressing their opinions in clubs and coffee-houses, and authors charged with attending the theatres in the hope of witnessing the demolition of a rival bard. The prologue to *All for Love* opens with the lines—

What flocks of critics hover here to-day,
As vultures wait on armies for their prey,
All gaping for the carcase of a play!

And presently occurs the familiar passage—

Let those find fault whose wit's so very small,
They've had to show that they can think at all.
Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls must dive below.
Fops may have leave to level all they can,
As pigmies would be glad to lop a man.
Half wits are flens, so little and so light,
We scarce could know they live, but that they bite.

Another prologue begins—

They who write ill, and they who ne'er durst write,
Turn critics out of mere revenge and spite;
A playhouse gives them fame; and up they start
From a mean fifth-rate wit, a man of parts.

The more important critics are described as—

A jury of the wits who still stay late,
And in their club decree the poor play's fate;
Their verdict back is to the boxes brought,
Thence all the town pronounces it their thought.

"The little Hectors of the pit" are also spoken of, and there is mention of "fop-corner," the prototype of "fop's alley" of later years. Now, "a kind, hearty pit" is prayed for, and now, in a prologue delivered before the University of Oxford, stress is laid upon the advantages of "a learned pit." It may be noted, too, that the prologues of Dryden, apart from their wit, and overlooking, if that can possibly be managed, their distressing grossness, are invaluable for the accurate and minute pictures they present of English life, manners, costumes, and character in the reign of Charles II.

In right of the many quotations it has supplied to literature and conversation, Dr. Johnson's prologue spoken by Garrick upon the opening of Drury Lane Theatre, in 1747, may claim to be considered the most famous production of its class; it is not, in truth, however, a prologue as prologues are ordinarily understood, but rather an address, written to suit special circumstances, and having no connection with any particular play. Boswell describes it as unrivalled for "just and manly dramatic criticism on the whole range of the English stage, as well as for poetic excellence," and records that it was during the season often called for by the audience. Johnson's prologue to his friend Goldsmith's comedy of "The Good-natured Man," was certainly open to the charge brought against it of undue solemnity. The first lines—

Press'd with the load of life the weary mind
Surveys the general toil of human kind,

when enunciated in the sepulchral tones of Bensley, the tragedian, were judged to have a depressing effect upon the audience—a conclusion, which seems reasonable and probable enough, although Boswell suggested that "the dark ground might make Goldsmith's humour shine the more." Goldsmith himself was chiefly disturbed at the lines describing him as "our little bard," which he thought likely to diminish his dignity, by calling attention to the lowness of his stature. "Little bard" was therefore altered to "anxious bard." Johnson also supplied a prologue to Kelly's posthumous comedy of *A Word to the Wise*, represented in 1770, for

the benefit of the author's widow and children, although he spoke contemptuously of the departed dramatist as "a dead staymaker," and confessed that he hated to give away literary performances, or even to sell them too cheaply. "The next generation," he said, "shall not accuse me of beating down the price of literature; one hates, besides, to give what one has been accustomed to sell. Would not you, now," and here he turned to his brewer friend, Mr. Thrale, "rather give away money than porter?" To his own tragedy of *Irene*, Johnson supplied a spirited prologue, which "awed" the house, as Boswell believed. In the concluding lines he deprecated all effort to win applause, by other than legitimate means:

Be this at least his praise, be this his pride :
To force applause no modern arts are tried ;
Should partial catcalls all his hopes confound,
He bids no trumpet quell the fatal sound ;
Should welcome sleep relieve the weary wit,
He rolls no thunders o'er the drowsy pit ;
No snares to captivate the judgment spreads,
Nor bribes your eyes to prejudices your heads.
Unmoved, though wittings sneer and rivals rail,
Studious to please yet not ashamed to fail,
He scorns the meek address, the suppliant strain,
With merit needless ; and without it vain ;
In Reason, Nature, Truth he dares to trust :
Ye fops be silent, and ye wits be just !

Of prologues generally, Johnson pronounced that Dryden's were superior to any that David Garrick had written, but that Garrick had written more good prologues than Dryden. "It is wonderful that he has been able to write such a variety of them." Garrick's prologues and epilogues are, indeed, quite innumerable, and are, almost invariably, sparkling, witty, and vivacious. They could scarcely fail to win the favour of an audience; and then, oftentimes, they had the additional advantage of being delivered by himself.

Prologues seem to have been a recognised vehicle of literary courtesy. Authors favoured each other with these addresses as a kind of advertisement of the good understanding that prevailed between them—an evidence of respect, friendliness, and encouragement. Thus Addison's tragedy of *Cato* was provided with a prologue by Pope—the original line, "Britons, arise be worth like this approved," being "liquidated" to "Britons, attend!"—the timid dramatist being alarmed, lest he should be judged a promoter of insurrection. Johnson, as we have seen, now and then provided his friends with prologues. The prologue to Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Garrick, to b

spoken by Woodward, the actor, dressed in black and holding a handkerchief to his eyes; Colman wrote the prologue to the *School for Scandal*; and Sheridan supplied a prologue to Savage's tragedy of *Sir Thomas Overbury*, on the occasion of its revival at Covent Garden, thirty-five years after the death of its author.

Prologues have now vanished, however, and are not unlikely to be re-introduced. It must be added that they showed symptoms of decline in worth long before they departed. Originally apologies for players and dramatists—at a time when the histrionic profession was very lightly esteemed—they were retained by the conservatism of the stage as matters of form, long after they had forfeited all genuine excuse for their existence. The name is still retained, however, and applied to the introductory, or, to use Mr. Boucault's word, "proloquial" acts of certain long and complicated plays, which seem to require for their due comprehension the exhibition to the audience of events antecedent to the real subject of the drama. But these "proloquial acts" are things quite apart from the old-fashioned prologue.

THOUGHTS.

"THE sun set in a sea of brilliant hues,
Crimson, and gold, and azure; one by one
I saw the colours blend and interfuse,
And follow down the pathway of the sun.
I almost wished with them to fade away
Over the distant edge, and die as they."

Thus spake my friend half lightly; but my heart
Shrank, trembling at the words with sudden dread.
"And when the time shall come for us to part,
Must each go on his way alone?" I said;
"And in that unknown country shall we meet,
Or seek each other with unresting feet?"

Shall we love there, as here—what thinkest
thou?"

He answered slowly with a thoughtful face:
"If from my nature could be taken now
All memories, passions, hopes, the love and grace
Which is of thee, and maketh up the whole,
'Twould leave the merest shadow of a soul;

But if our lives begin anew, 'twill be
As if we ne'er had lived." With blanched cheek
I answered, "Say not that, it frighteth me."

"Why," said he, smiling, "How art thou so
weak?"

Why fear or wonder? Let us live our best,
And to our Father's goodness leave the rest."

SPIRITED AWAY.

EVERY now and then we see in the newspapers "mysterious disappearance." Sometimes it is a young lady, sometimes a boy of roving mind, sometimes a business man. Now and then we fear there is a real tragedy connected with it, though very very seldom of the "Bayswater mystery"

type. Oftener the disappearance means heart-breaking, it may be, to the one who is gone as well as to those who are left behind. Perhaps the affair gets into the agony column of the *Times*, amid the correspondence of burglars, who are popularly supposed to communicate confidentially under tragic as well as comic masks; "dearest X, return to your inconsolable family, all shall be forgiven," being as much to their purpose as "give the baboon a biscuit." Oftenest, however, the mystery ignobly collapses. The lad comes back when his pocket-money is spent, and he gets hungry; the business man, whose wife was alternately terrified by newspaper hints that he might have been "lured down a cellar," or "hurried under one of the arches of the Adelphi," or "kept in some dreadful den until a ransom was extorted," and maddened by "kind friends," who suggested that he had gone out on a spree and taken some one of the other sex with him, nay, that perhaps by this time he had another wife in America—the wife, who has been equally anxious either way, finds her husband able, when he turns up, to give a satisfactory account of himself; or, if he can't, she is wise enough to say nothing about it, and, above all, not to take the "kind friends" aforesaid into her confidence. It is the public, that part of it which is getting to live more and more on sensations, that grumbles. People think they are ill-used because there has been after all no scandal, no spiriting away, no mystery of any kind.

They couldn't have grumbled in that way about the "absence," as the old pamphlet calls it, of William Harrison, gent., steward to the Lady Viscountess Campden, who, in 1660, suddenly disappeared, and did not turn up again for more than two years, during which time three people had been hanged for murdering him, and he himself had been a slave in Turkey. There are horrors enough to please anybody: and the case is rendered doubly remarkable by the evidence, or rather no evidence, on which the supposed murderers were convicted. You will find it in Vol. III. of the *Harleian Miscellanies*, reprinted from a pamphlet of the time, which describes it as "one of the most remarkable occurrences which hath happened in the memory of man."

It was on August 16th, 1660, that Mr. Harrison, an old man of seventy, went from Campden, in Gloucestershire, to Charringworth, two miles off, to receive

my lady's rents. As he had not come back between eight and nine at night, his wife sent their man John Perry to meet his master. Nothing more was seen of Perry that night, and next morning young Harrison went out to look for his father, and meeting Perry took him round to various farms, where they were told the old man had called the day before, but had not staid. At last they heard that an old woman "leesing" ("pikeing" is the Mid-land word, "gleaning" it is called in the Home counties) in a field near Campden had picked up a hat, band, and coat near a big furze-brake on the highway. So to her they went, and found the hat and coat hacked and cut, and the band bloody. They searched the furze-brake, but could find nothing; indeed all Campden turned out to search, but the supposed dead body was not forthcoming, nor do we hear of any stains on the ground or signs of a struggle.

Next day Perry was brought before a justice of the peace, and said that having gone about a land's length towards Charringworth he was afraid to go further, and told William Reed, whom he met, that he would go back and fetch his young master's horse. He then met another man, one Pearce, and made with him a second start; but again lost heart, and, at last, went back and lay in the hen-roost till he heard twelve strike. He then started again; but, a great mist rising, he lost his way and lay under a hedge till morning. He then went into Charringworth, heard of the steward from several, one of whom had paid him twenty-three pounds, and was returning home with his news, when he met young Harrison as aforesaid. All those whom Perry had met confirmed his statements in every particular. "But," asked the justice, "if you were afraid at nine of the clock, how became you so bold at midnight?" "The moon had then risen," replied Perry. "Why did you adventure forth again without asking whether your master was come home?" "I knew he was not, because I saw a light in his room."

Perry was kept in custody, sometimes in the lock-up, sometimes in an inn at Campden; and during the week he told "somebody" that his master had been killed by a tinker, at least so "somebody" informed the justices. "Somebody else," had heard him say that the servant of a neighbouring squire had done it; while a third "somebody" averred that Perry had

declared the body was hidden in a certain bean rick, which was of course at once pulled down to no purpose. The wretched man was then brought a third time before a J. P., and urged to confess if he really knew who the murderer was. Whereupon, with strong affirmation that he would die to justify his words, he said:—"Ever since I've been in my master's service my mother and brother have lain at me to help them to money, they being so poor; bidding me tell them when my master went to receive the rents, for they would then waylay and murder him. On that very 16th of the month I was going an errand, and met my brother. 'Now's your time,' said I, 'for to-day he goes for the rents.' The same evening I met him hanging about the gate, through which my master would turn in home through the gardens. It was very dark, but we heard some one inside the grounds, and my brother followed in; but I took a turn in the fields, and going in by-and-by I found my master on the ground, and my brother upon him, and mother standing by. 'Ah, rogues, will you kill me?' cried my master. 'Don't kill him,' said I; but my brother replied: 'Peace, peace, you're a fool;' and so strangled him, and took a bag of money out of his pocket, and threw it into mother's lap. They then said: 'Go you to Campden Court, and see if anybody is stirring, and we will throw him into the great sink by Wallington's mill.' So I took my master's hat, and coat, and band, and went to the Court gate, where I met Pearce, and walked with him a piece of the way, as if to look for my master. Then I went into the hen-roost, and, rising as aforesaid, I hacked the hat and coat with my knife, and threw all three on the highway, that it might be thought he was there robbed and murdered, and then I went on towards Charringworth."

Hereupon Joan and Richard Perry were apprehended, and there was much fruitless searching of mill-sinks, and drawing of fish-ponds, and poking among the ruins of Campden house, burnt in the late wars.

Poor Joan and her son indignantly deny the whole charge, which John affirms, saying he will justify it to his death; and it makes against Richard that as he was being taken back from the justice's house, he dropped out of his pocket a ball of inkle, which one of the guard took up. "Give it me," he said, "it is only my wife's hair lace." The guard untied it,

found a slip-knot at the end, and showed it to John, who was too far on in front to notice when it was dropped. "That," cried he, "is the very string my master was strangled with." Moreover, next Lord's day, Joan and Richard were brought to church, the minister designing to speak to them and exhort them to repent and confess. Their road lay past Richard's house, and, two of his children running out to meet him, he took one up in his arms and led the other by the hand, when, on a sudden, both their noses fell a bleeding, "which was looked on as ominous."

People then remembered that, the year before, Mr. Harrison's house had been broken into, on the market-day, while he and his family were at lecture, and seven score pounds of money taken away. Besides, not long before the steward's disappearance, John Perry had one night made a hideous outcry in the garden, and, running in, had declared that two men in white, with naked swords, had set upon him, and he had defended himself with a sheep-pick, which he showed to be hacked in several places. John, therefore, being questioned about the robbery, said his brother was the thief, and had told him the money was buried in their garden. "We were to have divided it this Michaelmas," added he. Of course, after the strictest search, nothing was found in Perry's garden. The men in white, he acknowledged, was an invention: "I wanted to make my master think there were rogues about, that we might rob him without suspicion."

John, Joan, and Richard were tried at the next assizes: first, for stealing, in 1659, a hundred and forty pounds out of Harrison's dwelling-house; next, for murder. To the first they pleaded not guilty; "but, some one whispering behind, they soon after pleaded guilty, and were pardoned by the Act of Oblivion (framed after his sacred Majesty's restoration for far other purposes). They that prompted them were probably unwilling to lose time and trouble the court with their trial, in regard the Act of Oblivion pardoned them. Nevertheless, afterwards, and at their deaths, they earnestly denied they knew anything about this robbery."

The judge could not try them on the second count, because the body had not been found; so they were kept in prison, John persisting in his story, and adding that his mother and brother had tried to poison him in jail, and that he durst neither eat nor drink with them.

At the next assizes, in the spring of 1661, the judge was less scrupulous, and the three were tried for murder. All pleaded not guilty, and when John's confession was proved by the J.P. and several witnesses, he replied that he was then mad and knew not what he said. Richard further averred that his brother had accused others, as the tinker and the squire's serving man; but these were not questioned, and the jury found all three guilty. Then followed one of the most shocking outrages on justice which English law has ever committed. On Broadway Hill, in sight of Campden, the mother was first hanged, "being reputed a witch, and to have so bewitched her sons they could confess nothing while she lived." Then Richard, with his foot on the ladder, once more professed his innocence, and that he knew absolutely nothing of Harrison's death or what was become of him, and with great earnestness begged his brother, for the satisfaction of his own conscience, to say what he knew about him. But John, "with a surly and dogged carriage, told the people he was not obliged to confess to them." At the last, however, Richard having been hanged, he declared he knew nothing about what had happened to his master; "but by-and-by, perhaps," he said, "it may be found out."

And so it was; for, in 1663, Sir Thomas Overbury, J.P. of Burton, in Gloucestershire (what relation of the Sir T. Overbury so mysteriously murdered in the reign of James I. we cannot tell) received a letter from old William Harrison himself, telling how on that night, of the 16th August, in the narrow passage amongst Ebrington furzes (the good old law of Richard II., that there should be fifty feet plain and bare on each side of the king's highway, seems to have been become obsolete) a horseman met him and called out, "Art thou there?" "I, fearing he would have rid over me," said Harrison, "struck his horse over the nose, whereupon he struck me with his sword and ran it into my side, while another came behind me, and then another, and hoisting me up behind one of them, fastening my wrists round his body with something that had a spring lock, and gave a snap as they put it on." They then put a lot of money into his pocket, why, is not explained, and carry him to the sea-side at Deal, keeping him alive, wounded and bruised as he is, with broth and strong waters. One Wrenshaw then takes him on board a ship,

there being some talk between Wrenshaw and the men about seven pounds. On shipboard he remains six weeks, and gets pretty well of his injuries. He finds plenty on board "in the same condition as himself;" but when the captain comes round one day, and says he has spied three Turkish cruisers, they all, captives as they are, volunteer to fight in defence of the ship. "No; keep you close (says the captain) and I'll deal with them well enough." He soon calls them on deck, and they see two Turkish ships close by, into one of which, he and others are put, and after various sufferings at sea, and on shore, are brought out for sale. Each being asked his trade or calling, Harrison says he has some skill in physic, and is handed over to "a grave physician of 87 years of age, who lived near Smyrna, but had been in England, and knew Crowland in Lincolnshire, which he preferred before all other places in England. . . . He employed me to keep his still-house, and gave me a silver bowl, double gilt, to drink in. . . . once he set me to gather cotton wool, which I not doing to his mind, he struck me down to the ground, and drew his stiletto to stab me, but I, holding up my hands to him, he gave a stamp, and turned from me." After a year and three quarters, the old Turk calls him, "as he was used by the name of Boll," (query Bull), and says: "I am going to die, and you must shift for yourself." As soon as he is dead Harrison goes down a day's journey, with his silver bowl, to the nearest port, and finds no English ship, but a ship of Ham-burgh, bound for Portugal in three or four days. The Ham-burghers are afraid to take him on board, lest the searchers should find him, and so their goods and lives should be forfeit. At last one of them, who had been "very stiff in his denial, at the sight of the bowl is put to a pause," and agrees, in exchange for it, to let him lie down in the keel, covering him with boards and such like. There he stays, "daily furnished with victual," till they get to Lisbon, where he is put ashore moneyless, to shift for himself. Going up into the city he comes into a fair street, and being weary, turns his back to a wall and leans upon his staff. There soon pass four gentlemen, one of whom speaks to him in Portuguese; he answers in English; whereupon the speaker replies in the same tongue, that he is a Wisbeach man, and, hearing his story, gives him lodging and

diet, till he can make interest with the master of an English ship to take him home. "Bringing me aboard, he bestowed on me wine, and strong waters, and gave me eight stivers, and recommended me to the master's care. He landed me at Dover whence I made shift to get to London." And so, with a few lines of praise to God, concludes this "true account," on which Sir Thos. Overbury's comment is, that he considers "the whole business amongst the most remarkable occurrences of this age." Many, he tells us, questioned the truth of Harrison's statements, and believed he was never out of England. But, then, why should he—for fifty years and more in honourable and plentiful service with the Campden family, a man, too, of sober life and conversation, and reputed a just and faithful servant—have so strangely misbehaved himself in his old age? It was not because his accounts were out of order. Moreover, he left in his house a considerable sum of the viscountess's money. Of one thing there is no doubt, the Perrys suffered unjustly; Harrison affirmed that he never set eyes on any of them that evening, those who carried him off being men whom he had never seen before. That he was "spirited away as some are said to have been," Sir Thomas cannot believe, "in respect he was an old and infirm man," fairies being notoriously particular, and choosing either promising babies or stout, well-set-up fellows, like Ogier le Danois. He also remarks how hard it is to think that any one would take the trouble to carry off an old man who would only fetch seven pounds all the way from the middle of Gloucestershire to the coast of Kent.

Old Harrison did not live long; and his son succeeded to the stewardship, in which office he was not popular; and his enemies set afloat the story that he had contrived his father's removal, in order the sooner to step into his shoes. Yet, admits Sir Thomas, it is hard to think that he, knowing what had happened, should prosecute the Perrys to the death, and should provide for their being brought for execution to Broadway-hill, near twenty miles from where they were condemned, close, indeed, to his own gates, and where he could daily see them hanging in chains. "So bitter was he, that he himself stood at the foot of the ladder when they were put to death." This bitterness may to some seem like conscious guilt determined to thrust away from itself. On the whole,

however, we must feel, as Sir T. Overbury did, that "it is best to suspend hard thoughts till Time, the great discoverer, shall bring to light this dark and mysterious matter." Time, however, is sometimes a concealer; and from that day to this, nothing more has come out about the Harrison mystery.

There was, of course, nothing incredible in the carrying a man off and selling him to the Turks. Crimping and kidnapping were regular professions. Bristol stood at the head of this nefarious traffic, which went on with the connivance of Government so far as "our plantations" were concerned. Labour was wanted out there; negroland was so well worked by Spaniards and others that we could not supply our needs thence; and "the labour field of the South Pacific" was not yet opened up, nor had the happy thought occurred to any one of getting hold of Chinese or Hindoo coolies. So political prisoners were sent out wholesale, much under the same conditions under which French "reds" and "suspects" have been shipped any time the last twenty-five years to Cayenne and Lambessa and New Caledonia. Barbadoes alone must have had enough, what with Cavaliers, and Irish (sent over in swarms by Cromwell), and Scotch Covenanters (those who escaped hanging after Bothwell Brigg and Claverhouse's subsequent raids), to have peopled the whole West Indies, if they had been sent out to live instead of to die. But the demand continued; for so long as men could be easily got it did not seem worth while to take much care of them. I suppose whenever there was a glut in the "plantation" market, the Turks came in for their share; or perhaps, at times they outbid the Christians. Now and then they took the matter into their own hands; Sallee rovers were, in those days, by no means unknown in the Channel, and they were always ready to pick up what came in their way. Nearly half a century after, when our navy was at a low ebb, and Tourville, having destroyed Teignmouth and harried the coast of Torbay, was defeating Sir G. Rooke and scattering the great English and Dutch Smyrna fleet, an Algerine cruiser fell on the town of Baltimore in Ireland, sacked it, and carried off nearly all the inhabitants. There is, then, no *prima facie* improbability in Harrison's story. What he related might have befallen him; and those who seized him might have been paying off an old grudge, or might have

fancied the old steward would have a great deal more about him than twenty-three pounds. Anyhow the affair was much talked of at the time; and has never since been cleared up. For one thing we may be thankful; people are certainly not hanged now-a-days on the miserable insufficient evidence which was enough to bring the three unhappy Perrys to the gallows.

FATAL OMENS.

THERE may be some advantage in believing in lucky omens, since the believer enjoys his good fortune in expectation, if not in fruition; but, unless it be good to meet trouble considerably more than half way, those who have faith in death-tokens are not to be envied. If they would not make themselves miserable with dismal guesses as to the coming vacancy in the home circle, they must keep every window close, lest some erratic bird fly in, and out again; and even then a robin, intent on a friendly call, may tap thrice at the glass barring his entrance, a heedless swallow may tumble down the chimney, or a lively crow croak thrice as he flies over head—all infallible signs of a speedy visit from the grisly king. In Northamptonshire, it is sufficient to see three magpies in sociable communion, to become aware a burying is at hand, although elsewhere the sight is a welcome one, for

One is a sign of sorrow, two a sign of mirth.
Three are a sign of a wedding, and four a sign of a birth.

Chaucer speaks of the "owl eke that of death the bode bringeth," and Spenser's "whistler shrill, that whoso hears shall die," has but to flap his wings against an invalid's chamber door, and the doctor may go his way. The owl's evil repute reaches even to Siam, where his perching upon a roof is held prophetic of at least one death in the house it covers. The only bird rivalling the owl in this sinister respect is the raven. "I had as lief hear the night raven, come what plague could have come after it," says Benedick. Full of her fell purpose, Lady Macbeth exclaims,

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements;

and the victim of Iago's treacherous counsel, and his own weak credulity, cries

It comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
Boding to all.

According to an Eastern tradition, Cain, after committing the first murder, wandered about the earth with his brother's body, knowing not how to rid himself of the ghastly burden. One day he came upon two ravens in fierce conflict, and saw the victor make a hole in the ground with his talons and beak, and deposit therein the body of his foe. Taking the hint, Cain set to work with his hands, and hid Abel's corpse in a grave beneath a palm tree. When he had finished his task, his instructor, who had watched the operation from a tree branch, flew to Adam with the news. From that time the raven has been a messenger of ill to mankind. The grim aspect of the raven, his sombre plumage, and his odd croak, in some measure excuse his libellers; but it is hard upon the pigeon that he cannot rest on a tree, or stray into a house without being scouted as the harbinger of death. Fowls roosting at noon lie under the same imputation, and if a hen so far forgets herself as to crow, the only way of preventing a death following such an assertion of the equality of the sexes, is to wring the offender's neck.

The liability of insects to play the part of death-seers seems to be limited to the bee, the butterfly, and the death-watch. The ticking of the last behind the wainscot, the appearance of three butterflies taking the air in company, or the mere entrance of a wild hummer into a house, are all equally fatal. If a swarm of bees choose to settle upon a dead hedge-stake, a dead tree, or the dead bough of a living one, a death is sure to occur in the family of the owner before twelve months have gone by. It is a still more serious matter for an ox or a cow to break into a man's garden; that is a warning he will hear of three deaths in his family in the ensuing half year. Does the feminine horror of mice spring from a latent belief in the superstition that a mouse running over a person, or squealing behind a bed, is as ominous of drawn blinds as the howling of a dog outside a sick man's house?

Some shrewd old farmer, we suspect, first promulgated the notion that the missing of a drill in sowing betokened the demise of somebody employed on the farm, before the season was out; but how the idea could obtain anywhere that a similar misfortune is entailed by growing parsley in a garden is beyond comprehension. Thanks to gas, colza, and rock-oil, one is pretty safe now-a-days from having one's equanimity

disturbed by a tallowy winding sheet; but, unless we eschew open fires, we must remain liable to receive an unpleasant notification by a coffin-shaped cinder popping out upon us. Materfamilias should look to it that nurse makes sure baby is in the cradle ere she sets about rocking it, for if the cradle be tenantless when rocked, a little coffin will soon be required. Ladies who love their lords must beware of fracturing the symbol of wedlock, the breaking of a wedding ring being a certain sign that its owner will soon wear the weeds of widowhood. We suppose the rarity of such an accident has invested it with such dire significance. Rarer still is the substitution of a mourning ring for the circlet of plain gold, and no wonder Mauritia de Nassau swooned when she discovered her careless bridegroom had bound her to him with a death's-head ring. When he should have been at church the young Earl of Balcarres was quietly taking breakfast in his nightgown and slippers, oblivious of the fact that it was his wedding morning. Reminded that the fair Mauritia was waiting for him, he dressed hurriedly, and hastened to church. When the wedding ring was wanted, it was not forthcoming, and Balcarres taking a ring from a friend's hand, placed it upon the bride's finger. After the ceremony was over, the lady glancing at her hand, beheld a death's head and cross bones upon the ring, and fainted. When she recovered, she declared she was destined to die within the year, a sentiment that probably helped to bring about its own fulfilment, for before the twelve-month expired, the heedless earl was a widower.

When the Scottish "dead-bell" tinkled in Lord Marmion's ears, the forger-hero addressing Fitz-Eustace, said—

Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seemed in mine ear a death-peal rung.
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul.
Say, what may this portend?

but the squire left the Palmer to answer. "The death of true friend"—a very safe interpretation upon the eve of Flodden. Persons possessing the uncomfortable faculty of second sight know that an individual will succumb to death within a year, when they see him or her accompanied by a shadowy shroud invisible to less favoured eyes; the nearer the shroud rises to the doomed one's head, the closer is the end at hand. Lord Reay writes to Mr. Pepys,

"A gentleman who was married to a cousin of Drynie's, living in the county of Ross, coming on a visit to him at his house, called him to the door to speak to him about some business. But when they went out, he was so frightened that he fainted, and having recovered, would in no wise stay in the house that night, but went with his wife to a farmer's hard by; where, she asking him why he left the house, he told her publicly that he knew Drynie would die that night; for when they went to the door, he saw his winding-sheet about him. And, accordingly, the gentleman did die that night, though he went to bed in perfect health, and had had no sickness for some time before. I had this story from Drynie's own son, the farmer, his servant, and the man himself who saw it." Henry, Earl of Clarendon, son of the famous chancellor, sets down a still stranger story for the secretary's edification. "One day, I know by some remarkable circumstances it was towards the middle of February, 1661-2, the old Earl of Newborough came to dine with my father at Worcester House, and another Scotch gentleman with him, whose name I cannot call to mind. After dinner, as we were standing and talking together in the room, says my Lord Newborough to the other Scotch gentleman, who was looking very steadfastly upon my wife, 'What is the matter, that thou hast had thine eyes fixed upon my Lady Cornbury ever since she came into the room? Is she not a fine woman? Why dost thou not speak?' 'She's a handsome lady, indeed,' said the gentleman, 'but I see her in blood.' Whereupon my Lord Newborough laughed at him; and all the company going out of the room, we parted; and I believe none of us thought more of the matter; I am sure I did not. My wife was at that time perfectly well in health, and looked as well as ever she did in her life. In the beginning of the next month she fell ill of the small-pox; she was always very apprehensive of that disease, and used to say if she ever had it she should die of it. Upon the ninth day after the small-pox appeared, in the morning, she bled at the nose, which quickly stopped; but in the afternoon the blood burst out again with great violence at her nose and mouth, and about eleven of the clock that night she died, almost weltering in her blood."

To see ourselves as others see us, is sentence of death with speedy execution. In 1793, the hostess of the Three Stags in

St. George's Fields, fell one day into a sort of slumber as she was sitting in the bar. When she awoke, she said that she had dreamed she saw herself enter a room where she was sitting; getting up from her seat, she spoke to her second self, taking the phantom, which resembled her in every particular, by the hand. Nothing her friends could say, would convince her it was only a dream. "Whether it was her eidolon or not," says the newspaper chronicler of the strange vision, "we shall not pretend to say; but, certain it is, that the next morning, after eating her breakfast, she was taken ill, and expired a quarter of an hour.

Were omen-mongers content with drawing dire conclusions from doleful visions, there would be something like method in their madness, but they make joy prophetic of sorrow, a light heart premonitory of heavy woe. Since prevision is happily denied mankind, it were odd, indeed, if instances could not be cited of merriment preluding misfortune. James the Second, of Scotland, held high revel, and was unusually gay, a few hours before he was murdered. Buckingham cut a caper or two upon rising from his bed, the day Felton's knife split his proud heart in two. A young officer put on new regimentals "to meet Master Soult," and was full of fun on the morning of Vimiera's fight, in which he was killed. The idea that high spirits presage impending calamity, does not lack poetic authority. Romeo has only just uttered the words,

*My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne,
And, all the day, an unaccustom'd spirit,
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts,*

when Balthasar comes with bad news from Verona. Hastings jests at the doubts of the boar-fearing Stanley, asking,

*Think you, but that I know our state secured,
I would be so triumphant as I am?*

but a little while before he hears Gloucester swear he will not dine before he sees his head. King Duncan had been in unusual pleasure before seeking the bed from which he was not to rise again. But in truth Shakespeare might be quoted as effectively to prove that low spirits forerun evil hap. Hamlet feels ill about the heart when summoned to meet Laertes with the foils: "such a gainsaying as would, perhaps, trouble a woman," but he defies the angry and goes to his death.

Sunday funerals would need no official discouragement, were it an article of common belief that if a grave be open on the

first day of the week, the sexton will have to ply his spade before another Sunday comes; but so far as we know this notion is peculiar to a solitary parish in Suffolk. Another superstition of the same sort is the belief that one death in a house will be speedily followed by another, if the door is closed upon a corpse, that is, if the house door be shut before the hearse has started on its journey.

Mr. Fludd told the author of "A History of Remarkable Providences," that James the First was earnestly entreated to forego disturbing the remains of his unhappy mother; it being very well known that if a body were removed from its grave, some of the family would die shortly afterwards; "as did," says Turner, "Prince Henry, and, I think, Queen Anne." He was half right, half wrong. Prince Henry's death followed hard upon the removal of Mary's body from Fotheringay to Westminster Abbey. That took place in the autumn of 1612; in September the Prince sickened, in October he took to his bed, and when, upon the twenty-ninth of the month, a lunar rainbow for seven hours seemingly spanned the palace of St. James's, the crowd of gazers accepted the unusual sight as a fatal omen, and upon the fifth of November, he who might have saved his race from ruin, passed away to his rest. James did not lose his consort till seven years afterwards, and we have his royal word for it that a comet appeared specially for the sad occasion. His bereaved majesty, turning poet in his grief, wrote,

Thou to invite, the great God sent a star;
His nearest friends and kin good princes are,
Who, though they run their race of men, and die,
Death serves but to refine their majesty.
So did my Queen her court from hence remove,
And left this earth to be enthroned above;
Then is she changed, not dead. No good prince dies,
But, like the sun, doth only set to rise.

Baxter assures us that the well at Oundle "drummed" in anticipation of the decease of Charles II. When Shakespeare's Henry IV. swoons after hearing good tidings from the seat of war, Prince Humphrey deems he will soon be sireless, because

The river has thrice flowed, no ebb between;
And the old folk, Time's dotting chroniclers,
Say it did so a little time before,
That our great grandsire, Edward, sick'd, and died.

The Welsh captain in Richard II. declares his countrymen cannot be longer kept together; the withering of the bay-trees, the bloody aspect of the moon, and meteors fighting the fixed stars of heaven, all assuring them the king is dead. When

there were lions in the Tower, the death of one of the royal beasts was supposed to herald the demise of the wearer of England's crown, as surely as any extraordinary disturbance of the elements announced a great man was dead. The Greeks, thronging Missolonghi's streets, to learn how it went with their poet-leader, cried with one accord, as a violent thunderstorm broke over their heads, "The great man is gone!" and they divined rightly, for at that moment Byron died.

Not a few old families pride themselves upon inheriting certain omens, whereby they are warned of death's approach. Some are warned by a meteor's light, some by melancholy strains of music floating from the mansion to die away in the woods. A mysterious knocking, never heard at any other time, tells the lords of Bampton that one of their race is bound for the silent land. A stamping by unseen feet on the palace floor predicates a death in the family of the ducal house of Modena. A sturgeon forcing its way up the Trent towards Clifton Hall, is a sign that the Cliftons of Nottinghamshire will have to put on mourning. For some days before the death of the heir of the Breretons, the trunk of a tree is to be seen floating on the lake near the family mansion. Two giant owls perch upon the battlements of Wardour Castle, when an Arundel's last hour has come. If a Devonshire Oxenham is about to die, a white-breasted bird flutters over the doomed one's bed. A local ballad relates how on the bridal eve of Margaret, heiress of the brave and generous Sir James Oxenham, a silver-breasted bird flew over the wedding guests, just as Sir James rose to acknowledge their congratulations. The next day, the bride fell dead at the altar, stabbed by a discarded lover.

"Now, marry me, proud maid," he cried,
"Thy blood with mine shall wed!"
He dashed the dagger in his side,
And at her feet fall dead.

Poor Margaret, too, grows cold with death,
And round her, hovering flies
The phantom bird for her last breath,
To bear it to the skies.

Howell saw a tombstone in a stone-cutter's shop in Fleet-street, in 1632, inscribed with the names of sundry persons, who thereby attested the fact that John Oxenham, Mary his sister, James his son, and Elizabeth his mother, had each and all died with a white-breasted bird fluttering above their beds.

A family of Loch Ranza, Arran, know

when one of their kin is about to die, by an invisible piper playing a lament on the hillside. When Death purposes visiting a McLean of Lochbury, the unwelcome caller is heralded by the spirit of a battle-slain ancestor ringing the bells on his fairy bridle, as he gallops twice round the old homestead. As a rule, death-announcing phantoms are of the feminine gender. No Lady Holland expects to shuffle off this mortal coil until she has seen a shadowy counterfeit presentment of herself. The Middletons of Yorkshire, as becomes an ancient Catholic house, have a Benedictine nun to apprise them of a reduction in the number of Middletons. A weeping, moaning, earthy-sprite warns the Stanleys of the death of a distinguished member of the family. A hairy-armed girl, called May Moullach, brings the like sad news to the Grants of Grant; the Bodach-am-dun, otherwise the ghost of the hill, performs the office for the Grants of Rothiemurcus, and most old Highland families boast their own familiar banshee, whose wailing, screaming, and weeping, tells them the head of the house must make room for his heir. Lady Fanshaw, visiting the head of an Irish sept in his moated baronial grange, was made aware that banshees are not peculiar to Scotland. Awakened at midnight by an awful unearthly scream, she beheld, by the light of the moon, a female form at the window of her room, which was too far from the ground for any woman of mortal mould to reach. The creature owned a pretty pale face, and red dishevelled hair, and was clad in the garb of old—very old—Ireland. After exhibiting herself for some time, the interesting spectre shrieked twice and vanished. When Lady Fanshaw told her host what she had seen, he was not at all surprised. "A near relation," said he, "died last night in this castle. We kept our expectation of the event from you, lest it should throw a cloud over the cheerful reception which was your due. Now, before such an event happens in the family and castle, the female spectre you saw always becomes visible. She is believed to be the spirit of a woman of inferior rank, whom one of my ancestors married, and whom he afterwards caused to be drowned in the moat, to expiate the dishonour done to our race." If all banshees originated in the same way, the less the proprietors of such things brag of the matter, the better. If we must believe in omens, rather than own a banshee, we

would put our faith in warnings that are common property, like the credulous folk who behold

No natural exhalation in the sky,
No scope of nature, no distemper'd day,
No common wind, no custom'd event,
But they will pluck away his natural cause,
And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
Abortions, presages, and tongues of heaven.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER LXXI. PITY AND PARDON.

It was a long winter, wonderfully mild about Christmas time, but afterwards unusually severe. We had "a stem" of hard frost, with biting east winds, succeeded by heavy snow-storms. I was reminded of the old time when I had encountered Rosetta, nearly perished with the cold, in Orme's Plantation; when I had ventured upon my most foolish journey by night to Overbury Hall. The farm was revisited by its old wintry disasters, frozen ponds and suffering cattle. Reube was beset with his old difficulties; day and night he was at the folds, combating the snow, and striving his best for the preservation of his distressed and shivering flock.

All had been made snug for the night, however. Wearied with many hours' toil and trouble my uncle had fallen asleep by the fireside. He had but just returned from the frozen water meadows. His hat hung upon the back of his chair; a cloud of steam was rising from his wet boots and gaiters. Rachel, I think, was taking counsel with Kem as to the preparation of something comfortable for his supper.

I had been conversing in a low tone with my mother as to certain plans I entertained. I sought her permission to go abroad in quest of my father, Sir George, of whom nothing had been heard for so long. That was to be my main object, at any rate; but combined with it was a desire to benefit, if possible, by study of foreign picture galleries.

The journey I proposed was a thing to be viewed with seriousness and even some alarm in those days, especially by one who had lived so many years in seclusion and stillness. My mother hesitated. I could see that my going would grieve her much, and yet I knew that in her heart she approved it. She felt that it was dutiful and right; her own anxiety for tidings of Sir George was not less urgent than my

own. For some time past, indeed, her distress on this account had been very sore. Again and again we asked each other, vainly enough, What had become of him? What had been his fate? Did he live still?

Something too we had spoken upon another matter. I mean my love for Rachel. This had somehow come to be oftentimes a subject of conversation between us. In truth I had confessed my love to my mother, artfully trusting to gather from her some clue to Rachel's sentiments in regard to myself. My cunning had not advantaged me, however. My mother would not aid me by revealing any secret knowledge she possessed. She declined, indeed, to set forth any opinion on the subject. That she regarded Rachel with great affection, and that, so far, my choice had her sanction, I was well assured. But as she said with a smile, "There are things a lover must find out for himself. He can learn them in no other way. Echoes are very deceptive. And what is the worth of hearsay evidence in such a case of all others? As a lawyer you should know, if not as a lover. Besides, a woman may not be conscious of her love until the touchstone of another's is applied to it. But I'm too old to talk of these things; and you, Duke—are you not too young?"

I said, what was indeed the truth at the time, that I no longer felt myself so very young; that of late I had grown older with great rapidity; and that the title of "Young Mr. Nightingale," which had so often been applied to me—something by way of taunt in many instances—had lost much of its appositeness.

"But are you sure you know your own heart, Duke?"

"I think so. I would I was as sure I knew hers." And then I stated my fears lest Rachel should accept my suit—supposing her to accept it—not out of her love for me, but moved by a sort of gratitude, and influenced by the thought that I had been the firm friend of poor Tony.

"It might be so," said my mother, nusingly. "But if she loves you, can it matter so very much why she loves you? If it is to be for his sake at first, will it not surely be for your own by-and-by? But love is so jealous; perhaps justly so. Well, Duke, if I'm to advise, I must say—wait."

"Her love lies in the churchyard yonder, I fear."

"But can it stay there? She is very

young. She has been severely tried, no doubt. Still her heart is not dead, Duke; you can't think that. There is snow all over the land just now. But can you doubt that the sun will shine forth—that the snow will melt—and the flowers lift their heads, and bud and flower again? Have but patience, Duke; and wait. Spring will come, and summer in due season. I said that you were still young. Does not this prove it? You have not yet learnt to endure. Disappointment and delay are new to you—and you cannot bear them uncomplainingly. May your burden of care be no heavier than it now is, Duke! But do not fear. Time sets things right. Meanwhile, we can but wait and hope—yes, and pray, my boy."

There were tears in her eyes as she spoke. She drew me towards her and kissed me tenderly on the forehead, smoothing away my hair, just as I remembered her doing long years before, when I was quite a child.

"I can't think what it is makes the dogs bark so," said my uncle, stirring in his easy chair.

The dogs were certainly barking; although our conversation had so engaged us that we had not before noticed the fact.

"I hope there's nothing gone wrong in the farm-yard. We've surely had mischief enough for one while." He took up his hat and prepared to sally forth. "It seems to me there's something moving in the front garden," he said, presently, after waiting to listen. "It can't be one of the cattle got loose."

He opened the front door, and stood on the step, looking forth. I joined him. The moon was shining brightly. Rays of ruddy light poured from the house upon the snow-clad garden—which seemed by contrast to acquire a bluish-green tint—with here and there black patches where the shrubs grew.

"I see nothing. Do you, Duke?" I pointed out to him footprints upon the gravel walks. Soon I perceived a figure standing at a few paces distance from the doorway; a man with a thick sprinkling of snow upon his dark dress.

I called to him, but he did not answer. Apparently he did not hear or understand me. I approached him. For the moment I did not recognise him.

"This is the Down Farm, I think?" he said.

His voice—it was broken, and hollow, and tremulous—sent a strange thrill through me.

"And this," he cried, suddenly, as I

took his hand, "this is my boy—this is Duke!"

"Father!"

The man was Sir George Nightingale. His hand was cold as a stone. He was thinly clad and wet through. He was standing in snow up to his ankles.

"I've come, Duke," he said, faintly. "I've come, at last. I thought I should have died on the way. I missed the track, and have wandered many miles. But I've seen you again, thank God! thank God! Now lead me in—take me to your mother."

His manner was most strange—he moved like a man in a trance. He was trembling violently—his face was terribly hollow and worn—livid from exposure to the cold. There was a curious filmy look about his eyes. His limbs seemed to have lost strength to sustain him—he swayed and tottered so that I circled him with my arms to save him from falling. I had but a moment to note these things, for I saw the necessity of bringing him at once into the house. He was dying of cold.

My uncle, shocked and bewildered, stared at us vacantly. Yet I can remember that with a sort of involuntary action he removed his hat and stood bareheaded on the door-steps as Sir George, with my help, moved past him.

My mother had issued from the dining-room and was standing in the hall. She wore a startled, perplexed air, but she did not yet fully comprehend what had happened.

"What has happened? Who is this?"
"Mildred!"

It was a cry almost of delirium; wild and shrill, terrible to hear; then he half slipped, half sprang from my grasp and fell down heavily at her feet. Something more he said, imploring her pity and her pardon, as I understood, but the words were so indistinctly uttered I could not be certain of their purport. For a moment his arms were stretched out imploringly; then I heard his hands strike noisily upon the floor.

"George!"

She was on her knees weaving her arms round him, struggling to raise him and to rest his head upon her bosom.

"George, George!" she cried piteously, over and over again. I took his hand; it was still icy cold. Still I fancied it returned the pressure of mine. Then all movement ceased. It was plain that he had become insensible.

"My husband!" she cried. "Speak to

me; George, speak to me," and she rained kisses upon his white face.

"He has fainted," I said.

My uncle left us hurriedly in quest of remedies—Kem emerged from the kitchen; Rachel was in attendance beside my mother. There was great commotion, and bewilderment, and alarm.

"He does not move!" cried my mother presently, as she rocked to and fro in her great anguish, pressing closely the inanimate form, as though to impart to it her own heart's warmth and life. "Tell him to speak to me, Duke. He will know your voice—he's forgotten mine! Tell him to say one word—but one. I love him—I have always loved him. It is my husband. My own dear husband come back to me at last. Forgive him? I've nothing to forgive. I love him—I love him. I have never loved but him in all the world. He's all in all to me. My life, my soul—speak to me, George. He does not move. Oh God!" she cried in her despair, as she turned and gazed about her with wild beseeching eyes. "Tell him to live, some one—tell him to speak to me. Live, George, live! Speak to me, my husband—" and then she fell swooning back with his head still resting on her bosom.

He never spoke, or stirred, or breathed again.

The death of Sir George Nightingale was duly announced in the newspapers, and occupied public attention for some time. Brief memoirs of him were published, setting forth the leading facts of his professional career with sufficient accuracy. His early demise was the subject of general regret. It was shown that entirely by his own merits and industry he had risen from a position of comparative obscurity to one of real distinction. High rank among the great English portrait-painters was freely accorded him. There was a disposition to estimate generously his gifts as an artist. A list was furnished of the rewards and dignities conferred upon him at various times. Knighted by his sovereign and appointed serjeant-painter in ordinary, he was also a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in France; a member of the Royal Academy of London, of the Imperial Academy of Vienna, and also of the academies of Rome, Florence, Venice, Bologna, and Turin. Concerning the details of his private life little was stated;

mention was made, however, of his unvarying amiability of character and finished courtesy of manner. It was said further that he had been at all times a liberal patron of the Fine Arts, and was renowned for the generous encouragement and assistance he had afforded to youthful and aspiring talent. The fact that, notwithstanding the popularity he had long enjoyed, and his large professional earnings, he had died in circumstances of some embarrassment, was attributed to the munificence of his disposition, and the excessive liberality of his charitable donations.

Of the wife who wept her dead husband, of the son who had lost a father, no word was said.

CHAPTER LXXII. BY WAY OF EPILOGUE.

AFTER some months spent in travel abroad, I had returned home to take up my abode again at the old farm-house, for a season.

Why did my steps turn towards Purrington church? Well, the truth is, that I knew Rachel was to be found there. She, too, had been away for a while—visiting friends in London, and receiving at their hands, as I understood, some salvage from the wreck of her father's estate. But she could not long be spared; her presence had become so indispensable to my mother, whose health for some time past had been but ailing and infirm. So she had come back, and, out of her old fondness for occupation and beneficence, had undertaken the instruction of a class of village children, assembled two or three times a week in the vestry. So I had walked to Purrington to meet her and accompany her home again.

As I passed through the churchyard, I noted that fresh flowers had been strewn upon poor Tony's grave.

The church-door was open. I entered and passed up the aisle, stopping to study once more the dim old fresco above the chancel-arch, which, ever since I could remember anything, had possessed for me such potent attraction. It was much the same to me now as it had ever been—veiled, indistinct, inscrutable, with clouds of crimson and blue, flecks of gold, and mere suggestions of outline. I could comprehend it no more than of old—less, perhaps: for childish fancy no longer came to help me.

"I often try to make out what it means," said a soft sweet voice. Rachel stood beside me.

An autumn sun shed rays of bright warm orange light upon the wall.

"Sometimes it seems all so clear to me; and then again, sometimes, I can understand nothing of it. But surely there, high up, do you see Duke? is a cross, with a golden glory about it. And is not this a crown of thorns? May it not be an allegory of Life, Duke? Are not these good angels and interceding saints? And here dark clouds—shrouding strange forms, that may be Sin, and Suffering, and Despair? But see above them nobler figures—that seem to soar, and yet to lead on, and invite by their example—Religion, perhaps—or this, with trailing draperies, to which I fancy I see hands clinging, might be Hope—and this Love—might it not be so, Duke? But all is so clouded—the poor picture has been so badly treated, one can but guess at what the painter meant. That's true of Life, too, perhaps. Is not that Love, Duke? Or is it only an idle fancy of mine? There, the sunshine's gone, and I see nothing now, but mist, and spots, and obscurity. Yet I know there's meaning behind. And there's always Love in the world—that we may not doubt."

We passed out of the church and stood just beyond the dark shadow of the great yew-tree.

"Always Love in the world," I repeated. "Does it never lie buried in the grave?"

"Can it ever wholly die? For a while it changes, and turns to sorrow."

"And sorrow fades?"

"Yes, it needs must. Yet it does not depart from us. We could not wish that—for sorrow is indeed something to prize. It teaches us so much—to endure—to trust—to believe. But why do I tell this to you who know it all so well already? For you have sorrowed deeply, Duke, have you not? you and yours. To lament—but not to repine—is not that our simple duty? And Hope comes to our aid—and the beautiful world spreads out before us to comfort and cheer—assuring us that there is work to do and a life to live here and hereafter. How lovely the fields look with the golden sun shining fully on them! How peaceful it is here! What a soft sweet breeze blows over the down!"

We stood for a moment in silence beside Tony's grave. Then we moved to the lych gate, and remained there awhile looking out, over the brook towards Purrington.

Something in the tender tranquillity of the scene—something I derived from Rachel's words, spoken as they had been

with the utmost simplicity of thought, moved and encouraged me towards a step I had long contemplated, yet feared to take.

Yet sooner or later I knew it must be taken. I nerved myself to take it then—with a suddenness that was a matter of wonder to me at the time, and for a long while afterwards.

And then I told her as simply and briefly as I could—but indeed it was not a very convenient time for picking and choosing forms of expressions—how dear she was to me, how long and how fondly I had loved her. And I besought her to become my wife.

She seemed startled, frightened even. For a moment I feared that I had forfeited her good opinion, that I had shocked her by the suddenness of my address: that indeed she thought almost scornfully of me for loving her, her estimate of her own worth being so modest. Then came a quivering smile upon her lips, a bright flush upon her cheeks, her eyes sparkled beneath their trembling lids; she leant her head upon my breast; her soft little hand nestled in mine; and I knew that she was won. I kissed her for the first time.

“When did you first begin to love me?” she asked presently.

“From the first moment of my seeing you.”

“Is that true, Duke? But it is true; because you say it, and because I like to think it true.”

“And you, Rachel, dearest—you began to think of me, and to care for me—when?”

“My dear, I liked you from the first—when you came into the drawing-room in Golden-square—what a while ago! You remember?”

“Of course I remember. Can I ever forget? And when did the liking turn to love?”

“How can I tell you? Does one ever know that? I liked—I could not own even to myself—I did not dare, I was too much ashamed—that I loved! But when you went away—you will never know how my heart sank within me. And when letters came from you—with just a sweet little message to me—or hint of remembrance of me—squeezed in at the end, now and then—”

“Always, Rachel.”

“Well always—it was always, my dear—I was in a fever till I knew how you were—what you were doing—when you

would be home again. I began to think, to fear, then, that I loved you. For how was I to know that you cared for me?”

“You might have been sure. But, first, you began to like me for Tony’s sake?”

“Of course. You were so kind to him, and my poor boy loved you so.”

“And then, afterwards?”

“Don’t ask me; for how can I answer? I liked you—I loved you for his sake—for mine, for your own. What does it matter? I love you, Duke; you may be sure of that, and you are sure. I love you—because I love you. Surely, you don’t want a better reason?”

After that we turned homewards, walking quietly, and I must say very slowly, over the down to the farm.

From a far-off field, old Renbe, pitching hurdles as usual, hailed us and waved his hat wildly in the air. It was mere chance. He could have known nothing of what had happened. Certainly he could not have seen me kiss Rachel as I helped her over the stile. Yet it was a pleasant tribute to my happiness, of which, indeed, all nature seemed to be thoroughly aware. Never did the sun set more brilliantly and joyously upon a more superb landscape. The very birds knew it, the dogs in the yard, the cattle in the meadows, and even, I do believe, the pigs in their sties.

My mother met us at the garden-gate, her pale worn face lit up with smiles and congratulations. She knew all, long before we came near enough to tell her.

My uncle upset his snuff-box in his haste to pat me on the back, shake hands with me, and clasp Rachel in his arms.

We were all very happy.

And so I close these passages in the life of YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

Other trials and troubles and grave experiences I underwent—for what human life has ever been without these? But further there is no need for me to recount.

Through all, my beloved Rachel was by my side, ever cheering and sustaining me with her tender love, her firm faith, the unexampled sweetness and purity of her nature.

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CHAPTER XXXIX. JUDITH'S DEATH-BED.

"You will not leave me, Doctor," whispered Evy, faintly, as she lay back in the swift rolling carriage. "I shall have you by me all the time?"

"If you wish it, dear girl, it shall be so. You will see nobody, however, but Mrs. Heyton herself."

"Will he not be there, then?" she inquired.

The Doctor had guessed rightly what was passing through his companion's mind—more terrible far than the interview before her had been the thought of meeting her former lover, her rival's husband.

"No Evy, she will be quite alone."

"Does he know that I am coming, then?"

"Yes, since he knows *you*. 'She will come,' he said, when his wife entreated me to fetch you. I confess I had my doubts of my own powers of persuasion, though, if you could have seen her, if you could have heard her piteous prayers for you, a harder heart than yours, Evy, would have been melted. At first we thought her brain was affected; but that is not so. She is as clear in her mind as ever, though she is half dead already."

"Half dead, Doctor! What do you mean?"

"The lower part of her body is paralysed: but she can speak and write. Her first cry was for pen and ink: her next for you. I seem to hear it now, and yet I have heard sad sounds enough not to be lightly moved."

"Is not this the Hall, Doctor?"

"Yes, but you are not to breathe the night air."

The carriage had stopped at the great gates; but they were now swung back to let it pass into the court-yard. The old porter, as its lamps shone on his purple face, looked wonder-stricken. He had little expected in the person for whom that unwonted order had been given, to behold Miss Carthew.

A levy of obsequious servants—lights—the spacious hall—and then, like one in a dream, she found herself ascending a vast staircase. The Doctor was by her side, and presently, in a broad, thick-carpeted corridor, hung with great pictures, he stopped and pressed her arm. Before them was a gilded door, with carved medallions, and over it a heavy entablature of oak, all fruit and flower.

"She is here," he whispered; and the door was opened softly, and a heavy velvet curtain drawn aside by unseen hands, and she stood in the sick woman's room. A spacious oak-pannelled chamber, with silver sconces branching from the walls, and in the midst a bed, the curtain folds of which were gathered together in a crowned canopy, and fell tentwise; her eyes mechanically sought the pillow—but a voice she knew, tremulous, yet distinct, from the bed-foot said: "I am here, Evy," and there, stretched out on a slight couch, was Judith.

Her face was seamed and pale, and pinched with pain, but her large eyes had kept their lustre, and they glowed upon Evy now with feverish yearning.

"It was good of you to come," she faltered; "I feared you would not, and there was so little time. In a day or two at furthest, they tell me, I must die. I cannot

raise my head, nor look around me, Evy; are we alone?"

"We are quite alone, Judith. Dr. Burne came in with me, but he has left the room."

"Draw nearer, Evy, for since you have come, it seems that the evil spirits who watch round my pillow, waiting, waiting, until I die, draw back a little; and yet I have never earned their hate as I have yours. A few hours—two days at most—and I shall be at their mercy—as others have been at mine, and I have not spared them. Two days, if so much, Evy, and then Death: the grave and worse—what lies beyond the grave. Think of it, think of it, and pity even me."

"I do pity you from my soul, Judith," answered Evy, "I am sorry beyond words can tell to see you thus."

"No, Evy, there is no one sorry—no one in all the world is sorry that I lie here dying, save myself. And when I am dead, to-morrow, or the next day, there will not be one to mourn me."

Here Evy would have spoken, but Judith stopped her.

"You were about to say my husband would regret me. That was kind in you, for it would have cost you much. But he will not do so—not now. You look at me with pain on that account. It seems so hard to you, that I should lose his love, because I am lying thus, decrepit, and no longer fair: but let this comfort you, I never possessed it, Evy. It was given to you. You wonder, even if this be so, why he is not here; here by his dying wife—'twere but a little thing, you think, that he should wait, though wearied of me, till I depart alone on the Dark Road, never to see him more, nor trouble him—and say good-bye; but do not blame him; 'twas I who bade him go: else, though he knows what I have sent for you to hear, he would have stayed, not out of love, but what you will not grudge me from him—**merest** pity."

The tears fell fast on Evy's burning cheeks; she strove to speak—to defend herself from this unhappy woman, who took it for granted that she still loved the man who was no longer hers to love—but the words died away upon her tongue. In such a presence, with the Shadow of Death already on that motionless figure, and the fear of it stamped upon that disfigured face, she felt such protestations to be vain.

"Draw nearer, Evy, sit you down quite

close," continued Judith, "lest through the weakness of my failing voice, you should miss aught of what I have to tell. Here is a paper—priceless to the man who has been your benefactor, and who, for your sake, was mine. Do not read it yet, but place it in your bosom for him, a gift which shall repay tenfold all the love he has lavished on you. Here is another, which I strove to write, in case I should not see you, but which I could not finish. It is said by some that the guilt-laden soul is purged by earthly torments of its sinful burthen; that something is abated of the punishment to come to those who have suffered here. If that be so, I am half ransomed, for every letter cost me a pang of torture, and was written as it were in my heart's blood. It is—or would have been, had I had strength to end it—what I must needs tell you now; the Confession of a Lost Soul."

Such pain it evidently cost the wretched woman to draw her breath, that Evy besought her to be silent, or to confine herself to such points only as she might consider vital, and needful to be told; but Judith shook her head—the very motion put her shattered frame to torture—and muttered, how that to tell the tale was itself a part of the punishment of which she had spoken, and which it was good for her to suffer.

"I need not grope back through my loveless life for its beginning," she began, "nor paint the dull dark days of childhood, ere Mrs. Mercer took me an orphan from an orphan's home. She chose me, doubtless, as she would have chosen a dog or a bird, for my handsome looks; for I could have had no good character from the mistress, nor was I popular with my young companions. Selfish to the core, I thought to serve myself by serving no one else save those who could serve me: and even to those I grudged my service. So when you met me at Balcombe, you found me, as you would have found me at any other period of my life, devoted to my patroness while her eye was on me; honey to such as Mrs. Bullion, who had benefits to bestow, and contemptuous of all others, who paid back my scorn with a dislike that was not unwelcome to my gloomy pride. And yet I hated those who strove to please, and were successful, like yourself. Nevertheless, I was compelled to use civility, because of Mrs. Mercer's growing fondness for you, and when I saw how she had resolved to

wed your uncle, I resolved to make you my friend. Trading on the generous tenderness of your disposition, I persuaded you that I had a lover, whom poverty alone prevented from becoming my husband, and thereby enlisted your sympathies on my behalf. If I had really loved, even I might perhaps have been touched by the simplicity with which you credited my words, and the unselfish aid you promised to afford me with Mr. Hulet: but there was no more genuineness nor wholesome feeling in me, than in the imaginary Augustus whom I had created. Nay, even when your kindness had borne fruit, I felt no gratitude; the sense of obligation hardened my envious heart against you rather, and the more so, since I found my new independence made me no more acceptable to others than before; I could no longer say, it is because I am portionless that people flout me so, and flatter the well-dowered Evy. As to your uncle, I had abhorred him from the first, for, from the first, I felt that he had seen through me, and I lived in fear of him, yet not so much in fear as hate, because I saw that he despised me. Then, presently, I learnt of your engagement. This was bitter news indeed. What I had looked for from the earliest time that I had begun to weave the net of my own life, was to win a wealthy husband. At first, my ideas had been comparatively humble; but when I saw, as I soon did, how beauty works with men, and felt my power, there were no bounds to my ambition. I might have married Mr. De Coucy, if I would—it was a lucky miss for him—and I gave hopes to Mr. Paragon, which would have blossomed, perhaps, but for the wrong I wrought yourself. These conquests were as nothing, however, when compared with such a success as yours. I listened with greedy ears to the stories of this young man's wealth and greatness, or rather to what they would have been, had he not sacrificed so much to keep your love. For this, I deemed him, as I deemed all others who consulted any interests but their own, to be a soft-hearted fool, yet envied you the chance that had made him yours. Then when I saw him, Evy—so handsome and bright, and full of courtesy—I will not soil Love's name, by saying that I fell in love with him, but I resolved to win him from you, if I could. You start, you gather up your skirts, as though in neighbourhood to some vile creeping thing

—and so you are: I was the adder, Evy, that you nourished in your bosom, and who turned and bit you. And here it lies at last—oh pity it!—trampled and torn, and without power to writhe, far less to bite, till some one comes to cast it into flame.”

“Oh, Judith, Judith, I forgive you,” cried Evy, pitifully; “forbear to torture yourself by further self-revilings. You are penitent; and since what is done cannot be undone—”

“Aye, but it can, girl,” interrupted Judith, earnestly: “a little, just a little. That is the one plank upon the awful unknown sea before me, to which I cling. If I held my peace, I should perpetuate a grievous wrong—an infamy. To have left one of those two papers behind me, and not to have written the other, would have been your uncle's doom. These, and this full confession I am about to make, are my poor claims to mercy—so I pray you hear me out. I will not linger over the treacherous acts by which I strove to make you of less account in Captain Heyton's eyes, or to exalt myself in them: enough to say that they were vain. He loved you with a faithful heart, Evy, and though I did my best to draw him to myself, and tempted him with every wile I knew, he still was yours. I felt that I was beaten, foiled, yet so far from submitting to defeat, when it seemed most certain, my desire for success had grown to be a consuming passion, the flame of which it took all my care and cunning to conceal. Then something happened, Evy, which your keenest conjecture has never guessed—to put those I hated most beneath my feet, and to give him whom I most desired to my arms.”

CHAPTER XL. THE CONFESSION.

“YOU doubtless well remember, Evy, the events of that day at the cottage, on the night of which Mrs. Hulet disappeared. Mr. De Coucy called, and your aunt expressed herself in such terms about your uncle's ancestor as angered her husband exceedingly. Her words, which were designedly irritating and contemptuous, rankled in his mind, and all that evening, notwithstanding that we girls were present, their quarrel continued. It was something far worse than their ordinary bickering, and it became so painful to you, that you left the drawing-room before the usual time, and retired to your own chamber. Mr. Hulet presently fol-

lowed your example, and then your aunt, who was very nervous and excited, proposed a turn upon the cliff-walk, to which, as in duty bound, I assented. Curiously enough, no sooner were we alone together, than she acknowledged herself to be in the wrong; confessed that she had vexed your uncle of design, and without provocation, and, but for my advice, would, I verily believe, have gone up-stairs and asked his pardon. I hated Mr. Hulet far too much, however, not to combat this proposal with every argument at my command, and, in the end, she resolved to put off reconciliation with him till the morning—that morning which she was fated never to behold. She was very nervous and hysterical—scarcely mistress of herself, in fact—and I had some difficulty to get her to her own room. By that time it was very late, yet I felt no inclination for sleep. The thought of your approaching marriage was ever present with me, and the sense of my own powerlessness to prevent it made me chafe and rage like a caged tiger. Perhaps, also, the scene of which I had just been witness excited me, and made me disinclined for repose. At all events, I left my room, and went downstairs again; it was a starlit night, and I thought to cool my feverish frame by pacing up and down the garden. I had no candle, but there was light enough in the drawing-room to find one's way about it: the shutters as usual were not closed, and I had but to open the glass door to gain the lawn; I did so, and had hardly closed it behind me, when I heard a noise within the house. Some one was coming softly down the stairs. It was Mrs. Hulet, still in her evening dress, and with a candle in her hand; she came into the drawing-room, with nervous haste, and began to search for something on the table, bending her head close down over it, as near-sighted people are wont to do. From my place outside the window, I could see what was on the table far better than she did, and I saw what I concluded she had come to seek for, her bottle of drops. She never went to bed without it, but in her distress and excitement that evening, she had doubtless forgotten to take it with her. There was also another bottle upon the table, which I recognised as one of Mr. Hulet's most powerful medicines—the very one which he had been remonstrated with for leaving about the house on a previous occasion. I knew it to be prussic acid.”

“Poor soul,” cried Evy, “then it was

an accident after all—but then, how could she have fallen into the sea?”

“Aye, how indeed? You are far from the truth yet, Evy. It was no accident: it was murder—and it was I who did it!”

“You! oh Judith!” Evy shuddered in spite of her efforts to conceal her horror, and hid her face.

“Yes, I; for I could have saved her life, and I did not. I saw her take up the prussic acid by mistake, and then with trembling hands uncork the bottle. There was plenty of time for me to have tapped at the window, and given her warning of what she was about to do; but I never stirred a finger. Three wicked thoughts rushed into my mind together, and held possession of it. One was that this woman had provided for me in her will. I had independent means already; I had not even the meagre excuse of poverty for what I did: it was mere greed that actuated me. ‘If this woman dies,’ whispered the devil in my ear, ‘you will be rich.’ My second thought was, ‘Her death will be a thorn in her husband’s side to his life’s end. He will feel that it is through his self-willed obstinacy and persistence in leaving drugs about, of which he has been warned so often, that she has come by her end. That look of supercilious scorn with which he had regarded me, as though it were not worth while to expose the evil which he had detected, would be exchanged for a shameful abasement; he would never lift up his proud head again.’ My third thought, the most importunate of the three, was this: ‘If Mrs. Hulet dies, Evy’s marriage will have to be put off.’ That of itself would be welcome, and moreover there would be time given me to plot and plan; the cup of happiness would not be then so close to your lips, and I might yet find some opportunity to dash it from them. All this occurred to me in a few seconds, during which I beheld my patroness—the woman I was indebted to for so much, however ungraciously bestowed, and whose very bounty was then tempting me—standing as it were on the brink of the grave—where I am standing now, Evy. Oh, if men could know, as I know, what it is to die, to feel the foot slip on the verge of that dread precipice in which existence ends, and the hands clutching in vain to find a hold, and the voice that would fain cry, ‘Help! Help!’ choked with the last sands of life, or desperately dumb because

we feel no help can avail; when the eyes that dare not turn to Heaven are fixed on the dark void beneath! Oh, if men could know it, Evy, there would surely be no more murders. The most merciless would spare his worst enemy his life—his life—yet I did not spare hers. I saw her pour those drops, each one of which would have been enough to kill her, into the medicine glass, and then—there would have been time even then to save her, but I had lost the power; my senses were numbed with horror; my face was glued to the glass as though fascinated by the tremendous spectacle; I saw her drink, then turn and look towards me. Perhaps she saw me, and was terrified at the sight, as well she might be; or, perhaps, the poison was already at work; but over her face there stole a look of unspeakable awe and terror, and then she fell forward—dead—upon the floor. That was how Mrs. Hulet came by her end, Evy.”

“How horrible! And you to have been the witness of it, Judith.”

“Aye, and the willing witness. The one who could have saved her life by stirring her finger, by breathing a word, yet who neither moved nor spoke. But that was not the sum of my crimes. It was but the commencement of them. Listen. For an instant after your aunt had fallen I forgot all my wicked hopes, and threw open the door with the intention of assisting her, notwithstanding that my reason told me that she must be past all aid. But just as I did so, I heard your uncle, whose chamber was above the drawing-room, and whom the noise occasioned by Mrs. Hulet’s fall had doubtless alarmed, hurriedly leave his room, and come down stairs. Then I fled back to the lawn, and took my place among the laurels, whence, myself unseen, I could still watch all that went on in the apartment. My own position had now become somewhat perilous, in case my absence from my room should be discovered, but I did not think of that; nor even of the catastrophe of which I had just been the witness; I was seized with an overwhelming curiosity to know what your uncle would do. He ran in from the hall in haste, but without noise—for he had come down in his stocking feet—and his face was pale and frightened. It is my conviction that he had already guessed what had really happened. He knelt down by your aunt’s side, and propped her up as well as he could against the sofa; then searched the table with haggard eyes until

they lit upon the bottle of prussic acid, which he hastily thrust into the pocket of his dressing-gown. Then he looked round him, with a nervous and excited air, and seemed to listen intently.

I had made up my mind that he would at once rouse the house, and was in that case prepared to run in, and account for my being out of doors by saying that I had been on the cliff walk seeking to cure a headache, but this was evidently not his intention. When he found no one stirring he came to the glass door and softly opened it. I was not ten paces off, and could observe him with great minuteness. There was terror in his face, but also an obstinate resolution, for which I could not account. Once more he listened and gazed around him, but all was quiet; though I thought he could not have failed to hear my heart-beats. Then he went back, and lifting your aunt’s body—to which his utmost strength seemed hardly equal—he staggered with it through the door, then dragged it after him across the lawn towards the cliff walk.”

“Oh Heaven; the shock had turned his brain then!” cried Evy, clasping her hands.

“Not so,” said Judith. “It was, indeed, but a mad scheme; but he was sane enough. I saw his plan at once, and guessed the motives that were actuating him. Filled with shame and horror at what had happened, and conscious that his own wilful carelessness and perversity had brought about his wife’s death, his first idea—the rash instinct of a man at once obstinate and weak—was to conceal his own share in the catastrophe. Sensitive as he was to public opinion, the idea doubtless struck him that since Mrs. Hulet and himself were known to be on ill terms, it might be suggested that he had left the poison about with the express intention of getting rid of her, whereas, if the body were found in the sea, she would be supposed to have fallen into it by accident from the cliff walk—a victim to the rashness of which she, on her part, had been warned. The one event, in fact, suggested the other. This, at all events, was the current of thought that I ascribed to him, and as I did so, an indescribable joy took possession of my soul; for would not this very desire for averting the suspicion of others put this man at my mercy? I looked on with secret exultation at a scene that would have wrung your heart to witness, Evy. Nothing but the frantic haste in

which your uncle's purpose was conceived and carried out would probably have permitted of its execution. It was high tide, and the beating of the waves against the rocks beneath alone broke the silence of the night. Without noise, but with intense and persistent effort, he dragged the lifeless body to the cliff walk, and lifted it on to the low wall. Then for the first time he paused, and leant down over his terrible burthen with a look of yearning tenderness and distress. I thought at first that he had a doubt of her being dead—though I had none, for I had seen how large a draught of the deadly drug she had taken, and how she fell, like a lopped tree, without an effort to save herself—but it was not that; he had stooped to kiss the cold white face, the recollection of which, perhaps, as it had been when she was young and comely, smote him sore—and then with averted eyes he pushed her from him, over the cliff wall into the sea. He must have heard the splash in the wave below, for even I could do so from my place of espial; but he cast no glance behind him to make sure; but ran indoors like one pursued. And though he knew it not then, he *was* pursued, by one cruel as Fate, relentless as the Grave, who had him in her clutch, a powerless victim, from that hour.

“Though death had been so late before my eyes, I thought not of it; there was no gloom for me; my heart beat high with triumph: I saw my way to fortune, and above all, Evy, I saw that the way at last was clear before me to win the man you loved, the man that I desired. I had power to make you poor, and if that failed—if his foolish passion for you was too fierce for poverty to cool—I had power to disgrace you. I had no plan as yet—for that I was contented to be guided by circumstances, but from that moment I felt that I had my foot upon your uncle's neck, and that where he bent you must needs bend too. Not till long after the light was extinguished in Mr. Hulet's room did I venture within doors, for well I knew that he must be lying awake, listening with feverish intentness for every sound. As for me, I also lay awake, maturing my scheme, or picturing the success that was to attend it. In the morning, while we three sat at breakfast, I never took my eyes off Mr. Hulet: I think, even if I had not been witness of what he had done, I should have suspected from his manner that there was something

wrong with him: the careless air with which he asked us if we had heard any one stirring in the night, contrasting so ill with his anxiety for our reply: the denial so unnecessarily positive of his having left his room which you said you fancied you had heard him do: the agony of expectation with which he waited for the news of his wife's disappearance, and the pains it cost him to appear indifferent when it came, and to account for it in an ordinary way: all these things I marked as a careful surgeon watches the symptoms of his patient; I saw that he was nervous, unhinged, repentant to the last degree of what he had done, and would have fallen an easy prey to me even then, had I chosen to make my terms with him. But I waited for the more opportune time that I saw coming.

“In the meanwhile I sowed suspicion of him every where, not indeed hinting that he had made away with his unhappy wife—for that was not my purpose, at least at present—but suggesting that she had been driven by his ill conduct to put an end to her own existence. You remember, Evy, how I spoke of that, and how indignant you were that I should have done so, and especially in the presence of the servant. It was an important part of my plan to set evil reports of your uncle floating among the vulgar, that they might be dispersed abroad, and prejudice the corner's jury, which I took it for granted would be summoned. All this time, however, the body remained undiscovered, and my apprehensions began to be excited lest it should never be found, in which case there would of course be no inquest, and my testimony would be valueless, except so far as I could work with it on Mr. Hulet's fears. I could see, too, that he rallied a little, in this very expectation; if the corpse had been taken out to sea, even though the supposition he sought to foster—namely, that she had fallen by accident from the cliff walk—might not be so strong as if she had been found drowned, yet on the other hand there would be no further investigation and inquiry, but only baseless surmise. When at last the body was discovered, what he feared above all things was the inquest, and it was for that crisis that I reserved my knowledge of his fatal secret. He had already a vague sense, I think, of my wielding some ununwonted power, beyond that which attached to my having become by his wife's death possessed of means: and this

perhaps was sufficient to prevent him demanding an explanation of my conduct towards him, which was designedly disrespectful and even hostile. I am quite sure it was a relief to him, when I announced myself on the morning of the inquest as indisposed, and declined to attend it as a witness. I felt pretty sure, however, that I should be compelled to do so, and, under any circumstances, that was the time at which I had made up my mind to strike my long meditated blow.

"My great object was to make your uncle commit himself by a false representation of the actual facts, or by a concealment of them, before my own turn came to give evidence; and into this trap he necessarily fell. The jury having heard what he had to say—and probably believing it—still, naturally enough, desired the testimony of one so familiar with the deceased lady's habits as myself, and who moreover had been the last to see her alive. They sent for me, and I returned them word that Mr. Hulet must come for me in person, or I would not budge. In their eyes that may probably have seemed an impertinent affectation, but in your uncle's I well knew that it would have a more serious significance. He came to the cottage from the inn in fear of he knew not what: and what he was, when he had learnt the worst, you saw with your own eyes that evening.

"I remember it well," said Evy, thoughtfully; "we had all noticed how much better he had borne the events of that sad day than we had expected: how relieved he seemed to be when his own part in it was done; and yet when I returned home, so wretched and despairing were his looks, that I feared his heart was breaking."

"He had miseries enough to break it, Evy, though he dared not speak of them, and it was I who piled them on him, one by one, as those who 'prossed' the wretched prisoners of old, seeking to extort confession, placed on their labouring breasts, stone after stone, till at last, nature succumbed, and they told all. My own breath comes like theirs; I must rest awhile: and in the meantime read the paper that I gave you: the confession wrung by torture from your unhappy uncle."

Evy opened the smaller of the two documents which Judith had given her, and read what follows, written with trembling and as if remonstrant fingers, but manifestly in Mr. Hulet's handwriting.

"I confess that on the night of April 28th, 18—, I threw the body of Sophia Hulet, my wife, over the cliff walk of my house at Balcombe, into the sea.

"Angelo Hulet, May 5th."

LITERARY FETISH.

WHEN Sir William Molesworth, the editor of the works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, contested the borough of Southwark, he was met upon the hustings by loud stern cries of "no 'Obbes!" The crowd that yelled forth this denunciation had but the vaguest idea as to who "'Obbes" was, did not know the name of a single treatise he had written, and were obviously unconscious of the fact that he usually wrote his surname with the initial "H." They had been told by Sir William Molesworth's political opponents that Hobbes was a very dangerous unorthodox man, and that any one who had been so far lost to the sense of decency as to edit his works was emphatically not the man to represent Southwark in the British House of Parliament. There was something vaguely flattering to the self esteem of the free and independent electors in thus proposing Hobbes to them as a ground of disagreement with one of their candidates. Whoever he might be he was certainly a literary man of some account; had, as far as they could make out, lived a long time ago, and had written works over which learned scholars wrangled. To pronounce an opinion respecting him naturally pre-supposed an acquaintance with his writings, and so they drowned Sir William Molesworth's voice in cries of "No 'Obbes!" and probably were really very much in earnest in their desire that Southwark should, once for all, set its mark against the promulgation of 'Obbes theories—whatever they might be.

We see clearly that this was a very absurd crowd; but I am not sure that some of us whose literary attainments rank higher are not on a par with it, inasmuch as we daily shout out "No 'Obbes!" or "'Obbes for ever!"—generally the latter—at the mention of certain well-sounding names in literature, with the works of the owners whereof we have no more intimate acquaintance than the Southwark crowd had with "Human Nature," or the "Treatise on the Body Politic." There is Milton, for example.

How many men who write or talk about Milton with gushing admiration ever read "Paradise Lost" all through? Who has read the Faery Queen from the first line to the last? and of those who have, who honestly pines over the loss of the concluding six books? Who reads Chaucer now, except members of Chaucer Societies, who are never in company ten minutes before they let everybody know of their experience, just as a man who has gone through and overcome great tribulation likes to talk about it, and extort the sympathy of those whose withers are yet unwrung. Or even Dante? We say reflectively, "He was a sublime man; so intense in his feelings, so vivid in his conceptions, so graphic in his portraiture!" But did we ever read his Divine Comedy throughout? Voltaire was clearly of opinion that a great many of us had not, for he observed to a respectable person who was rhapsodising about the sad-visaged Florentine—see how easily and familiarly I write about him—"Ah, yes! his reputation will be continually growing greater and greater, because there is now nobody who reads him." Charles Lamb, chatting about books and reading, says, "I have no repugnances. Shaftesbury is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild too low. I can read anything which I call a book. There are things in the shape, which I cannot allow for such. In this catalogue of books which are no books—biblia-a-biblia—I reckon court calendars, directories, pocket-books, draught-boards bound and lettered on the back, scientific treatises, almanacks, statutes at large, the works of Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and, generally, all those volumes 'which no gentleman's library should be without;' the histories of Flavius Josephus (the learned Jew) and Paley's Moral Philosophy. With these exceptions, I can read almost anything." Beattie is not of much account now, though it would be as well if one were able to say he liked him; and Soame Jenyns, regarded in the light of a writer one "ought to know," scarcely outlived his generation, and was not of much account in it, if we accept in proof a contemporary stanza in which the following lines occur:—

Where like a farthing link boy, Jenyns stands
And the dim torch drops from his feeble hands.

But it is not without a shudder that I have observed the honoured names of Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson included in

a category with almanacks and lettered draught-boards. I have the works of all three writers on the top shelves of my treasured library. Hume is in eight volumes, and I have read nearly to the end of the second. Gibbon I have never read, though I have always been drawn towards him by the recorded observation of some great man (whose name I forget at the moment) to the effect that it was reading the "Decline and Fall" that "first made him think." I have read Robertson's History of Scotland, but not his other works; however, I feel quite comfortable on that score, having the volumes on my book-shelves, and unfeignedly intending to read them all through some day.

I need not say, that it is far from my intention to question the absolute merits of the principal works of the men whose names are canonised in modern literature. Those merits, I unreservedly admit, are beyond question. But what I am anxious to know is, admitting, as we all do, that they are transcendently superior to the works of modern writers, how is it they are not read? Would anyone having a reputation to preserve venture to rise in critical company and declare his preference for Thackeray over Fielding? I know I would not, although Richardson, with Dr. Johnson's approval, sneered at Fielding, and said, "if he had not known who the writer of Tom Jones was, he would have thought it was an ostler." Yet, writing here anonymously, I do not mind confessing that though I have, as in duty bound, read "Tom Jones" once, I have read "Vanity Fair" half a dozen times. It is an added perplexity for the honest enquirer to discover that, of the writers whom he knows he ought to revere, if not to read, some are spoken of with disrespect in very high quarters. If we believe Plato, Homer was not such a great writer after all, and of Plato, himself, Mr. Lewes remarks that "he is a tedious and difficult writer, often quoted at second hand, but very rarely read. Men of culture usually attack a dialogue or two out of curiosity; but their curiosity seldom inspires them to further progress." Sophocles was seriously regarded as a lunatic by his own children, who ought to have known something about him. Aristophanes mercilessly chaffed Socrates, whilst Athenæus attempts to prove that the great teacher was himself illiterate. Virgil was declared by Pliny to have

stolen such slight beauties as his poems may display. Quintilian says Seneca was no great shakes; and Cicero and Plutarch are both down on Aristotle; Demosthenes is pooh-poohed by Hermippus; and of Cicero it has been written that he is "cold in his extemporaneous effusions, artificial in his exordiums, trifling in his strained rallery, and tiresome in his digressions."

Coming down to the gods of our own household, does it not make the hair stand on end to find Tom Moore declaring that he found Chaucer "unreadable?" Lord Lansdowne said he was secretly of the same opinion, but did not dare to speak of it. "A. K. H. B." writes, "I would rather read Mr. Helps than Milton." "What will you say," writes Lord Chesterfield, "when I tell you that I cannot possibly read our countryman Milton through? Keep the secret for me, for, if it should be known, I should be abused by every tasteless pedant, and every solid divine in Europe." Charles Lamb says, "Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him," which, not to put too fine a point on it, is an inconvenient requirement in a favourite author. Even Shakespeare has not been spared. Ben Jonson, "rare Ben Jonson"—rarest of all in the matter of readers—began it with the repartee to Shakespeare's admirer, who boasted that the great Bard had never blotted out a single line he wrote. "Would that he had blotted a thousand," said Ben, and Mr. Samuel Rogers (whom everybody knows as the author of that charming, but never read, poem, "The Pleasures of Memory") was very fond of repeating the joke, believing that Shakespeare was a greatly over-rated man. "Well, after all, Tom," said Byron to Moore, one day, "don't you think Shakespeare was something of a humbug?" I have quoted Voltaire's scathing remark about Dante. "Can you read Voltaire's *Henriade*?" asked Mr. Senior of de Tocqueville. "No, nor can anyone else," was the prompt reply. Once at Abbotsford it was remarked, in Sir Walter Scott's presence that the speaker had never known anyone who had read the *Henriade* through. "I have read it and live," replied Sir Walter, "but indeed in my youth I read everything." Mrs. Browning humbly confesses that she could never read to the end of Akenside's "Pleasures of the Imagination." Emerson was equally lacking in appreciation of this highly

respected man, and so was Dr. Johnson. "Sir, I could not read it through," he says, when Boswell refers to "the distinguished poem." "I see they have published a splendid edition of Akenside's works," he proceeds. "One bad ode may be suffered, but a number of them together makes one sick." Dr. Johnson had, indeed, a painfully reckless way of tweaking the noses on the monumental figures in our literary Walhalla, and I reflect with sorrow on the fact that "London: a poem," "Rasselas," and "The Rambler," are to-day so little read, though, I daresay, we all have them in our libraries. Of the author of the famous *Elegy* in a Country Churchyard the doctor says, briefly, but forcibly "We have had enough of Gray." Of Churchill he remarked, "I called the fellow a blockhead at first, and I call him a blockhead still." Of Fielding, he also observed that he was a "blockhead," and upon Bozzy's venturing to express "astonishment at so strange an assertion," he was good enough to explain: "what I mean by his being a blockhead, is that he is a barren rascal." Of Richardson, he said, "Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, you would hang yourself." Upon Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, he pronounced the following verdict—"collecting himself as it were, to give a heavy stroke"—"there is in it such a labefaction of all principles as may be injurious to morality." This criticism is perhaps outdone in originality and weight, by that of the Duke of Queensberry on the same work. "This is a very odd thing, Gay," said his grace, on reading the opera. "I am satisfied that it is either a very good thing, or a very bad thing." Dr. Johnson was rather partial to Dr. Watts, but Prior suffered heavily at his hands. "My dear lady," he said to Mrs. Thrale, who was defending the poet, "talk no more of this. Nonsense can only be defended by nonsense."

Intimate as I of course am with the writings of all the men whose honoured names are here lightly spoken of—"beginning each morning with a chapter of Homer," and "spending my days and nights with Addison," not to mention spare hours stolen for delightful and easy converse with Chaucer, Spenser and Milton—it is natural that I should be pained when I read of distinguished persons declaring with more or less boldness that they don't care a fig for them. The boldness, it is true, is chiefly

less, Dr. Johnson being the only one who ventures to talk treason in voice above a whisper. Voltaire, it will be observed, was careful to construct his epigram at the expense of Dante in a way that left it to be understood that though the multitude were not able to live in the rarefied air of the Inferno or the Paradiso, he read these books constantly, and did not ever unduly hasten out of the Purgatorio. Tom Moore was evidently humbled when he found he could not read Chaucer. "In what terms some speak of him! while I confess I find him unreadable." Lord Lansdowne, his guilty secret stolen from him in a moment of surprise, implored that he might not be betrayed. Lord Chesterfield is equally nervous, and Charles Lamb's affected sprightliness does not hide the concern which he felt at the possible consequences of his indiscreet communicativeness. This is a healthy sign, and tempers the sorrow with which we see heresy springing up in unexpected places. Philip James Bailey roundly declares, striking the key-note of Festus, that—

This time is equal to all time that's past
Of like extent;

and there are probably not wanting people who say that affected enthusiasm for certain old writers whose books we buy but do not read, prevails for reasons akin to those which make a flock of sheep put themselves to the inconvenience of jumping over an imaginary rail, because their leader has so leapt, or to those which make all Englishmen, with pretensions to respectability, wear high round black hats when head-gear of almost any other conceivable fashion would be more comfortable and more becoming. These are reasons which, to quote Mr. Gladstone, "I for one" decline to listen to. It is very easy to cry "No 'Obbes!" it is the respectable thing to do; it has an air of crudition; and, if no inconvenient questions are asked, I shall cry "No 'Obbes!" or "'Obbes for ever," as circumstances may seem to require, to the end of the chapter.

POPPING THE QUESTION.

A POET of Cockaigne is surely at fault in asserting

If you tumble in love and are burning to pop,
You should never lose time in despair;
But at once on your knees you should gracefully
drop,

And express what you have to declare.

Kneeling to ladies, we fancy, went out

with swords and silk stockings. The gallant fashion had its inconveniences. Not for supple-jointed youth, may be, but suitors of Falstaffian build ran the risk of putting themselves in the ridiculous plight of Colman's Eudoxus, who, his love-plaint proving of no avail,

Looked sheepish, nettled, wished himself away;
And thrice he tried to quit his kneeling place;
But fat and corpulency seemed to say
Here's a petitioner that must for ever pray!

until his humiliation was completed by a sturdy flunkey being summoned to set the weighty wooer on his feet. Poor Jerry White came to more lasting grief through flinging himself at the feet of the Protector's daughter; for, caught in the fact by Noll himself, the ambitious parson pretended he was suing for the hand of the lady's maid, and, taken at his word, had to marry her instead of her mistress. Such a catastrophe did not await Daniel Webster when, kneeling before his lady love, he suddenly dropped the tangled skein of silk she was winding off his hands, saying, "Grace, we have been untying knots, let us see if we can tie one which will not untie in a lifetime!" With a piece of tape he fashioned half a true-lover's knot, Miss Fletcher perfected it, and a kiss sealed the bargain.

A love-lorn miller popped the question to a pretty little milliner by enclosing half a match in a valentine. Fearing this might not be deemed explicit enough, he followed it up with an odd letter of proposal, in which, after confessing he had hitherto been "a general lover to a certain extent," he said, "To yoke with you I believe I should be both delighted and happy, for I love and esteem you with all my heart, and could soon forget all others for the sake of you." The man of flour, however, was not entirely happy, as he and the lady were of different religions, still he did not think that difficulty insurmountable. "Although," said he, "neither of us would be arbitrary, one might want the other to go along with them in what they considered to be the broad road that leads to damnation, whereas our interests would be different ways, which is the greatest evil under the sun to us, but I hope not a fixer!" The miller certainly received a "fixer" of some sort, seeing his courtship ended in his having to defend an action for breach of promise. Your general lovers are not lacking in self-conceit. A delectable specimen of the tribe, the Honourable John Trevor, fancied

himself in love with Miss Steele, and after telling her as much, went on, "You will object that I tell almost every lady the same story. I grant I do, those I like; some have been so good as to believe me, and soften the care and concern that the most unchristian and unbelieving part of the sex hath created. But to none have I confessed the attraction of my soul so far that I would, what shall I say? marry them? No; never was I so daring, so bold in thought, till the year 1729-30, and the twenty-fourth year of my age, when I was so fortunate, or unfortunate, as you decree, to behold the resistless charms of the most engaging. But of this enough." The impudent wooer then drops sentiment for business. "If settlements are to take place, what I can offer, will, I hope, be not unequal to your fortune, though inferior to your deserts. If you are disposed to think seriously on this point, there must be a provision for the younger children, which Providence will not fail, under honest industry, to bless us with. What remains for me is to assure you that without vanity, I love myself exceeding well, and can heartily love you if you will do so too!" No wonder a lover with such an "if" obtained dismissal for his pains.

Swift, who had no more tenderness than one of his own Yahoos, indited the most brutal proposal we know of. Tired of his shilly-shallying, Miss Waryng seems to have insisted upon his speaking out, and Swift spoke out with a vengeance. After professing he is too just to stand in the way of her accepting a more advantageous offer, he says he must ask her a few questions—questions he had long since resolved to ask of the woman with whom he meant to spend his life: "Are you in a condition to manage domestic affairs with an income of less than three hundred pounds a year? Have you such an inclination to my person and honour as to comply with my desires and way of living, and endeavour to make us both as happy as you can? Will you be ready to engage in those methods I shall direct for the improvement of your mind, so as to make us entertaining company for each other, without being miserable when we are neither visiting or visited? Can you bend your love, esteem, and indifference to others the same way as I do mine? Have you so much good-nature as to endeavour by soft words to smooth any rugged humour occasioned by the cross accidents

of life? Shall the place wherein your husband is thrown be more welcome than courts and cities without him?" Surely never was a lady so catechised by a suitor for her hand. When Jane Waryng felt able to answer every question in the affirmative, then, and not till then, her lover says, "I shall be blessed to have you in my arms, without regarding whether your person be beautiful, or your fortune large. Cleanliness in the first, and competency in the second, is all I look for!" This unique epistle ends—"I singled you out at first from the rest of women, and I expect not to be used like a common lover." Swift was evidently enough a very uncommon one.

There is a world of difference between the love-making of morbid self-loving Swift, and that of cheery-hearted Richard Steele; the raven's croak and the lark's song are not more unlike. The Christian hero made love like a lover and a gentleman. He never dreamed of plying his mistress with doubting question upon question. Believing his Prue to be as beautiful, witty, prudent, and good-humoured as a woman could be, Steele was contented to know she loved him, and took the rest upon trust. "Instead of saying I shall die for you, I profess I should be glad to lead my life with you!" That is the way he pops the question; then, when assured that the dearest being upon earth is his own, he asks her to name the day. Can anything be more charming in its way than this? "I have not a minute's quiet out of your sight; and when I am with you, you use me with so much distance, that I am still in a state of absence, heightened with a view of the charms which I am denied to approach. In a word, you must give me either a fan, a mask, or a glove you have worn, or I cannot live; otherwise you must expect I will kiss your hand, or, when I next sit by you, steal your handkerchief. You yourself are too great a bounty to be received at once; therefore I must be prepared by degrees, lest the mighty gift distract me with joy. Dear Mrs. Scurlock, I am tired with calling you by that name; therefore say the day in which you will take that of, madam, your most obedient, most devoted, humble servant."

A Frenchman, smitten with the charms of fair Lydia Sterne, instead of trying to secure her good-will, wrote to her father, desiring to be informed what he was prepared to give her upon marriage, and how

much he intended to bequeath her. He thought to be able to say to Miss Lydia as Petruchio said to Kate the curst,

Your father hath consented
That you shall be my wife; your dowry 'greed on,
And will you, nill you, I will marry you.

But Sterne was not so eager to get rid of his girl as was Signor Baptista, and replied—"Sir, I shall give my daughter ten thousand pounds the day of marriage. My calculation is as follows:—She is not eighteen, you are sixty-two—there goes five thousand pounds. Then sir, you, at least, think her not ugly, she has many accomplishments, speaks Italian and French, plays upon the guitar; and as I fear you play upon no instrument whatever, I think you will be happy to take her at my terms, for here finishes the account of the ten thousand pounds." Whitfield asked the hand of a young American lady, of her parents, without troubling to ascertain her inclinations, and was good enough to let them know they need not be afraid of offending him by declining the honour, since he blessed God he was free from the passion called love. Next to ignoring the lady altogether, the worst way of making a declaration is to do it by deputy. Cupid is no friend to faint-hearted lovers. If the damsel be worth the wooing, it is odds upon the proxy suitor proving false, and suing on his own account. When those inseparable brothers, William and Jacob Grimm, were persuaded of the necessity of one of them taking a wife, they had a friendly contention as to which should be the victim, and after some days' argument, Jacob decided that he, as the elder, was bound to sacrifice himself. They had previously fixed upon the lady, a beautiful girl of twenty-two, but when it came to the push, Jacob's courage failed him, and William undertook to persuade the maiden to love his brother. After a week's acquaintance poor William was horrified at discovering he had lost his own heart, and now, fully alive to the excellences of the fair one, was miserable at the thought of losing her, while he felt that to rob his brother of such a prize would be an unpardonable treachery. Fortunately for everybody, Grimm's aunt, a shrewd old lady, saw how things were, and told Jacob what had come of William's efforts in his behalf. Jacob was delighted to think he had escaped matrimonial bondage, and celebrated his good fortune by roaming about the country a free man,

until the honeymoon was over—the cross courtship ending more pleasantly for all concerned than such things commonly do. Convinced by kind Mrs. Churchman that he wanted a wife to look after him, the judicious Hooker escaped the bother of courting and popping the question by leaving his adviser to find him a mate, and arrange all preliminaries. Happening to have a daughter upon her hands, the disinterested matron soon executed her commission, and the great churchman was speedily married, as per contract.

Shakspeare's heroines are remarkably ready to take the initiative, popularly supposed to be the ladies' right only in Leap Year. Helena demands the hand of Bertram as the price of her wonder-working prescription. Desdemona gives Othello the broadest of hints that she is to be had for the asking. Miranda tells her patient log-man she is his wife if he will marry her. Olivia says to her lover's masquerading messenger—

Would you undertake another suit,
I had rather hear you to solicit that,
Than music from the spheres!

then, finding Sebastian himself of more malleable stuff than his fair double, fetches a priest to make sure of him while he is in the humour; and Juliet, caught thinking aloud, declares her willingness to lay her fortunes at Romeo's feet, if he will but say when and where the holy man shall make them one. If the poet drew from the life, we must assume the ladies of his time were equal to bringing laggard admirers to the point by popping the question themselves. One Englishwoman of high degree, at any rate, had not very long before set her sisters the example. Mary Tudor, thinking, not unreasonably, one loveless marriage sufficient for a life, determined not to be sacrificed to state policy again; and Charles Brandon had not been many hours in France ere Mary tearfully told him that, unless he wedded her there and then, he should never have a second chance. Brandon was not the man to say nay to such an appeal from the fairest princess in Christendom, let what might come of it, and, at the risk of his head, accepted the proffered hand. The pair married in haste; but it is not recorded that they repented at leisure.

Had the daughter of Gaston d'Orleans been as wise as the English princess, she would have taken Louis XIV. at his word when he consented to her marrying the Gascon, De Lauzun. Mademoiselle was

proud; and, if love had impelled her to offer her hand, with her heart in it, to an inferior, she could not brook the idea of being married in a manner unbecoming a princess of the blood royal. The king had time to listen to the remonstrances of his counsellors, and, when she besought him on her knees not to withdraw his consent, could only reproach her with not having profited by it while she could. Louise de Savoie, sometime Queen-regent of France, was equally unfortunate when she usurped the masculine privilege, and proposed to the famous Constable de Bourbon. Louise and Bourbon were at variance respecting the disposition of his dead wife's property. Talking over the business one day together, the Queen-regent observed that there were more ways than one of accommodating a lawsuit. Queen Anne, for example, had saved Brittany from a civil war in a manner worthy of imitation. "True," answered Bourbon; "but I know not what princess would enable me to settle your highness's suit in such an agreeable manner." "You forget, duke, I am a widow;" said Louise, allowing her hand to rest upon that of the Constable. Bourbon's face darkened as he rose to his feet, saying, "Your highness mistakes me. The respect I owe his majesty, the disparity of our years, my own feelings, all render such a union impossible. If the king goes to law, I will fight him, madam, that is all!" Had not Louise de Savoie challenged that mortifying rebuff, Bourbon had not lived to lead his country's foes to victory, and the sack of Rome would not be a matter of history.

Miss Kenrick, the beautiful heiress celebrated in the ballad of The Berkshire Lady's Garland, adopted a singular method of winning the handsome young attorney, Benjamin Child, with whom she had fallen in love at sight. She sent him an anonymous letter, demanding satisfaction for injuries received. After vainly puzzling himself to guess whom his challenger might be, and how he had offended, Child betook himself, duly provided with a second, to the place of meeting, near a pleasant crystal fountain. There he saw no fierce gallant, only a masked lady, who asked him his business there. He told it; whereupon his fair questioner, flashing a rapier she carried for her security, said,

It is I that did invite you;
 You shall wed me, or I'll fight you,
 Underneath those spreading trees,
 Therefore choose from which you please!

Rather taken aback by such a summons to surrender, Benjamin asked to see his challenger's face ere he decided. This was denied; she would not unmask until the knot was tied, but generously accorded him an hour's grace to turn the matter in his mind. His friend advised him, as he could lose nothing, to take the lady; and the three went off in her gilded coach to church, where the lady gay and her attorney were made one without delay—

Though sweet pretty cupids hover'd
 Round her eyes, her face was cover'd
 With a mask—he took her thus,
 Just for better or for worse.

He did not repent the leap in the dark, when he found his summer morning's adventure had brought "beauty, honour, riches store;" but, taking his place among the gentry of the county, lived happy ever afterwards. The hero of this romance was, in 1714, high sheriff of Berkshire.

Not in such warlike fashion did Margaret Charlton attack Richard Baxter. She sought to attain her end by negotiation; and never was a bachelor of forty-five more astonished than that worthy minister when Margaret's ambassadress opened her mind to him. He was destined to an additional shock. While he was vehemently declaring the idea preposterous, Margaret was listening at the study-door, and, losing all self-control, burst into the room, threw herself at her idol's feet, crying, "Dear Mr. Baxter, I protest with a sincere heart, I do not make a tender of myself to you upon any worldly or carnal account, but to have a more perfect converse with so holy and prudent a yoke-fellow to assist me on the way to heaven, and to keep me steadfast in my perseverance which I design to God's glory and my soul's good!" Margaret Charlton was very pretty; Baxter was mortal, and succumbed. So might Robert Leighton, Bishop of Dunblane, have done too, had he been wooed by a maiden as young and fair as Baxter's assailant; but the would-be Mrs. Leighton was a spinster of mature age, who called to tell the bishop she had received a revelation from heaven that he was to become her husband. The prelate, though somewhat startled, was equal to the emergency. He assured his visitor that such an intimation was not to be despised; but, as yet, the designs of heaven were but imperfectly explained, seeing they had only been revealed to one of the parties. He would wait to see if a similar communication were vouchsafed to

himself, and, whenever that happened, would be sure to let her know.

It were hardly fair to reckon pretty Elizabeth Simpson among proposing ladies, although answering Mr. Inchbald's suggestion that she should marry, with "Who would marry me?" was tantamount to seeking the reply, "I will, if you will have me." The actor was not so unready as Dean Ramsay's Scotch beadle, who could hit upon no better way of popping the question than by taking the object of his affections to the churchyard-gate and saying, "Mary, my folk lie there; would you like to lie there, Mary?" Being, like Barkis, willing, Mary was as indifferent as to how the question was put as the Galloway girl, who, when her uncouth swain carelessly remarked, "I think I'll marry thee, Jean," responded, "Man Jock, I would be muckle obliged to ye, if ye would!"

"FORGOTTEN."

"FORGOTTEN, as a dead man out of mind."
Nay, surely, when the royal Psalmist sang,
Some thought of Life's hard teaching, cold, unkind,
Like nightshade 'mid his pure white lilies sprang.
Love, like a champion armed at cry of need,
Rises beside each cherished grave to say,
'I live, I struggle, hide the wounds that bleed,
Never forget them for a single day."

Back to the world the quiet mourners turn,
Striving the daily duty still to do,
To veil the eyes that stream, the hearts that yearn,
For them who made the life sweet, pure, and true;
In reverent jealousy their memories guarding,
'Gainst sneer or weariness from those around,
The prompt impatience of this world's awarding,
Where Grief, too faithful to the Past, is found.

Time's hand does stanch the wound, and draws
above it,

The decent robes of custom and of life,
The daily task-work gives to all who prove it,
Strength for the hour, and courage for the strife.
Pale flowers spring up, where once our roses bloomed,
Pale moonbeams glisten, where our full suns shone,
And passing where our treasures lie entombed,
We learn, in patient hope, to labour on.

But, oh dead eyes, that watch us on our road,
Look on us, mark us, scan us through and through;
Bravely, although we strive to bear our load,
Love sees where sorrow takes her tribute due;
Some day, some day, long-silent lips may tell,
The warfare past, the heavy arms resigned,
Together, in God's joy unspeakable,
"Darling, I never once was out of mind."

LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

HAMPSHIRE. (BASINGSTOKE. THE TWO SIEGES OF BASING HOUSE.)

SWIFT and compact as a long case-shot the special train flies from Surrey to Hampshire. Winchfield and its old Norman church shot by while I was lighting my first cigar; we crossed the valley

of the White Water while I read the last news from Ashantee; I caught a glimpse of Odiham when I looked up from the confession of the chivalrous Charles Orton; the church of Nately Scures, with its circular apse, ran past and hid itself, while I unscrewed the top of my sherry flask to recruit nature; and now, as I pass my penknife blade by a stern passado straight through the moist stump of my cigar, lo! here are the red roofs of Basingstoke. We are flashing over the river Loddon, and there yonder are the ruins of Basing House.

The traditions of the first siege of Basing House, the chief Royalist stronghold in Hampshire, have been preserved with all the picturesque details of the period in a diary kept by the brave Marquis of Winchester, and afterwards printed at Oxford. It wants but small imagination to turn this siege into a romance, as picturesque as that of Old Mortality, and Sir Walter would have revelled in the vivid contrasts it suggests.

Basing House, the Cavalier stronghold, held by the Marquis of Winchester, is described as standing, during the civil wars, on rising ground encompassed with a circular brick rampart, lined with earth, and with a very deep dry trench. The lofty gate house, with four turrets, looked northwards, and to the right beyond the ditch rose a goodly building, with two fair courts. Beyond this was the Grange, separated by a ditch and the high road, and again divided from the foot of Cowdry's Down by meadows, the river running from Basingstoke being a mile distant. On the east lay Basingstoke, on the south side a park, and towards Basingstoke a little wood. Thus stood the fair castle of the loyal Pawlets, whose proud motto, "Ayez Loyalté," shone upon the crimson standard that fluttered from the keep.

To this fortress the marquis in those evil times retired for peace and quietness. But the Puritans, allowing no neutrality, soon forced the marquis to vigorous resistance, and he twice repelled attempts at surprise with only the six poor muskets which were left in his once well-furnished armoury. But after the loss of Reading the marquis found the air gradually getting hotter round his turrets, and, determining to make a bold stand, he obtained, in July, 1643, one hundred musketeers under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Peake, an eminent engineer.

The castle had scarcely become a garrison, or the musketeers well rested, before Norton and Harvey, two Roundhead colonels, attempted to surprise the place, but were not only beaten off, but the same night compelled to retreat to Farnham. Soon after this, on the report of Sir William Waller's march westward with "a puissant army," Colonel Rawdon, with one hundred and forty-five more musketeers, was sent to Basing, the marquis taking out royal commissions as colonel and governor of the place.

On the third of November, Waller and the real live "puissant army" of seven thousand Puritan horse and foot sat down before Basing for nine long days, and three times with rush and shout, and blaze of muskets, and push of pike, the dogged Roundheads tried to scale and storm the stronghold, but Norton and Harvey's musketeers proved too much for them, and drove them back bruised and wounded, till Waller finally had to slink off to Farnham, leaving only two of the garrison dead and some rough shot marks on the proud old castle walls. Two days after Lord Hopton and the Royalist army arrived, were warmly welcomed, and helped to further strengthen the Hampshire fortress.

In the spring, the rebel army tried to starve out the marquis by harrying the country round about. In June, Colonel Norton, the rebel leader, drew forces from the adjacent garrisons, and, aided by the treachery of one of the musketeers of the garrison, cut off a party of the marquis's men at Odiham, faced the house for some hours, and then moved off to Basingstoke, leaving guards of cavalry, however, at the avenues, to prevent the exit or entrance of foragers.

The blockade soon commenced, and the Puritans gathered like an iron chain around stately Basing. Colonel Morley's blue regiment, of six colours, from Sussex, joined Sir Richard Onslow's red regiment with five colours from Surrey, and two white companies from Farnham. Norton's regiment soon fetched in three fresh troops of horse, the white companies marching to Sherfield, Onslow and his horse to Andwell House, near the ruins of the Priory, and Morley's foot and Norton's horse quartering at Basingstoke, so that daily cavalry skirmishes occurred in every lane.

On the seventeenth of June the Puritan horse swooped on two teams fetching provisions to the castle from Sherfield,

and three horses also that were grazing in the park. At night the white companies quartered at Basing village fortified the church, and next day, from the neighbouring windows, shot two of the Cavalier garrison. The marquis, now seeing things looking serious, began to rummage out his books of celebrated sieges, and true men being few, to divide his musketeers into three companies, keeping two-thirds on duty while the remaining one-third rested. Each company had its particular gate, doorway, postern, or turret to guard. The field-officers, too, had their several quarters. Major Cuffand the works adjoining the park, Major Langley those in the gardens, Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson the Grange, old Colonel Rawdon the works next the tower, while the guns and the supply of muskets for the troopers fell to Lieutenant-Colonel Peake—part of whose foot companies served as a special reserve for emergencies. The lieutenant-colonels and majors by turn were captains of the watches, old Colonel Rawdon alone being exempted, on account of his age.

Two days afterwards the white regiment of the blockaders being at midnight relieved by the blue from Basingstoke, the garrison took advantage of the confusion, and sallied out and burnt one of the vexatious houses where the Roundhead musketeers lurked, and the next night, in a fierce sally, destroyed all the houses between the castle and the church, driving the enemy into the hedges. But at the ringing of Norton's alarm bell relief came on all sides, and the Cavaliers were driven back, the enemy sheltering behind the park lodges and gates, and killing one of the Cavalier sentinels and wounding another.

By the twenty-fourth the blockading lines drew closer round the old castle. Two companies more from Portsmouth had joined those of Farnham at Basingstoke. The blue regiment now stacked their pikes in the park, while Colonel Onslow's men bivouacked in the lane and close towards the tower, where they began to trench, shutting up the marquis and his Cavaliers now on three sides; the Puritan horse keeping steady guard on Cowdry Down, and at night working with spade and pickaxe.

The marquis's next step was to send some musketeers to a bulwark towards Basingstoke, to reconnoitre the lane, and to cut down some trees that sheltered a ruined mill from whence the Roundheads

played on the castle; and in a skirmish several were killed on both sides. At night the Roundheads ran a line of earthwork towards the mill from whence they had been halted the night before, and the next night a party of Cavalier horse fired on the sentinels on Cowdry Down, to draw off their notice while some troopers were sent off secretly to Oxford with despatches.

Shortly after this the enemy's works in the park were advanced, the cannon baskets in rows showed that a culverin had been placed there, and soon after six shots came pelting at the castle. Next day, although Sunday, the Precisians still kept at work pushing on a sconce from Morley's quarters in the park, and running a fresh line of earthwork from the mill to the church. At Onslow's quarters they raised a platform in the lane with such speed that the next morning a demi-culverin began playing at the castle. That night a messenger from faithful Oxford brought news of the king's successes against Waller at Cropredy. This joyful news the Cavaliers of Basing spread abroad by volleys small and great, and to them the Puritans gloomily and sourly replied with great shot that battered the kitchen and gate-house, till a lucky hit shot the carriage and struck dumb their new demi-culverin. The enemy's lines were now within half musket shot, and the continual pouring of lead into the castle began to be irritating, as the assailants generally killed two or three soldiers a day. The marquis himself had been shot through his cheek, and the towers and chimneys began to suffer.

On the eighth of July the artful Roundheads feigned an alarm and left their guns unguarded, to try and draw out the garrison, but in vain; and that same evening a Cavalier prisoner skilfully escaped, after running the perilous gauntlet of one hundred bullets, which so chafed the crop-ears, that they vented their rage in firing till midnight, and killed two of the garrison. The next day four red companies from Surrey coming to the relief of Colonel Onslow's men, marched so near to the castle that three shots from a "minion" were pitched among them, driving the rogues off to a far safer distance.

This reinforcement was followed on the eleventh by a company of seven score arriving from Southampton, and Morley, taking advantage of Colonel Norton's

absence, sent in the following insolent letter by "a drum:"

"My Lord,—To avoid the effusion of Christian blood, I have thought fit to send your lordship this summons, to demand Basing House to be delivered to me for the use of King and Parliament; if this be refused the ensuing inconveniences will rest upon yourself. I desire your speedy answer, and rest, my lord, your humble servant, HERBERT MORLEY."

The marquis at once returned this stern and scornful answer:

"Sir,—It is a crooked demand, and shall receive its answer suitable. I keep the house in the right of my sovereign, and will do it in despite of your forces. Your letter I will preserve as a testimony of your rebellion. WINCHESTER."

This letter being returned with "Haste! Haste! Haste! Post haste!" Morley replied angrily with a volley from his guns, which now and for some days played steadily on the water-house. That same day Colonel Onslow's men allowed eight foot soldiers of the garrison to fetch off six beasts that were grazing near their works, and at night Colonel Bryant and some troopers, while passing a messenger by Cowdry Down, carried off two rebel prisoners.

A week later a flaring bonfire in the park, and two volleys along the whole line, proclaimed a welcome to the Parliamentary Committee, sent to urge forward matters at stubborn Basing.

On the twentieth a party of Cavalier musketeers fell on the enemy in the lane, and having done execution, drew towards home, and at the same time a shot from the marquis's works killed a captain of Colonel Morley's. Two hours afterwards the rogues sent in a drum with letters offering exchange of prisoners, but really to gain time to place a fresh mortar in their trenches, from whence, on master drum's return, they sent a grenade of eighty pounds weight, and thundered away next night from their culverin, two shots passing, but luckily harmlessly, through the sick men's quarters.

The twenty-second, says the brave old marquis, saw the enemy's lines much advanced, and their sconce flanking the battery in the park was finished. The marquis himself was hurt by a shot, two of his men killed by chance bullets, and the carriage of a small gun shattered by their culverin. The following night being

dark and stormy, "a messenger was despatched to the royal camp." The same night that favoured the muffled-up trooper with the load of despatches close to his heart, favoured, however, also the stealthy flight of eight Roundhead prisoners, who got back to their leaguer with reports that soon brought a double allowance of great shot and grenades on the stubborn roofs and turrets of Basing House.

The morning of the twenty-seventh showed the besieged that the enemy had run a traverse across the meadow from the burnt mill to flank the way to their musketeers' blind, while in the park they had enclosed the near side of an old orchard, to secure Morley's quarters, and that night they threw from their mortars six great stone shot, thirty-six pounds. The grenades at first vexed the marquis's soldiers, but they soon became so familiar with them as to nickname them the "baubles," the splinters only hurting the roofs, and the courts of Basing House being spacious and numerous.

Before the close of this eventful month a spit of fire from the leads of Basing church showed that the cunning Roundheads had planted a culverin there, to batter a tower from whence the Cavalier marksmen had severely harassed that quarter. This day was the day year that Basing, or "Loyalty," as the king's soldiers called it, had been garrisoned, and the second month of the siege. Still the crop-eared knaves were at as wholesome a distance as ever, and the Pawlet flag still shook out its "Aimez Loyalté" to the breeze.

The next day, as if the enemy fretted at this recollection, the Puritans began to hammer up a platform on the wood side, within half musket shot of the bulwark. Being a fast day, there was no firing from the enemy till the evening, but then they let out. At night they ran a trench from the church to their works in the wood, and hearing from the four deserters exaggerated reports of the havoc their stone shot and grenades had wrought, they sent in a supply, one of which fired some hay in a barn, and might have done great harm had it not been quickly quenched.

At the beginning of August the Basing men, worn out with spells of forty-eight hours' duty, were now divided into two bodies, each relieved every twenty-four hours. During the whole siege the officers and gentlemen took common soldier's duty

(except standing sentry), went forth in all sallies, with musket and brown bills, and for seven weeks procured grass and sedge for their horses by nightly excursions close to the enemy's works.

August the fourth was a day of bold counsels. The Cavaliers were reduced in numbers, and spent with vigil and toil. They had a proud contempt for their Puritan opponents, and rejoiced to see that the number of the besiegers did not increase. Now was the time for hot sallies, cried the young Hotspurs and Ruperts, who pined at the long imprisonment. Could they not strike as hard and shoot as straight as the crop-head rebels? "Our" men had small-pox among them, and were badly fed. They needed encouragement. They must turn the tables, and resume the offensive. Works could be retarded, and prisoners taken who would yield news of the Puritan plans. Grind the swords! Out with the old flag! Boot, saddle, to horse, and away! Almost at that moment an opportunity set fire to the powder. A party of Puritan foot can be seen from the tower lying loosely like stray sheep in Waller's work on the green slope of Cowdry Down. There the knaves are, the lazy loons, sprinkled about like so much black pepper on a green cloth. Out dash twenty Cavalier horse, while Cornet Bryan, with twenty more wild fellows, slips in between the other rogues and the hedge. Their guard of horse stand in somewhat too loose order. Hark, forward! Hey there! spur all together; away run the louts flying like mad dogs to Basingstoke; every moment one is sabred or shot down, or torn off his horse, with a shake and a curse, and a slash and stab; and here comes Cornet Bryan, with eyes only for one fair face blushing at him from the battlements, with a trumpet in one hand and their colours red and wet over his dusty shoulder. Seven horses and three sour troopers prisoners follow at his heels. Eleven of their foot were left stretched out dead, and some half-dozen were bound and dragged in prisoners—a pretty good haul for one throw of the net.

Next day the guard at Waller's work was doubled and strengthened by pikes, and they kept their guard of horse in constant readiness. On the park side the enemy's lines were advanced towards the two Basing platforms, and the work at the wood pushed on, and plenty of great shot, stones, shells, and hand grenades, bestowed

their devil's benediction on "proud, stubborn, and malignant Basing."

By-and-by Colonel Whitehead's newly raised regiment of five companies marched through Basingstoke to Cowdry Down, and took quarters in the Delve, to welcome whom the enemy's cannon beat down an old round tower in the old castle. But the marquis paid them back in their own coin the next morning by a hot sally. Major Cuffand marching smartly into the park with six ready file of musketeers, and twenty troopers armed with good brown bills, attacked their lines, killed some, burned their blinds and baskets, and carried off one of their mortars, besides great stores of arms and tools. At the same time Lieutenant Snow, with twenty musketeers and twelve bill-men, fell on their quarters in the lane, smashed their semi-culverin, fired their baskets, and carried off their arms, tools, and powder. For this defeat the enemy cashiered for life Captain Oram, who had the guard. That same night the encouraged Cavaliers made an earthwork beyond the Grange, and near the foot of Cowdry Down, to secure the meadows for the troopers, who had to sally out every dark night to bring in grass for the horses.

For the next few days the enemy were busy making baskets and cutting turf and brushwood for their works, and all the time their culverins were plied hot and fast at stubborn "Loyalty." In the night of the twelfth an alarm beat through their quarters, and about half-past three a.m. a trumpet sounded on Cowdry Down from the Delve, and fifty musketeers fell upon their new works; at the same time sixty more, by favour of a wood, got to the ditch under the Cavalier platform, but were fired on by the guard in the flanking park bulwark, and then fled, some stone shot being fired at their rear. After this they ran a trench into the park from the lane, to secure that work, trending it towards their great fort to close their lines throughout the whole league. Next day they were sparing of their great shot, but at night there was a false alarm.

On the fourteenth the indefatigable Major Cuffand and that wild horseman, Cornet Bryan, pulled on their big buff boots, tossed off a sufficient dose of sack, and then darted out with twenty horse and forty musketeers, and again beat up the enemy. They soon drove the foot from Waller's work and the horse from their post, and chased them into Basingstoke,

but there the tide turned. Fresh cavalry poured out, and soon forced back the swearing Cavaliers. Cornet Bryan and a trooper were knocked down and hemmed in; three others were wounded, and Ensign Amery left dead: but, nevertheless, Lieutenant Cope, a corporal of horse, and seventeen common men were brought in, and refused in exchange for the gallant cornet, whom the enemy retained. Two days' parley led to no result.

There was plenty of noise on the nineteenth, when the demi-cannon from the work in the wood discharged forty-eight shot, and, the two next days, sixty more. This shower of shot killed two men in Basing, wounded two more, broke the marquis's best iron gun, and made a gaping breach in one of the square towers. In the night of the twenty-second, the enemy shot in letters fixed to arrows, to induce the soldiers to desert, offering preferment, encouraging to mutiny, and trying to make one regiment jealous of another. A few faint-hearted men soon after ran over. The fact was, things were getting serious with the Pawlet commissariat: there was only water to drink, and, for some weeks, the bread had been all made of peas and oats, for the wheat was gone. At last, however, the marquis hung a deserter, and the renegades became fewer.

At noon on the second of September, when letters came for exchange of prisoners, the marquis elevated his old grey brows at receiving the following very insolent summons from Colonel Norton—

"MY LORD,—These are in the name and by the authority of the Parliament of England, the highest court of justice in the kingdom, to demand the house and garrison of Basing to be delivered to me, to be disposed of according to order of Parliament, and hereof I expect your answer by this drum within one hour after the receipt hereof. In the meantime, I rest yours to serve you, RICH. NORTON.

"From the quarters before Basing, the 2d Sept., in the afternoon."

Reply—

"SIR,—Whereas you demand the house and garrison of Basing, by a pretended authority of Parliament, I make this answer—that without the king there can be no Parliament. By his Majesty's commission, I keep the place, and without his absolute command shall not deliver it to any pretender whatsoever.—I am yours to serve you,

"Basing, 2d Sept." "WINCHESTER.

The gallant old marquis's troubles were now nearly over for this bout, and hope's rainbow threw a sudden arch over the turrets of Basing. On the eleventh of September a messenger brought word that Colonel Gage, with relief from Oxford, had reached Aldermaston, and fires were lit on the Gate House, though it was foggy, to imply readiness. At seven next morning gallant Colonel Gage and two hundred and fifty horse, besides foot, were on Churton Down and crossing swords. The day clearing, and reports of fighting reaching the excited garrison, Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson, with some musketeers, sallied from the Grange and cleared the way for Gage through the Delve. A few minutes more, and the friends met with hearty shakes of hands, and great clattering of sword-belts; and in, with bags of corn and flour, and cables of match wound round their corselets, rode Gage and the troopers to rejoicing Basing, bringing with them twelve barrels of powder and twelve hundred weight of metal. Each of them wore a white tape or handkerchief round the right arm, and the pass-word was "St. George."

That lovers met that day, and blushed and kissed; that old, grey-bearded friends embraced each other, and aye marry, pledged each other, too; that good Catholic comrades exchanged prayers at Basing altar; that brave fathers kissed the wives and children they had left shut up in brave old "Loyalty," needs no telling. But not alone in kissing and quaffing did Gage spend those two merry days. His troopers swept off all the malt, oats, salt, bacon, cheese, butter, powder and muskets in Basingstoke, and carted them to Basing; and drove the enemy out of Basing town, capturing two captains and some hundred Roundhead prisoners.

But all was not yet over; for the Roundheads stuck to their work for two long months more, and it was not until the morning of the thirteenth of November, fearing the king's army then moving upon Hungerford, they furled their tents, drew off their guns and waggons, and in fact, finally threw up the game. It was time. The garrison was all but spent, the men were half naked and worn out; there were nearly one hundred sick, and there were pining in the old battered house seven score useless mouths.

The second siege in October, 1645, history has deigned to record fully. It was hot and quick. Basing House had barred all

the western trade from London, and Cromwell had at last sworn to draw this stubborn tooth, and he did draw it, too, for here is his stern and grim announcement of the fact to Parliament:

To the Honourable William Lenthall, Speaker of the Commons House of Parliament; These.

"Basingstoke, 14th October, 1645.

"Sir,—I thank God, I can give you a good account of Basing. After our batteries placed, we settled the several posts for the storm; Colonel Dalbier was to be on the north side of the house next the Grange; Colonel Pickering on his left hand, and Sir Hardress Waller's and Colonel Montague's regiments next him. We stormed this morning after six of the clock; the signal for falling on was the firing of four of our cannon, which being done, our men fell on with great resolution and cheerfulness; we took the two houses without any considerable loss to ourselves. Colonel Pickering stormed the new house, passed through, and got the gate of the old house, whereupon they summoned a parley, which our men would not hear.

"In the meantime Colonel Montagu's and Sir Hardress Waller's regiments assaulted the strongest work, where the enemy kept his court of guard; which, with great resolution, they recovered; beating the enemy from a whole culverin, and from that work; which having done, they drew their ladders after them, and got over another work, and the house wall, before they could enter. In this Sir Hardress Waller performed his duty with honour and diligence; was shot on the arm, but not dangerously. We have had little loss; many of the enemies our men put to the sword, and some officers of quality; most of the rest we have prisoners, amongst whom the Marquis of Winchester himself, and Sir Robert Peake, with divers other officers, whom I have ordered to be sent up to you. We have taken about ten pieces of ordnance, with much ammunition, and our soldiers a good encouragement.

"I humbly offer to you, to have this place utterly slighted, for the following reasons; it will ask about eight hundred men to manage it; it is no frontier; the country is poor about it; the place exceedingly ruined by our batteries and mortar pieces, and by a fire which fell upon the place since our taking it.

"Sir, I hope not to delay, but to march

towards the west to-morrow; and to be as diligent as I may in my expedition thither. I must speak my judgment to you, that if you intend to have your work carried on, recruits of foot must be had, and a course taken to pay your army; else, believe me, sir, it may not be able to answer the work you have for it to do.

"I entrusted Colonel Hammond to wait upon you, who was taken by a mistake whilst we lay before this garrison, whom God safely delivered to us, to our great joy; but to his loss of almost all he had, which the enemy took from him. The Lord grant that these mercies may be acknowledged with all thankfulness; God exceedingly abounds in His goodness to us, and will not be weary until righteousness and peace meet; and until he hath brought forth a glorious work for the happiness of this poor kingdom. Wherein desires to serve God and you, with a faithful hand—Your most humble servant,

"OLIVER CROMWELL."

BLIND KATE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

WHEN they told Mrs. Cawthorne that her fatherless little daughter was born blind, like David she turned her face to the wall, and refused to be comforted. The child's misfortune humiliated her; and she took it as a personal wrong that she had not the large blue eyes which had been the only permanent benefit got out of a high-sounding Irish inheritance, belonging to the family on Mrs. Cawthorne's side of the house. But there was no help for it. Science may do much; but science cannot develop serviceable orbs from two dark and sightless organs; so the misfortune had to be accepted, whether it was accepted patiently or impatiently; and little Kate was a fact that had the right to assert itself—a life that had the right to live.

The child grew up dreamy, clever, full of odd fancies and ideas, but sweet-tempered and loving, if also impatient of control. She was more than one person's work to manage and watch, said the servants in despair; and she kept the household in a constant state of anxiety for the slipperiness with which she used to escape from their care, and the rashness with which she would wander about the house and grounds unattended. And the grounds were dangerous; with a

craggy bank overhanging a rapid river below, and never a railing set between the tiny wandering feet and sure destruction, should they slip on the rocks or step over into the abyss. As yet, however, Kate had not come to any harm, though she had been saved over and over again almost by a miracle; her nurse, Mary Rayner, declaring, each time, that the little mischief would be the death of her before she was done, and certain sure to be the death of herself.

As time passed on and Kate grew to be beautiful though blind, interesting and intelligent though perhaps a trifle strange in her ways and odd in her fancies, it might have been expected that her mother would have taken some kind of pride and pleasure in her. But things do not always go as they are expected. Mrs. Cawthorne refused to forgive her for those sightless eyes of hers; and kept her at as far a distance as was possible. She had never been known to kiss the child since she was born; she had never played with her, called her by a pet name, talked loving mother nonsense to her, given her a toy, nor taken her out for a day's pleasure. She had done her duty by her so far in that she had made sure of Mary Rayner's devotion; and she had had her as well and carefully instructed as the child herself would allow. But in truth Kate preferred her own wild fancies to formal lessons; and the "second sight" which she declared she had—and all the servants declared so too—was more precious to her than any amount of practical instruction. This might be so if it would; but to provide the means, even if Kate made little or no use of them; was her mother's duty; and Mrs. Cawthorne was a woman who prided herself on doing her duty to the letter. Beyond this lifeless righteousness of the law she went not one single step into the sunny garden of love; and it was just this love denied that was the most passionately desired. Save indeed that given to her by her faithful nurse—the nearest to the maternal the poor blind girl had ever known—no one in the world gave her any; and it was the fashion at the cottage to consider the child a standing nuisance, and to say how much better it would have been had she died in her birth.

And now Kate was twenty years of age; close on to her majority, when she would be entitled to half her mother's present fortune. Her age could not be gainsaid, though Mrs. Cawthorne, a pretty

woman marvellously well preserved, would have docked her of at least seven years if she could—besides destroying that hateful clause which would make her a rival and independent in six months' time. But the whole world, such as it was at Pentreath where Mrs. Cawthorne lived as the local queen, the prettiest and the richest woman for miles round, remembered the very day and hour when her handsome young husband had been drowned in the bay; and knew that little miss had been born just three months after. So that they were perfectly well aware that nearly twenty-one years had come and gone since then, though Blind Kate was still treated like a child in the nursery, and was never seen with her mother as a companion or a charge. The proud blood which had curdled at her birth had never sweetened since, and there was no likelihood now of things being better. The mother's displeasure, born of disappointment, had passed into a habit, and Kate herself had accepted her inheritance as of the unalterable order of things, and would have been more astonished than any one else, had her mother softened in her tone or relaxed in her severity.

Pentreath was a village on the Welsh coast; a poor kind of place where money was money, and people understood the full value of their odd halfpence; pretty and picturesque in scenery if only taking low rank as a show place; but still a village where strangers did come in the summer time to make a little life in the sleepy old streets, and stir up the drowsy trade. These strangers were as precious jewels of which too much account could not be made, or they were questionable purveyors of danger of whom no one could be too wary. If the former, they were friends of friends who had brought letters of introduction to the clergyman, or the doctor, or perhaps Mrs. Cawthorne herself: if the latter, they were strangers who came unheralded and without sponsors, and whom therefore it would be folly to credit with honour or respectability.

In the summer of the year when Kate was twenty—to be twenty-one in the autumn—two dashing-looking men came by postchaise to Pentreath, where they stayed; lounging about the coast as men out on their travels, and fascinated with the beauty of the place. They said they were father and son, though one could not have been at the most more than twenty years older than the other; and

they were called by the not too distinctive name of Smith. John Smith and William Smith. Nothing could be more prosaic, more commonplace; and that plain indeterminate appellation scarcely seemed to fit in with the showy manner of living of those who owned it. One would have expected a roll-call of high sounding names, like Plantagenet, or Hotspur, or something with De, or Saint, or Beau, before it. But John and William Smith, all the same as the butcher, the baker, and candlestick-maker—it seemed incredible! Nevertheless here they were, with their well-cut coats and fashionable air, their sparkling jewelry and universal affability, their disregard of sixpences and their readiness to converse—and the little world of Pentreath gave itself up to speculation and surprise. Inclined to suspicion by the law of its being, but unable to find a peg whereon to hang its crooked surmises in the case of these radiant strangers, and truth to say dazzled by their lordly bearing and comparative royal lavishness, it gradually subsided into an attitude of admiration; and accepted the Messrs. Smith as it was intended it should—at their own valuation.

Among the first who went down before the grandeur of these gentlemen, and who forgot her caution in her commendation, was Mrs. Cawthorne. For all these years of her widowhood she had lived as discreet country ladies do, a life of harmless, uneventful, monotonous negation. To be sure she every now and then left home for short visits to her friends—and the Messrs. Smith reminded her, when they came to know her, that they had met her at a certain house; though she did not remember them, she said—but those visits were neither long nor frequent, and she always returned to her honourable monotony seemingly without regret or without change. But now a new spirit possessed her. The Smiths wakened in her long-forgotten thoughts and feelings, and a kind of after-glow of youth brightened afresh for the widowed lady. The elder of the two gentlemen was a fine well-preserved man of forty-five or so; Mrs. Cawthorne was a pretty little woman, girlish in face, fresh in manner, looking about thirty on her best days, though she was ten years older. Here was occasion enough for the after-glow, and we all know that feelings come on occasions as flowers follow on the rain and the sun. There was soon talk, and to spare, in Pentreath,

of the intimacy between the lady and the new comers; and people wondered which it was to be—whether the widow and the father, or the daughter and the son. Or perhaps a double event they said: and the cynical added—four fools done for instead of two.

Kate, however, did not count in the relations between the houses. It was all her mother and John Smith the elder—he with the black hair and flowing beard—not herself and the younger man, the fairer and softer William. So far as that went, indeed, her blindness assumed more perspicacity than belonged to her mother's large blue Irish eyes. From some mysterious cause, wholly inexplicable and unreasonable, she had taken an almost insane hatred to both, but especially to John the elder; and not all his pleasant flattery—pleasant though so false—nor the younger's less artificial and more real interest, could win her from her distrust, nor warm her to the palest reflection of personal liking. So things stood: Kate, hating, fearing, shrinking, wilder and more weird in her visions than ever, fuller of mysticism, of prophetic warnings, of secret revelations; her mother subjugated, fascinated, trusting wholly these two men of whom she knew nothing, though they affected to detail all; and prepared to give up every friend she possessed rather than accept a hint to their discredit, or a recommendation to be cautious before she was irrevocably committed. As for the two men, their ingenuousness was only to be matched by their delightfulness; and very soon it came to be known that preparations for the marriage were being pushed forward at hot speed.

Mysterious whispers haunted Kate through the night, and warning voices led her like guiding hands through the day. She made the life of her faithful nurse a burden to her by the mental turmoil in which she lived, and, by the very passion of her own distrust, compelled the elder woman to share it. Always dreamy, always living that strange double life by which she saw more behind the veil of her darkness than the brightest-eyed of them all, half a seer, and held by those who believed in her to be equal to the strongest witch in Devonshire, she was more than ever possessed by the fancies she cherished as facts; and she believed in her Voices more and more implicitly. And one fancy that she could not overcome was, that the Smiths were of no good, neither the one

nor the other, and that John smelt of blood. And she said this so often, that at last nurse Mary sniffed at the gentlemen disdainfully on her own account, and declared that she too distinctly smelt blood, and that they were of no good in consequence.

It was strange how persistent Kate's dislike was notwithstanding all the efforts they made to win her. In such a barren life as hers it might have been expected that she would have been only too easily won by the first comer; yearning for love, too, as she did. When it came to two clever tactful men laying themselves out daily and patiently to please her—it did indeed seem odd that her fancies held her in such subjection, as to render her deaf and stone-cold to all they could say or do! Of the two, however, she disliked the elder one the most; as was perhaps natural. The younger, more her own age, and with a certain ring of sincerity in his voice, a certain honesty of tenderness and reality of interest wanting to the father, was less obnoxious to her. But though she endured his companionship with less visible reluctance than that she showed her appointed step-father, she neither enjoyed it nor encouraged it.

It wanted but a few hours to the wedding, and all Pentreath was in commotion. To Kate it was as if heaven and earth had come together, and she had passed through both, to land in the third place assigned to suffering souls as part of their inalienable patrimony. But it mattered little to her mother what the blind girl felt or thought; and for all that the proffered propitiation failed so signally, the Smiths expressed no resentment against her. Only John Smith laughed sometimes, not quite pleasantly, and William's fine brown eyes looked wistfully at the sweet, sad, cold, and sightless face that only grew sadder and colder when he spoke, and gave back no response to his wistfulness, no answer to his endeavours. And now the preparation time had passed, and to-morrow was to be the wedding-day of the pretty, well-endowed, and heedless widow, and her handsome showy lover.

It was a ripe, fine, summer's day, and Kate was sitting in the depths of the shrubbery, hidden from view of all by the thick underwood that grew like a miniature forest round about. Mary had left her there with strict injunctions not to move till she returned; and Kate had

promised to obey her, and not let herself be tempted away by any of the odd fancies that came upon her, when the Voices sounded with more clearness than usual and bade her follow as they led. And they led at times to strange and awful perils, which, had not Mary been ever on the watch, would have more than once ended poor Katie's unwelcome life, and have changed the mother's enduring displeasure to remorse.

Sitting there in the depth of the shadow, and surrounded on all sides by brushwood and bracken, as much unseen as she was herself unseeing, presently there came to the garden seat, set against the wall, the two men who had so lately passed into her life and deranged its former setting.

"What does it matter!" said the younger man in a rather excited manner, like one who is pleading, hitherto in vain, "A poor creature like that, who could be afraid of her?"

"One never knows the threads," said the more cynical voice of the elder, he who called himself John, and William's father. "The old fable of the lion and the mouse holds good for more than mere release."

"But how can she?" insisted the other.

"Hatred has strange instincts, and an insight to correspond: and she is odd," was the reply.

"But if she is sharp, she is blind, and therefore helpless," said William; "and the other, who has eyes, is a fool in your hands."

"Not so helpless as she looks—that nurse of hers is eyes and hands both," said John. "I tell you it must be done. Why, Cyril, old man, you are not going to show the white feather now, surely! We have brought things to the neatest and prettiest little pass imaginable. It wants just one moment's nerve, and the game is in our hands, without a break! But remember, it must be done speedily. She will be of age in the autumn, and then—there goes ten thousand!"

"I shall be glad when it is all over," said the young man, Cyril or William. "I cannot help fearing a fiasco. And if Jenny got scent of your present game she would not be disposed to keep terms, I fancy. She is loyal enough, good soul, when she thinks herself the only woman in the field; but if she knew of this widow, I would not give much for her discretion."

John Smith laughed. "You always

look at the dark side, Cyril!" he said, disdainfully. "I dare say you have conjured up the whole scene before now—a trial for bigamy, and the first wife rounding on us in open court, with the moulds and the dies and the whole plant produced, and the evidence fitting to a hair."

"We have seen stranger things than that, you and I, Rainforth," said Cyril; "and I say again, I shall be well pleased when it is all over, and you and the fair widow off on your travels, with her comfortable little catch of twenty thousand safely landed at the end of it."

"Never fear! we are standing on velvet, and the whole thing will go as easy as an old glove," answered John Smith or Rainforth. "But remember," he added, significantly, "it will be only ten thousand unless the daughter is made safe before her birthday. The real wire-puller is yourself, old man, and if you fail in your part, all that I have done will be of no good. When I have secured my prize, the mother, you must do as much by the daughter—in a different fashion."

Cyril shifted his feet uneasily. "I do not like the task," he said. "She is so young! and in spite of her blindness, there is something about her—well! I scarcely know what to say! She interests me. I wish I could have made another path through the wood than the only one open to me!"

"Needs must," answered Rainforth. "Her face might have been her safety, if not her fortune, if she had known her best interests; but as she has not, we must not let it be our misfortune, don't you see? She has to be made safe, and you have the means handy."

"I wish it could have been given to any one else," said Cyril.

"What! showing the white feather again!" sneered Rainforth. "Come! come! this is child's play, boy! You know as well as I do that we are lost without redemption, if we cannot carry this scheme through to a good ending. And to let such a useless life as this girl's stand in the way of our own safety and success, is mere madness. Had she been tractable she might have had her little day of sunshine, like her mother; being what she is, she has to go straight into the pit she has dug for herself."

"Well, it's a nasty job," said Cyril, with a checked sigh: and then the two got

up and walked away, and Blind Kate was left where she had been sitting, with the weight on her mind of a discovery she could not share, and which she felt no one would credit were she to reveal it.

What did it all mean? The horrible vagueness of the suggestions, the misty glimpse into crime and danger that this conversation gave her, froze the blood round her heart. She had never felt her helplessness so much as now. Would nurse Rayner believe her? and if she did, could they make their escape before it was too late? Alone she was helpless; but if Mary would, she could save them both. But Mary was difficult at times; and she might be difficult now.

It seemed hours to poor Kate before her friend and caretaker returned, as at last she did, distressed and heated on her own side. She had had a sharp altercation with her mistress; the first in her life; which had resulted in her dismissal now on the instant—a month's wages and a month's board wages, in lieu of longer notice. This was the end of nineteen years of faithful unremitting service! Thus there was no trouble in convincing Mary that the men meant harm to her and Kate. It was plain enough. She was to be got out of the way; Mrs. Cawthorne would leave to-morrow; and thus Blind Kate would be thrown entirely into the hands of those who neither understood her nor could manage her, with the younger Smith—William, Cyril, whatever his real name might be—free to carry out the terrible designs at which he and his companion had hinted. Having got rid of the one protector, the way was open and the task easy. The vagueness of the danger made it all the more appalling to her, too, as it had done to Kate; but its imminence set her woman's wits to work. Come what might, she resolved that she would save her nursling, and baffle the designs of these wolves preying round her one beloved lamb.

She sat with the girl's hands in hers, and her young head pillowed on the honest loving breast that had been more to her than her own mother's. Truly, the ways of escape in this small place were few and doubtful; she scarce knew what plan to propose to herself; but she felt that inner resolution, that brooding kind of consciousness of success which made her

sure she should discover the right thing in time.

"There is one way," she then said in a whisper; "I will not tell you what I mean until I have gone over to him and made sure; but if it answers, and I think it will, you are safe, my darling. Trust me, and it will all come right. I am to leave to-day—so I will; don't wince and cry out dear! you shall leave to-night. I will come for you and take you away; and between this and to-night—if you will stay up in your own room, and not stir for any of them—with your mother in the house they cannot hurt you. By to-morrow they shall not be able."

"I believe you, Mary, dear mammy Mary!" cried Kate, kissing her. "I will be good and obedient and do just as you tell me. I know you will take care of me. When you were speaking, They spoke too, and told me not to be afraid."

"Never mind what They say," answered Mary, hastily. "Trust me, my darling, I am better for you than a Voice!"

"I will trust you both," said Kate, gravely.

That night Kate was missing. She had obeyed her nurse to the letter; gone upstairs to her own room when Mary was dismissed; and in spite of all that her mother and the man who was to be her step-father to-morrow, and who already took a kind of paternal command of her, could say, clung to her promise tenaciously and would not stir. Then in the middle of the night she heard Mary's voice whispering to her; and, hand in hand, the two passed noiselessly through the house, and, escaping into the dead blackness of the night, were lost. They had vanished like ghosts at dawn, and when every place had been searched, and searched in vain, it was assumed that they had been drowned, and Mrs. Cawthorne's marriage took place after the delay of a few weeks: a delay just for decency, and that the world should not say she had been precipitate or had left undone what she ought to have done.

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AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGERED," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLII. THE CONFESSION—(continued.)

"How did you ever persuade my unhappy uncle to place such a piece of evidence as this paper in your hands?" inquired Evy, regarding the document with horror. "His error was great enough, Heaven knows, but it did not include the heinous guilt which this imputes. The words are true enough, but the meaning they suggest goes far beyond them."

"So pleaded he," answered Judith; "but I—the unjust judge, who held his fate in my hard hands—affected to believe him guilty of murder. 'I saw you throw your wife into the sea,' said I, 'and I believe you killed her first. You tell me she took poison by mistake; if that be so, then let the law prove who poisoned her.' His cheek grew pale at that: he had already lied about her in the face of the law: and the new story that he would have to tell was inherently most improbable. I did not affect to be greatly shocked or horrified with him on account of the crime itself. I had always disliked him, as I now frankly told him, and was not surprised that his passions had brought him to this pass: I did not even conceal from him that his position caused me satisfaction. It would be both my duty and my pleasure, I said, to go at once before the coroner, and tell the plain unvarnished truth, as I had seen it.

"Suppose you do, and I deny it," replied he, rising for once to something like defiance; "is not my word as good as yours? Cannot I prove by Evy's evidence that you have always hated me, and show this story to be a trumped-up malicious tale?"

"There is the presence of the prussic acid,' said I, quietly; 'which you seem to have forgotten.' If that could have lasted for ever, there would have been no need to demand his written confession: I had only to threaten to denounce him, and cause the body to be exhumed: but as it was, that paper was essential to my purpose.

"What is it you demand?' groaned he, despairingly, when he found himself in my vice, 'name your own terms; I dare not defy you, since that would be to brand with infamy my innocent niece.'

"That reference to you, Evy, closed my heart against your wretched uncle more than aught else; for your ruin was the object I had in view, even more than his own.

"I must have your written confession,' answered I, 'in terms that I have fixed upon, and shall dictate; I demand from you the thirty thousand pounds or so, of which I know you to be possessed; and you must promise to prevent Evy's marriage with Captain Heyton.'

"To the first point, though it was in fact the principal one, since it in a measure comprised the others, he did not make much opposition: the mere reference to the fact of my having been a witness to that awful deed seemed to unnerve him, and subdue him to my views. Nor, be it remembered, had he much time to argue with me, since the coroner was waiting for my evidence at that very moment. To the second point he objected that to take so large a sum would be to strip him of his all; but I was merciless, not so much through greed—though I was always grasping, as you know—as to make sure that you would be suspiciousless. Since I was to conceal all suspicion of his guilt during my approach—

ing ordeal, I could not of course bring shame upon you through your uncle; so I could only make you poor; but that at least should be done effectually. As for my third point, it was not carried. Your uncle positively refused to use his influence to break off the match between yourself and Captain Heyton. 'Do your worst, Judith,' said he; 'I have destroyed my own happiness for life, but hers, I will not destroy.' 'Yet if we split on this,' reasoned I, and I go into the witness-box yonder to tell the truth; do you think Captain Heyton will hold to his engagement with the niece of a man who will be hung?'

"No matter," returned he, trembling in every limb nevertheless; 'I will have no part in persuading her to give him up. I will neither be for nor against, if that suffices you; but move a finger against my darling's happiness I will not.'

"With this I was fain to be content, and the more so, since I had myself a plan to hinder your marriage which I thought would render Mr. Hulet's aid unnecessary. When I left him, my hard terms having been acceded to, and repaired to the inn to give my evidence, do you not remember, Evy, how you besought me to spare your uncle all I could? That gave me the very opportunity for which I looked. Without compromising him in any public way, I let you know that I had it in my power to bring shame upon him, which, for your sake only, I forbore to do—albeit I had sold my privilege of speech by that time at a very high price. On a subsequent occasion I took care to remind you of this sacrifice of my finer feelings of duty, whereby I not only laid you under an obligation, but made you reflect upon the impropriety of proceeding with your engagement. You might have suffered Captain Heyton to take you as a dowerless bride, but scarcely as one whose guardian and only relative lay under a cloud of suspicion, dark and even menacing, though it lacked tangible shape. All happened, alas, as I would have had it. The arguments I used to you, advising your immediate marriage with Captain Heyton before he should come to hear evil reports of your uncle, and of your own pecuniary ruin, were intended, of course, to produce the precisely opposite effect; to arouse your sense of honour and self-respect. But they were quite superfluous; you were too generous, too delicate, to permit your lover to become a poor man for your sake, far less to risk the taint of shame.

When he told me with his own lips that you had refused him on your uncle's account, who was selfishly disinclined to see you married, I perceived your pious fraud, though he did not, and I helped it on. I could see he was piqued and irritated to an extreme degree, though I affected not to do so. I was well aware that his heart's affections were with yourself, in spite of all my machinations, and that if I won him, it would be owing to his disappointment at your conduct, rather than any merit that he saw in me. At the same time I had one advocate in my favour, my beauty, never more powerful with a man (notwithstanding what they may tell you of their loving once and once only) than when he has just lost possession of some other object of admiration. Do not blame him, therefore, but rather despise me, Evy, who left no art untried to make him seek solace for your seeming inconstancy in my pretended devotion. To you—perhaps to any woman—such sudden transference of vows seems incredible, but it is my belief that not a man on earth under similar conditions could have withstood me. He had, doubtless, often admired me before, though his fidelity to you had forbidden him to think of me, except as your friend and companion; I was not a stranger to him, and I easily persuaded him that I had always felt for him that love which circumstances had hitherto forbidden me to breathe. At all events he rode forth from Cliff Cottage as he had come, an accepted suitor; it was only his betrothed that had suffered change. Deprived of my presence, indeed, he might soon enough have repented of his vows; but I made up my mind not to leave him long. He was going to town, he said, and Mrs. Bullion, who, since I had grown rich, had become very gracious to me, lived in town, and would, I knew, receive me, and give me opportunities of meeting him. Then, when I had conquered so far, I could afford to pity you a little; I felt some compunctions even for the treachery and ingratitude of which I had been guilty towards you; when you wished me happiness with my Augustus—so little guessing who that Augustus was—I scarcely dared to look up in that face, so full of innocent simplicity, for very shame.

"But shame does not last long with such as I. I had work enough to occupy my thoughts and to put you and your wrongs out of my mind. Moreover, it was useless to think of them, since reparation could not now be made. I wanted the whole

fortune I had extorted from Mr. Hulet to recommend myself, if not to my husband, at least to his uncle, Lord Dirleton. This new engagement of his nephew would be almost as displeasing to him, as the old one had been. I was no mate in any sense for his heir and favourite nephew; and he said so. But, on the other hand, he never positively forbade our marriage. His word was not passed, as it had been in your case, that he would never consent to such a union. It is my belief that, notwithstanding my ineligibility, he was so far pleased, since it gave him an opportunity of making matters up with Captain Heyton, to whom he is genuinely attached. But I did not feel that I was in a position to throw away a chance of propitiating him—to give back any portion of the money I had wrung from your uncle, and which, with my own fortune, made me no insignificant heiress. And very soon the very idea of restitution died away. I have not been happy in my marriage, Evy, you may well suppose. From the very first I failed to win my husband's love. We married; for I was resolved there should be no dangerous delays while matters were yet in doubt as to whether we should obtain Lord Dirleton's forgiveness, and it angered me to note how much he thought of that, even in those early days. If he had married Evy Carthew, thought I, with bitterness, he would not have cared for house or land. That hardened my heart against you more than ever.

"We had made our preparations to go abroad for a time, despairing of a reconciliation with the old lord at present, when he suddenly relented. Nay more; gouty as he was, he contrived to pen an affectionate letter to my husband, bidding him bring his wife to Dirleton Park. 'In a word,' said he, 'come home.'

"That was a proud day for me, Evy. It is not true that the wicked are never happy. The dream of my life was at last realised. I was about to assume a great position—a greater one than my wildest aspirations had ever reached. When this old lord should die—and I was already speculating on that—I should be the lady patroness of a county. My husband was pleased because he had regained his inheritance. I tried to believe that he was pleased with the idea of presenting his beautiful bride to those at home.

"Then, suddenly, I remembered that I had learnt, from a certain private source, that your uncle had removed with you to

Dunwich, and was living there. When I had once got possession of his written confession—after which he became, as it were, my bond-slave—I imposed certain conditions upon him. One was, that he should not dwell within a certain number of miles of my own residence. When he had gone to Dunwich I had certainly had no expectation of going to Dirleton Park. I thought Captain Heyton would have made, at least, no better conditions with his uncle than had been agreed to in your own case; but, since Fortune had thus declared in our favour, it was not likely that I should brook the unwelcome presence of my victim and yourself. It would, on many accounts, have been highly undesirable that you should continue to live in such close proximity to me; and, under any circumstances, I should have insisted on your uncle leaving the neighbourhood. As it was, I had only to remind him of our agreement—I always called it 'our agreement,' though his wishes had been so little consulted in it—and to bid him depart. If he wanted money, I offered to supply him with a little—of his own. I was resolved, as I said, that you should go at once; but the idea of your presence did not disturb me so much as you may suppose. I was immersed in my visions of greatness, and thought but little of such insignificant persons as yourselves. Then something happened which caused me, perforce, to pay more attention to you.

" 'Judith,' said my husband, one morning—it was just after he had received some letter from the steward at the Park, for he had already begun to transact business for his uncle, as he had been accustomed to do of old—'are you aware that Mr. Hulet and—and his niece—are living at Dunwich?'

" 'Yes,' said I, 'I know it. What then?'

"For I was curious to hear what he would say; I had grown very bold with him—so bold, perhaps, as sooner or later to have ensured a quarrel between us.

" 'What is that to us?'

" 'To you,' said he, 'perhaps very little: though I should have thought you would have felt some embarrassment in meeting Mr. Hulet.'

"Believing that my great fortune had all come to me (as indeed it had, though in such illegitimate fashion) from your uncle, or his deceased wife, he had pressed me to offer to restore at least a portion of it to him: and this indeed I had done, but Mr.

Hulet (who had my instructions to that effect beforehand) had declined it.

“Well, at all events, Judith,” he continued, since I did not speak, ‘it would be very embarrassing to me. I had no idea, until I heard it this morning in a letter from De Coucy, that Mr. Hulet was at Seymour’s Home—good Heavens, how poor they must be! It is frightful—’

“I have heard it is a very comfortable place,” said I.

“‘Comfortable!’ echoed he, with indignation. ‘I believe you would think the workhouse comfortable enough for your benefactor and Evy Carthew.’

“I am glad you have mentioned the young lady’s name at last,” returned I: ‘because I know that it is she who has been in your mind, and not ‘my benefactor,’ as you choose to term him, all along. Nothing, of course, can be comfortable enough for her in your eyes; while the tender ‘embarrassment’ of meeting her, I can easily imagine, would in your case be very great.’

“Do not let me have to tell you what I am thinking of you just now, Judith,” answered my husband, sternly. ‘But be assured of this, that since Mr. Hulet and his niece do happen to be living at Dunwich, that I shall not live there. I shall write to my uncle to-day to postpone our visit.’

“‘Are you mad?’ cried I. I was almost mad myself to think that for a puling piece of sentiment, this man should thus put in peril our whole future fortunes. ‘Would you reject the hand your uncle holds out to us, to save yourself a passing pang. How like a man that is! Your informant, however, has not been quite accurate in his intelligence. It is true that Mr. Hulet and his niece have been living at Dunwich, but they are now, as it happens, on the point of departing from it to some more eligible place of residence.’

“‘How do you know that?’ inquired my husband, sharply.

“Simple as he was, and prepared at all points as I had endeavoured to be, for all inquiries concerning you both, this question took me aback. I knew that you were going, because I had written peremptorily to your uncle to urge his immediate departure, and it was out of the question that he should prove rebellious. I replied, however, that I had heard from Mrs. Hodlin Barmby to that effect.

“My husband seemed only half satisfied; and you may imagine my rage and chagrin

when I got Mr. Hulet’s letter, stating that you were too ill to be removed. I did not believe it; but if I had believed it, I should have been scarcely less enraged. I made up my mind to give that screw a turn, which I had only to turn enough to crush your unhappy uncle. No sooner did I arrive here than I set evil tales afloat about his treatment of his late wife, and even hinted that there had been a difference of opinion among the jury, as to whether the verdict should not have been an open one. It was my object to make him as unpopular as possible, and also to let you learn the cause; for I knew that, having learnt it, you would be the first to withdraw him from the reach of malicious tongues. It was a devilish deed to do, with you lying on what might have been your death-bed, and considerations of mere prudence would scarcely have urged me to it; but I was pushed on by jealousy. It was wormwood to me to learn that every day my husband called at Dr. Burne’s to ask about you. It was not your fault, and yet it was with you and not with him that I was most enraged. It chafed me so to think, though I had grown so great, and you had shrunk so small, that you had still such power; I could not prevent my husband showing interest in you; something warned me that it would be even dangerous to tax him with it: and that thought chafed me too. I felt that though I had risen so high, you were still an obstacle in my path; and at all hazards, even at the risk of driving your uncle to desperation, I was resolved that you should go. As for him, poor wretch, I had no pity for him. Since you had done me naught but kindness, and always credited me with good intentions, whereas Mr. Hulet had committed the inexpressible offence of having known me from the first for what I was, my cruelty towards him may seem less inexplicable than it was in your case; but I was swayed by no such considerations. Looking on my own motives now without any shadow of excuse or subterfuge—for I am past all that—my conviction is that, as some cruel tyrant who has wrung his slave with torture, is urged on by the very spectacle of his savage work, so I, who had wronged you both, robbed you of happiness and him of home, was urged by the very knowledge of your ruin, to heap blow and blow, and hurt on hurt upon you. There is something in a good book, somewhere, about making ourselves meet

for the companionship of those we are to mingle with after death. And that was my case, Evy. I was a demon already."

"Oh Judith, Judith," cried Evy, piteously, "you know not what you say. Forbear to vex yourself with such terrible imaginings; you have made your peace with me—with both of us—for I can answer for my uncle—strive then to make it with Heaven. You must be wearied out with this long talk, which I would never have permitted, unless I had thought it would have given you ease. Try and sleep a little, and then you will have strength to pray."

"Pray! Sleep! Evy? you might as well bid me rise and walk."

"There was One on earth, Judith, who could bid sick men do so. He has not lost his power, now, but lives in Heaven to use it for such as you. For those upon whom Justice frowns he speaks in Mercy."

"There was a prayer, I learnt long ago—at the Orphanage, Evy. A little girl there—a fool, I thought her for it—told me once that it seemed to comfort her; that when she had said it, she felt somehow as though she were not an orphan; that she had a Father in heaven."

"Was it the Lord's Prayer, Judith?"

"Perhaps. How dark the room grows. Are the candles burning dim, Evy?"

"No, dear. It is because you are growing weak; that is," added she hastily, for the scared, hopeless look, that for a little while had left her companion's face, once more took possession of it as she spoke; "this exertion has been too much for you. You must take a little sleep, indeed you must."

"I have no time to sleep. Did not the doctors say, 'two days at farthest,' and much of that—of what to me who lie in agony, is dear and precious life—is already gone. Would you have me waste it? But you need sleep, I see. Go, Evy, go, and if I live, come back to-morrow, for you are all in all to me. Nay, don't deny me. If you knew how strange and sweet it seems to ask you to depart for your own sake; to leave me, though I yearn to keep you here; it is my first self-sacrifice, dear Evy; my very first—Oh that this were but the beginning of life and not its close!—I pray you accept it."

Evy arose, and pale and trembling stood beside the couch of her dying rival; herself just risen from a sick bed, she was indeed ill fitted to attend one; but she had no thought of that.

"I will come to-morrow, dear Judith," whispered she, stooping down to kiss her.

"Coals of fire, coals of fire," murmured the wretched woman, and then closed her eyes. They were words that rang in Evy's ears for many a day.

At the door she found the nurse in waiting, and Dr. Burne below, who accompanied her in the carriage as before.

"You look sadly troubled, dear Evy," said he; "I fear your uncle will blame me much for having caused you such an ordeal."

"No, Doctor, he will bless you rather," answered Evy, gravely. "May I ask, even at this hour, that you will go to Mr. Mellish and beseech him to visit Mrs. Heyton. She will not sleep, although she feigned to be about to do so, for my sake."

"She must be greatly changed," was the surprised reply.

"She is," answered Evy, gravely. "The change also from life to death is drawing near with her. You will do what I ask, if not for her sake, for mine."

The Doctor readily gave his promise, and duly performed it.

At Seymour's Home Evy found her uncle had retired to his own room. This did not surprise her, for she could easily imagine that he desired no witness to their first interview. He was up and dressed, pacing his chamber in impatience for her coming, and had been doing so for hours.

"My dear, dear uncle," cried she, running towards him.

"Then the woman has not told you," exclaimed he, holding her at arm's length, and scanning her face with anxious eagerness; "she has spared me something. She must be on her death-bed then, indeed."

"Oh, uncle, don't say that; she is penitent and beseeches your forgiveness."

"If she has not told you, she shall have it. If she has still left me my darling—to love and comfort me—I will forgive her all."

"She has, uncle, she has; and yet she has told me all. I know the fatal error which you committed in such a moment of remorse and agony, that you scarce knew what you did. I have the proof of it, here, in your own handwriting; but it was not a crime, uncle; I always said it was not a crime." She pressed the paper into his hand, which he opened eagerly, and then thrust into the fire.

"Free, free at last," he cried, "and yet

not outlawed from my darling's heart; it is too much of happiness."

"Not more than you deserve, dear uncle," answered Evy, embracing him; "after the wretchedness which five minutes of frantic weakness have inflicted on you for so many months."

"Yes. I have been punished, Evy; oh, what tortures, oh, what pangs!—and what was worse, I have seen you tortured, too. But I deserved it all. Alas, I knew what I was doing but too well. You kiss my cheek, you press my hand; but do you understand what this hand did? To shield myself from righteous reprobation, to justify my own obstinate self-will—"

"Cease, dear uncle," interrupted Evy, pleadingly; "cease I pray you, to revive that terrible scene. Whatever may have been your guilt—if such it seems to you—it has been surely expiated. For the future let us live together in content and peace."

"Yes, darling, yes; I would I could hear you say in happiness; but that you have lost for ever, thanks to me—thanks to me," and again he gave way to bitter grief.

It was long before Evy could comfort, or even calm him; but at last she succeeded, and left him to seek herself that rest of which she stood so sorely in need. For awhile she lay sleepless, picturing Judith's miserable condition, and considering what words of consolation she should address to her on the morrow; but presently, utterly wearied out, she fell into a deep slumber.

When she woke, it was broad daylight, and starting up, she heard, to her inexpressible dismay, the church clock striking the midday hour. No; it was not the clock; in her confusion and excitement she had mistaken for it the tolling of the church bell.

A shudder ran through her, and she hastily summoned the servant; yet when she came she did not dare to put to her the question that rose to her trembling lips.

"My watch has stopped, Jane; what time is it? I have surely overslept myself."

"It is ten o'clock; but master said you were on no account to be disturbed, Miss."

"I am sorry for that. I wished particularly to be up early; I had promised to go to the Park this morning."

Jane did not reply, but busied herself about the room, while the bell boomed hoarsely in the air like words of doom.

"Who is dead, Jane? Not Judith—not Mrs. Heyton?"

"Yes, Miss. Mr. Mellish called here not ten minutes ago, on his way from her death-bed."

EASTER IN LONDON A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

EASTER having longer daylight than New Year's Day, it is marked by more outdoor activities and amusements in London. This was the case a hundred years ago as it is at present; but, in the one season as in the other, a century has brought about some singular changes.*

Few things are more striking than the difference in the mode of treating public subjects. The names of statesmen and great personages were in those days masked in the newspapers behind the mysteries of asterisks and dashes, easily interpretable but not actionable. There was reason for this kind of manoeuvre, owing to the severity of the law of libel, especially in relation to all comments on members of the royal family. The American war was just beginning; Lord North and Lord Bute, in favour at court, but unpopular out of doors, were attacked by many of the newspapers; and the dash and asterisk plan was much in vogue. The Morning Chronicle managed the following political hit by another mode of masking: "Many solicitations derogatory to the honour of this nation have been made to the Court of France by a well-known man in office, commonly called a lord, to ensure their friendship so long as the vigorous measures are executing against the Americans. He has something more substantial than a promise for the performance of what he has desired."

The following, again, was a smart bit in which asterisks and dashes could be dispensed with: "Tis said that the Bostonians have been to a great expense in purchasing foreign hemp to send to England, because they think there will be a great demand for halters in the kingdom." One marvels why the king could not be openly named in the following innocent paragraph: "There are some reasons to think that a great personage will this summer not only visit Oxford and Cambridge, but also Edinburgh, he having often expressed a wish to see the latter

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Jan. 3, 1874, "New Year's Day in London a Hundred Years Ago."

place, and Holyrood House in particular." Lord Mansfield came under the lash in some dispute between two royal brothers. "We are desired to strip the wolf of the sheep's clothing, and assure the public that Lord M——d, so far from being the mediator between the r——l b——rs, as mentioned in Friday's paper, has been, and still is, conjointly with Jemmy Twitcher, the two secretaries, and the Arch-thane of Bute, an indefatigable promoter of their divisions." The politicians of the day knew who was meant by Jemmy Twitcher. The same subject, with a mysterious dash concerning the queen, was the theme of another newspaper rub: "Let the following fact demonstrate who rules the roast in this kingdom. The k——'s two b——s are still to remain in proscription. The q——'s two b——s are daily expected at St. James's. The Sc—— and foreigners will doubtless be forwarded with every mark of deference and servility towards these exotic guests; while John Bull is to be duped into the cry against our two persecuted P——s." Again does Lord Bute come in for the rod: "It is said that the thane is consulted daily and hourly by a certain great personage; no favourable omen this for the rights and liberties of the subject." The offensive custom of parodying the Bible was in vogue, and was adopted by the Daily Advertiser in a pretended "Lost Book of Chronicles," wherein politics were discussed in language closely copied from that of the Old Testament. Of course wherethescandal of fashionable life was retailed, dashes were plentiful, as in the following: "Tuesday last, Adjutant C—— received the following very laconic epistle from Captain Sc——, the antagonist of Mr. F——d, the bosom friend of Captain H——: 'Dear C——x, I am off. You know what the ensigncy and lieutenantcy cost me, so sell them directly for the most you can get. Yours, &c.' And the day following the lady left Lady A——le's, and followed her lover."

On Maunday Thursday, a hundred years ago, "Her Majesty took an airing along Pall-mall, and all through the city, accompanied by the Princess Royal and Princess Augusta Sophia, to show the young princesses the shops in the city." Young girls, whether princesses or not, have a liking for such gay attractions; but we certainly do not, now-a-days, take an "airing" in the City. On Easter eve, the king reviewed the forty-third Foot at Wimbledon, previous to their embarking for

foreign service. On Easter Monday, temptations for holiday-makers were announced, but they were very limited compared with those which are offered in these railway days of ours. Among them was an entertainment at Ranelagh, "music, coffee, and tea, two-and-sixpence," with the important addition of "horse patrol to guard the roads." Those were times when the present Belgravia was anything but safe from highwaymen. Drury Lane, Covent Garden, the Haymarket, and the King's Theatre put forth their attractions; while Sadler's Wells had a programme of ladder dancing by the celebrated Richer, singing, dancing, rope dancing, "the cave of enchantment," music by Dibdin, and the "bower of Flora." The famous Breslaw, the prestidigitateur, held forth at an exhibition room in Cockspur-street: he drew particular attention to an exploit with "a new-invented japanned casket," which sets us speculating what kind of relation it bore to the conjuring manoeuvres of the present day. In Oxford-street there were two automaton figures which played on two flutes: they were as large as life, and dressed with Turkish gorgeousness, which the exhibitor did not fail to extol in grandiloquent terms. He, furthermore, informed the public that "the difficulty of producing music from the German flute is well known; notwithstanding which, the figures not only blow the flutes, but express the notes in a very delicate and proper manner, and grace the tunes with their fingers in a pleasing and agreeable strain, and play in unison as first and second in exact time; so that any gentleman that plays the flute may play in concert with them." A masquerade or masked ball was held on one of the evenings of Easter at the King's Theatre, the tickets costing a guinea and a-half each. Bagnigge Wells, a place of popular entertainment, was situated in what was long known as Bagnigge Wells Road, now transformed into King's Cross Road: visitors were invited to drink the chalybeate and aperient waters at three-pence each person, while "tea, coffee, and hot rolls" could be had at the bar. A tea-garden was kept up long after the water ceased to be drinkable; and a public-house, Bagnigge Wells Tavern, still enables us to identify the spot. Fireworks were among the attractions of Easter week; Mr. Clanfield, "the original firework maker to Ranelagh Gardens," gave a grand display at Mrs. Mullet's, the Three Tuns' bowling-green, behind the Foundling Hospital.

It commenced at eight o'clock "with an overture of maroons." M. Caillot had another display in the bowling-green of his house, the Star and Garter Tavern, Chelsea; "including a representation of the Temple of Fortune, illuminated with two thousand cases of the most beautiful colours." M. Caillot, however, seems to have got into some trouble with the authorities; for we are told that, unless he desisted from his pyrotechnic exhibition, he would be visited by the high constable of Westminster, with a sufficient number of officers.

We are let into a secret concerning the power of money to obtain invitations, or an equivalent to invitations, in connexion with a Banquet and Ball given by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House, on Easter Monday. The newspapers of the following morning told their readers that "the company at the Mansion House last night was more numerous than has ever been known for many years. The ball was opened about nine o'clock by a gentleman of distinction and the Lady Mayoress. The dancing continued till three in the morning, and by four the whole company departed, well pleased at the elegance of their entertainment, and the noble reception they had met with." So far good; but we find that the cards or tickets of invitation were in many cases rendered "transferable," in a way that the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress probably did not intend. An advertisement, on the morning of Easter Monday, ran thus:—"Wanted, twelve dinner and twenty ball tickets for the Mansion House, for this evening: a genteel premium will be given. Coffee House, 12, Threadneedle Street." Other advertisements show that the waiters at city taverns and coffee houses were dealers in these tickets. "Invitation tickets bought, sold, or exchanged. Apply to William, at Edinburgh Coffee House, Sweeting's Alley; and to Tom, at the Union Coffee House, Cornhill." "Blake the waiter, at Wills' Coffee House, buys and sells Mansion House Dinner and Ball Tickets for this evening." If the city and their wives wished to learn to dance, they could do so without the necessity for a journey to the West End; seeing that "At Bell Alley, George Yard, Lombard Street, M. Mussard teaches the Minuet, Cotillon, Allemande, and Country Dance; Hornpipes taught completely by Mr. Walker."

Theatrical squabbles not unfrequently occupied a portion of the limited columns

of the daily newspapers a hundred years ago. Mr. Macklin, an actor celebrated in a certain range of characters, was concerned in a quarrel which began long before, and did not terminate until long after, the particular Easter week which is here engaging attention. While performing *Macbeth* at Covent Garden Theatre, he was annoyed by two or three brother actors, and hooted by many among the audience, on account of some matter in which he had previously given offence; the storm became fierce, the insulted actor walked off the stage; and the manager, to prevent a riot, announced to the audience that Mr. Macklin's engagement would be cancelled; no other play being ready, the money taken at the doors was returned. Herein were ample materials for the intervention of the Law; riot and conspiring were charged, suits were brought and injunctions obtained; until at length, on the suggestion of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, a compromise was agreed to, by which all parties were considerably out of pocket through law expenses. Just about Easter time, there was a French dancer who brought his grievances before an enlightened public. M. Fierville, of the King's Theatre, in virtue of his position of premier danseur, claimed the right of selecting his own subordinate figurants: such figure dancers "as he thinks fittest to cut his entries, and to set them off in a convenient manner." Through some neglect of the manager on this point, M. Fierville complains that he was "obliged to caper away in the driest and most insignificant ballets, and appear in the new Chaconne quite alone (that is, with an insufficient number of figure dancers)." The crowning offence was that "Signor Bocchini and Signora Mazaim, who are both comic, were offered to him, to besort his serious action in a ballet." There was a storm in a tea-cup relating to Mrs. Lessington, an actress at one of the theatres; the *Morning Post* disparaged her, the *Morning Chronicle* bepraised her. The *Post* said she was not truthful, because she gave her address Percy Street, Rathbone Place, whereas she lived in Charlotte Street. The *Chronicle*, in an article two columns in length, defended her veracity, on the ground that her residence was a corner house, with the windows in Percy Street, although the street door was in Charlotte Street—a nice point in casuistry. A curious complaint was made against Garrick in one of

the newspapers; he was accused of want of generosity in acting so frequently, and drawing such large audiences; Covent Garden suffered because Drury Lane prospered; and "an industrious and deserving performer" at the former house had a very poor benefit night in consequence of Mr. Garrick's attractions at the latter.

Trade then, as now, made use of advertising as a means of extending itself, though not on the same gigantic scale. The dealers in rum at No. 2, Lower Thames-street, assured their customers that they "do not make use of any artifice to abuse the public confidence, either by adulterating their rum with British spirits, or lessening their over-proofs with water." In curious phraseology, they "assure themselves the candour of the public will be constantly excited to countenance and support wherein the prosperity of the colonies, the increase of the revenue, and the health of those persons who drink spirituous liquors, are so materially interested." Perfumers never have been wanting in eloquent announcements of the beautiful scents and cosmetics with which they tempt one half of the creation, and a portion of the other half. Mrs. Pearson, opposite St. Dunstan's church, philosophically urged that, "although female beauty is the most powerful of all attractions, irresistible and irrevocable in its operation, in every part of the habitable globe, yet it must be granted Nature is not equally kind to all." In other words, some ladies have freckles, pimples, sallow complexions, &c.; and they are therefore invited to purchase and use Mrs. Pearson's "Vivid Bloom!" A wig maker in Stationers' Hall Court deplored the condition of "some gentlemen who are yet induced to let their hair grow, while many others are still constrained to wear it, seeing they cannot get wigs made to appear as natural." The corollary is of course this: that gentlemen should forthwith buy their queues, bags, Roman tops, French tops, &c., of the advertiser, as they "sit light and easy on the head, and never fly off the ears."

A gentlewoman advertised her services in a way familiar enough to newspaper readers at the present day, but with a little more sentimental pretension. "A lady of good character, temper, and cheerful disposition, turned of forty years of age, with a very genteel education, and possessed of a small independent fortune, would be glad to give her company to an elderly gentle-

man of steady good character, virtue, and conduct; would conduct his family and superintend his table and servants, without any view of reward other than the condition of saving her board, and having the pleasure of conversing, visiting, and passing the time virtuously with him; doing the honours of his table as if his sister, and rendering his home as agreeable to him as a friend could do." The gentlewoman expresses a hope that no one will answer the advertisement who has views of matrimony, or less honourable views. Far different in gentility was a threatening letter written to one Mr. Goddard, who offered a reward for the discovery of the writer: "Mr. Gorrord, if you intend to go on in the maner as you go on, you may gess watt I mean, you shall shorley have a brase of bollots thru your head or your body as ever you are borne: for if I can't have you by night I will have you by day; you shan't tell hu aurt you, you damd under minden roge, there is no ways to manage you. But that I think you have run your rase long anuff, but now you have got in to good hands to due your jobb."

The four-horse stage coaches, called machines, ran from London to the chief cities of the north and west a hundred years ago. Some of these claimed to be flying machines, in virtue of their great celerity—to Gloucester in one day; to Birmingham in one day; to Shrewsbury in a day and a half, and so forth. Luggage was strapped on the top of the coaches, or slung on behind—not always free from mishap. A reward of ten guineas was offered for the recovery of a small deal box, "shape of a hat-box," dropped from behind the Ipswich machine between Stratford and Gracechurch-street. It contained articles of lady's attire, which must have been somewhat valuable to suggest so large a reward. The garments were passed over with a brief enumeration; but particular stress was laid upon "seven yards of white satin, painted in large festoons of flowers from Nature, tied up with large knots of blue ribbon, intermixed with bronze cords; at the extremity of the festoons are two doves, supporting the whole, with various kinds of birds, flowers, &c." The truth is, dress was, in those days, very costly—far more so than at present. Men, in particular, arrayed themselves in finery very different from the sober garments now worn. A censor in one of the newspapers declared

that tailors and laundresses made the men in London on Sundays. "One may see apprentices, who have been all the week confined behind the counter, strutting forth in scarlet and gold, with long sword, looking as big as a City alderman on a lord mayor's day. And, if you speak to any of them, you have only this reply—'Demme, sir, if you affront a gemman, d'ye see, demme, I'll run you through the body!'" The aldermen no more escaped then, than they escape now, from sarcastic allusions to the difference between their shop attire and their corporation adornments: "The shoemaker cuts a very good figure at his business; but, when he is wrapped up in his fur gown, and has got about him a couple of dozen common councilmen at his heels, he looks exactly like an owl followed by a flock of tom-tits on a summer's day." It is right to remark that aldermen in those days were often retail tradesmen, somewhat lower in grade than those who are now generally elected, and decidedly lower in education.

The newspaper gossip, chronicling the small daily occurrences in London, is often very amusing; showing, in some instances, the resemblance between the current events of Victoria and those of George the Third, in others illustrating the changes which time has wrought. Highwaymen had matters pretty much their own way, holding but little in fear the myrmidons of the law. On Easter Monday, a hundred years ago, a corn dealer was stopped by a single highwayman "genteelly mounted, on the Dulwich-road, and robbed of his watch, five guineas, and some silver." Much more daring was another of the Dick Turpin class, who robbed the York machine, the Leeds machine, the Coventry machine, the Stamford machine, and five other stage coaches, near the seven mile stone on Finchley Common (not far from the present St. Pancras Cemetery). "He took from the passengers of the first four upwards of thirty pounds, and large sums from the others. He was so daring as to stop the several coaches within five minutes of each other, and one absolutely at the distance of only two hundred yards. He was a thin man, and his hand shook much; but his expedition in his business permitted the outside passengers to go free." We fancy that this "thin man, whose hand shook very much," would not have found passengers so pusillanimous at the present day. A little relic of the old parish vestry days is met with in

an advertisement from some householder who objected to the junketing which those functionaries allowed themselves:—"Parish of St. Saviour's, Southwark. Such inhabitants of this parish as pay the poor's rate, &c., and think the present custom of feasting, &c., at the expense of the parish improper, are requested to attend the vestry to-morrow morning at nine o'clock." Our recent parliamentary election for the City of London may give us some interest in knowing that at a similar election, held just a century ago, a "screen was erected across Guildhall Yard, to prevent any but liverymen, &c., from passing into the hall; the screen contained thirty doors or wickets, each for one or more of the City companies; the beadles of the companies stood at the doors to prevent any but the privileged from entering; and as each door was only wide enough to admit one person at a time, the process of identification could be the better managed." One of the London parishes furnished an example of a pernicious system which prevailed extensively in those days, but has happily been much lessened in recent times—the heartless treatment of pauper children when apprenticed out by the parishes. A fish-stall keeper, near Clare Market, had taken five apprentices from various parishes, and employed them in traversing the streets with wheelbarrows, selling fruit and other articles by false weight and measure. One poor girl, detected by a purchaser in the use of fraudulent weights, saw in dismay her barrow upset and the weight lost. When she returned to the miserable home allotted for her and her hapless companions (who lived mainly on stinking fish), her master flogged her brutally. The fellow was punished for "over-severity," but nothing was done to remedy the system which rendered such scenes probable.

Executions were so frequent as to furnish almost a regular Monday morning holiday for the indulgence of the depraved taste of gallows admirers; it is shocking now to think of the severity and frequency with which the punishment of death was awarded. Easter week, a century ago, had its carnival of this kind. Another Easter incident for newspaper readers was the trial of a hopeful son, who had cut up a picture of his mother to denote what he would do to her if she were still living; and who was heard to mutter a willingness to treat his father in the same way. A third related to an odd will, in which a

wealthy testator bequeathed two shillings a week to a favourite greyhound. The deaths of centenarians were announced almost every week; for chroniclers had not in those days the fear of Sir Cornewall Lewis and Mr. Thom before their eyes. A paragraph told the gossip-mongers that the pensions of the wet nurses to the several branches of the royal family amounted to sixteen hundred pounds per annum; every nurse to the younger princes and princesses having an annuity of a hundred pounds for life, and those of the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal four hundred a year each. Other royal intelligence bore relation to the French King, Louis the Fifteenth, who died just about the period of which we are treating. The body of the dissolute monarch was taken to St. Denis, "as is customary for princes who die of the small-pox; the Bishop of Senlis, first almoner to his majesty, attended the procession." Three of the king's daughters had taken the disease while attending on him. Friars of the Order of St. Bernard prayed night and day by the dead body, before it was removed to St. Denis; "they," we are told, "have had this office ever since their establishment at Paris."

We will close with a kind of Enoch Arden incident—with a difference. "Mrs. Malding, who keeps a chandler's shop in Southwark, being at a neighbour's drinking tea, her daughter came to her and told her that a gentleman, dressed in blue and gold, wanted to see her on particular business. Accordingly, she went home, when, to her great astonishment, this gentleman proved to be her husband, whom she had not heard of since the taking of Havana, at which time he was a ship's carpenter." Fortune had favoured him; he rose in rank in the Spanish service, and returned with five thousand pounds. Happily, he did not find his wife wedded to another.

AH, LITTLE MAIDEN!

Ah, little maiden, frank and fair,
With rosy lips apart,
With sunbeams glinting in your hair,
And sunshine at your heart!
Glad sounds about your senses rise,
That have no voice for me;
Blithe visions dance before your eyes,
That mine may never see.
And are the flowers so rare, love?
And is the day so bright?
For me the boughs are bare, love,
And chill descends the night.

Ah, me! I mind me of a time,
Deep in the buried past,
When I, too, dwelt in that sweet clime,
Wherein your lot is cast;

When fragrance floated on the breeze,
When heaven bent blue above,
And every wild bird in the trees
Sang still of hope and love.

Dead are those flowers so rare, love,
And dimmed that day so bright.
For me the boughs are bare, love,
And chill descends the night.

Grim clouds came up, and overspread
The heavens with sullen grey;
The roses drooped, the fragrance fled,
The breezes died away.

And now, of all the happy throng,
One bird is left alone,
To sing a broken-hearted song
Of joys for ever flown.

Dead are those flowers so rare, love,
And dimmed that day so bright.
For me the boughs are bare, love,
And chill descends the night.

PEG-LEGGED BOB.

Yes, sir, I'm what you call a sub—a sub-contractor under Mr. Tracey. Me and my wife Sal, and Bos, the curly-haired dog, are pretty well known up and down wherever there's a bit of excavating going on. But as for sending me a letter, I don't hardly know where to tell you to direct it. You might hear of me at the Three Pigeons, Stonycross, Brummagem, if I happened to be out of work, which ain't often. Last time I was wrote to, was Providence Terrace, Banktop Cutting, Killarney, Ireland, and the postman broke his leg trying to get it to me. So perhaps you'd better not write; but if you should want to send me any money just you hand it over to Mr. Tracey's office in Great Parliament-street, and tell 'em it's for Peg-legged Bob. I shall get it all right some time or other. As to how I got the name, why that's pretty obvious I should think, looking at these timber toes of mine. It wasn't gave me by my godfathers and godmother, but you may say that I was christened by four hundred tons of rock and rubble as tumbled right atop of me.

This was how it happened. Me and a mate of mine was working in a butty gang on one of Mr. Tracey's lines. It was in the old man's time. Yes, he was a very decent fellow, old Tracey. There was a kind of a go about him, as made you like to work for him, even if so be as you didn't make much out of it. And he was precious near. Not himself, you know, so much, as the men that was under him; but bless you, he picked 'em out just for that, else he was a free-handed sort, if you took him on the right side, and he'd never see you ruined through any of his jobs, if you stuck to 'em plucky. Not but what perhaps there was a bit of policy about

that, too, for you see you'd cut things a bit closer, knowing as if they turned out unkimmon cross, old Tracey 'ud ease you off some trifle.

I was a able bodied young chap when it happened, and could do a day's work with anybody. I was butty of the gang, and we'd took about a thousand yards of rock and rubbidge to drive a cutting through, and was getting on very well with it, too. We was making three pound a week, every man in the gang, for it had turned out a very plummy piece; only perhaps we was in too much of a hurry, and used our powder a little too free. It was in Staffordshire county, a sort of red sand and rock, we had to cut through, a soft kind of stone as come away in great chunks like slices of pudding. We'd cut away at both ends of our piece and had left a big lump sticking up in the middle, and we'd made up our minds to give him a jolly good shaking, with twenty pounds of powder droved twenty feet into the rock. Me and my chum, carrotty Sam we called him then, had agreed to tamp the hole and fire the shot. We'd just rammed in the charge, and Sam had got a lump of clay in his hand to slap it into th' hole, when of a sudden I heard a sort of fizzling noise under my feet, and lo and behold, I'd struck out a spark with my hob-nailed boots, and the powder as we'd scattered here and there had took the spark, and the flame was running along all about like wildfire. "Run Sam," says I; and we started off for our lives. There was the chance you see that the charge wouldn't catch, or that if it caught it would "blow" without bringing the rock down upon us. But there was no such luck. I heard a gruff sort of a bang behind me, the ground wobbled about under my feet, and down I went, tumbling over my mate, all in darkness like. There was just a minute when I felt as if I was fireworks, and turning into all kinds of lights, and then I felt one twist of dreadful pain. After that I don't remember aught till I come to myself in a sort of a dream, as it might be the nightmare. Not that I could make out where I was or nothing, only I was feeling badder than I've got words to tell you.

When I did come to myself sufficient to know where I were, I didn't feel any better. I was buried alive, sure enough, and I felt bad all over, I can tell you. Then I moved a bit with my arm and felt something soft alongside me, that groaned as I touched it.

"Sam," says I, in a gruff kind of way. "Hullo Bob," says he. "Good-bye, old man," says I. "Good-bye, Bob," says he. And after that we lay quite still without speaking. How time passed I didn't know, but I felt getting colder and colder, and the feeling went out of me, so as I didn't feel no more pain, and my head was clear; and I thought, aye, I thought a deal o' things. Then I spoke to Sam again, and he never answered; and I spoke agair, but not a sound from him. So, thinks I, he's dead, and I'll have my groan out. And I cried out; ah, you wouldn't have thought there was strength enou' in me to have sung out as I did.

And when I'd had my cry out, now thinks I, it's all over, and I may give up the ghost. Then I heard another cry, as seemed as if it came out of the bowels of the earth, and after that there was a sound of picks and spades. Next thing I hears a voice, "Bob!" quite faint like. "Hallo," says I, "what, Sam, are ye alive yet?" "Aye," says he, "was that you as shrieked just now." "Aye," says I, a little bit nettled as Sam should have heard me. "But keep up mate," says I, "here's help a coming;" and presently there came a shine of light and somebody sings out "Here they are."

Ah, but we'd a precious bad time of it too, after they found us. A great stone had rumbled on our legs and smashed 'em dreadful, one of mine and one of Sam's, his left leg and my right. The stones had collapsed together like, so as we warn't killed outright; but they'd been digging for us the wrong way, and would never have got us out alive, if it hadn't been for that shout I give, as I thought was my last. The doctors whipped our legs off fast enou' after they got us out, and then I lay on my back, in a bit of a bothie alongside the cutting, for months and months. And there it was I made acquaintance with Sal, who was Sam's sister, and come to nurse him, and she looked after me, too, first-rate. Only I never thought about getting wedded then, being, as I was, very down in the mouth, wondering what was to become of me through having lost my leg.

Howsoever, Mr. Tracey, he came down one day to see how his chaps was getting on, and he comed into the hut to have a look at me and Sam. "Well lads," he says, "how are you by this time?" "All right, governor," I says, "what there's left of us," says I, "the doctor's took so much of us away, they'd ought to have joined

me and Sam together, as might make a man between us." And Tracey, he laughed, and said, "Well Bob," says he, "you allus had a wooden head, and now you'll be head and foot all alike," says he. Well, I knowed by the old gent being so cheerful as there was something more behind, and, says he to a man outside, "Tom, bring in them timbers!" and lo and behold there was a pair of wooden legs he'd brought from London; very neat looking things they was, too, with brass rims round the hoofs of 'em, and varnished beautiful. It seemed as the man as made them was proud of them, for there was burnt into the wood, right in the middle of each of the legs, the 'nitals of his name, P. L. B., meaning Philip Lee, Bow, Mr. Tracey told me. But one of my mates, as was a bit of a scholar, coming in by-'n-by, he takes up my leg, and says he, "P. L. B., what does that mean? Why, Peg-legged Bob," says he, and that name stuck to me ever since.

But I was telling you about Mr. Tracey; well, that wasn't the last visit he paid me, and next time he came, he says, "Bob, you won't be much use for a navy now," says he, "but you're a knowledgeable man, and has got your wits about you; take a contract under me," says he. "'An't got the brass, Mr. Tracey," says I. "I'll lend you some," he says, "enough to start you; no interest to pay; but, mark you, I shall look for my money back some day." And with that he wrote me out a cheque for a hundred. Now Sam had a great fancy for a public-house, and Tracey helped him too, so he and I parted. But afore then Sal and I was wedded, and with Sal I took to Bos, the curly-haired dog as had been her father's, a valyble animal, sir, as hunted silent, and brought me in many a hare and rabbit in days gone by.

I did pretty well as a sub on the whole; ups and downs, and sometimes only bread and cheese for my pains, with a pound or two to the good now and then to pay back Mr. Tracey. Sam didn't do as well in the public line—made a break of it in fact, and then came back among his old pals, and kept a sort of a sly grog shop.

Well, I'd been working a good piece with Mr. Tracey in Ireland, a starvation sort of a job, as melancholy a business as ever I knowed. When we'd got through that, I heard as Mr. Tracey was making a line in Wales. Thinks I, that's working home like: so I takes the steamer to Holyhead and jogs along to the wars.

Tracey was working this job at both ends, with one set at this end in Blamarginshire and another at the t'other end in Magonyshire. Well, I saw there wasn't a likely job, for me in Blamarginshire, and so I worked on through the country. I may tell you I heard of Sam, as was doing a bit of business among the lads, but I didn't trouble to look him up, not being over friendly with him just then.

Howsoever I took a stiffish cutting at the other side of the country, Magonyshire end you know, and soon repented of my job I can tell you. I never see such a mixed sort of a place as that Wales. Everything higgledy piggedly, gravel and rock, slate and rubbidge all twisted up anyhow. There was no lodgings to be had near our cutting, so we made a sort of a camp, a row of huts, as we christened Prospect Villas. And with there being no town near, Sal set up a shop to sell groceries and pork and so on. It was a thing Mr. Tracey set his face against in a general way, any of us subs setting up shop. "'Taint right for the men," he'd say, "and it's the beginning of truck-work as I can't abide." But in this case he'd nothing to say against it. "Only," says he, "Bob, don't you go selling drink." Which I didn't, except as it might be to a friend, you know.

We hadn't been there long when who should turn up, one day, but Sam, my wife's brother. He was a big lump of a chap, just like myself, and about the same height. "I'm in a bit of trouble, Bob," says he; "lend us a pound or two, and get us run on to Brummagem." And he stayed a night with me, and I took him off afore daylight, and got him on to the ballast engine as was working on the line, and then he was all right. I never axed him what the trouble was as he'd got into; it wouldn't a' been polite, you know; and Sam never told me, only that it was in Blamarginshire, where he'd been doing a bit of business among the navvies as was working at the other end of Mr. Tracey's line.

I was standing atop of the bank, one day, looking over the men as was filling a set of waggons for the tip. The road ran close by, and a gig was coming along, and I thought for a minute it was Grinwell, our gaffer, coming to have a look at us; and I stumped off to the road to meet him. But it wasn't him, but a rather solemn-looking chap, with a frill of black whiskers round his face. And he stops and

passes the time of the day with me. "Been in the army?" says he, pointing to my leg. "No," says I; "fall of rock." And he seemed to prick up his ears at that, and asked me a lot of questions as to how it happened, and so on. And then he begins admiring my leg—the wooden 'un—and would I mind putting it upon the step for him to see. "Ah," says he, "a nice bit of timber that; and them letters, why, you've got your initials on it, I see: P. L. B. Thank'ee; good day," says he, and drives off sharp, as if to make up for lost time.

Well, me and Sal was having our tea that night atop of the counter—we was a bit squeezed for room, there being only the shop and a back parlour and a little cook-house, and four or five lodgers, and the children and Bos—and a knock came at the door, and Bos he sets a-barking, like mad. "Come in," says I, with my mouth full of bread and cheese; and in walks two policemen and the gent I'd seen in the gig in the morning. "There's your prisoner," says he to the police; "take him off." "Why; what have I done?" says I, my heart sinking into my boot. "Oh," he says, "selling liquor without a license." "But," I says—for my mind was'n't quite clear as I mightn't have transfixed the law, through being too careful to go as near to it as might be without breaking it,—says I, "Ain't I to have my trial?" "Trial! nonsense!" says he. "Who are you?" I says. "Are you kings, lords, and commons, and judge and jury, too?" says I. Says he, "I'm the supervisor of the excise, my boy; and here's the warrant to take you to prison. You know all about it; so it's no use pretending you don't." Well, Sal cried, and Bos howled, and the children screamed, and some of my men began to get wind of what was up, and gathered about the door. "Look sharp," says the exciseman; "they'll be trying a rescue next." And with that they hurried me out, and across the line to where a dog-cart was waiting, and away we went. And, presently, we came to a town called Lanpigstie, or some such name as that. Now, it so happened as I knew a man there, a lawyer—a regular hearty sort of chap—as was doing a bit of work for Mr. Tracey; and I spoke up, and said, "You must let me see my lawyer." "Your lawyer," sneered the police; "who's your lawyer?" "Why, Mr. David Evans," I said. And with that there was a whispering going on; and, presently,

they said as they'd stop for half-an-hour at the Goat, and bait the horse; and I might send for the lawyer, if I pleased. And so Mr. David came to see me, as I was sitting in the tap-room, as glum as you please, between two policemen.

"Why, policemen," says he, as soon as he saw me, "what's all this about?" "Revenue case," say they. "Let's look at your warrant," says he; and he turns it over in his hands. "All right," says he. "Now, what do you want me to do?" turning to me. "Well, sir, I want to have my trial like an Englishman," says I. "But," he said, "it tells me there, in that paper, as you have been convicted already before the magistrates of the county of Blamarginshire." "Never," says I; "no such thing. I never had my trial." "Well, that doesn't matter," he says; "if you get out of the way, and don't appear, you've only yourself to thank." "But I was never summoned or nothing." "That's difficult to prove," he says, dryly, "if they swear you was, unless you can make out an alibi. You don't deny being in Blamarginshire when this took place?" Well, I thought it over, and I couldn't deny but what I had been there, having stopped there a week or so on my way, to see if I could get a job to suit me. "Well, then," says he, "I'm sorry to say, if you can't pay the penalties and costs, two hundred and seventy-five pounds, you must go to prison." "And even that wouldn't do," says the policeman; "for there's another warrant out against him." "And what's that for?" "For assaulting the excise." Says I, "You're a parcel of lying scoundrels; and, peg-legged as I am, I'll fight you, to prove the truth of your words." "Oh, hush!" says the lawyer, laying his hand on my arms. "Why, says I, "is it feasible, as a poor lame chap, like me, should go and assault the excise?" "Well," says he, laughing, "it's within the bounds of imagination. But," he says, "if you really say you ain't the man, I'll go and see Mr. Gauger, and ask him if he's quite convinced he's got the right end of the stick."

Well it was no manner of use, the exciseman was as sure he was right as if he'd been omniscious. "I've got him," says he, "he's giv' me a deal of trouble; they're a bad lot, these railway chaps, and I'll make an example of him. As for his not being the man, why that's what they all say; they've as many aliases as thieves," says he, "but we've got this man tight, anyhow, and we'll keep him." There was

nothing more to be done, and they took me right off to Blamargin Castle, and locked me up in prison. And Mr. David stuck to me like a brick, and drove all the way after us in a hired car, and stopped the night at Blamargin to be ready for the court next day.

For you see they was obliged to bring me before the magistrates through the warrant for the assault, else they'd have had me in limbo up to now, I dare say.

Well, I spent a bad night, I can tell ye. You see I was right in the middle of my work, everything hanging on to me, all my money in the mud as you may say, and only me as could pick it out. And Mr. Tracey depending on my work being finished too, and would have no mercy on me now, through having been deceived in me, as he'd say. It was almost as bad a night as I'd had under the rock. For tho' I knowed I was innocent, I knowed too as nobody would believe as I was.

Next morning, at eleven, I was walked up to the court-house, and there was the magistrates sitting all of a row, a little man with a big nose being the principal of them, and a white-haired gent with a pleasant rosy face coming next. And alongside the magistrates, who should be sitting but Mr. Tracey. And I felt reg'lar ashamed of myself, as he should see me like this, and could hardly hold up my head.

There was a flashy young lawyer jumped up as said he represented the Crown, and Mr. David sat at the other end of the table, and represented me. He was a fat-faced little chap, with a merry twinkling eye, and a round paunch, in a grey tweed suit as he'd slept in the night afore. But he was all there, every bit of him, sharp as a needle. First they put up a young chap who it seems was training for the excise business—and he gave his evidence, and told the gents all about it. How he had information, two months ago, that a man they called Peg-leg had set up, within the last few days, a kind of sly grog shop; how he'd gone there with a spirit level in his hand, pretending to be one of Mr. Tracey's men, and got served with a glass of whisky, for which he'd paid fourpence. How he'd been served by a one-legged man, who he intensified as the prisoner at the bar, and who seemed to be the master of the house.

"And what particular reason have you," says the lawyer for their side, casting a sort of a sweeping glance round the court, as much as to say, here's a clincher for

them, "what particular reason have you for intensifying him." "Well," says the young man, "when I first went into the shop the man had taken off his wooden leg, and was sitting without shoe or stocking on, and smoking a pipe. And I took up the leg," he says, "and observed," says he, "as it had the initials upon it, P. L. B., and I made a note of that and told the supervisor about it afterwards, and he tells me that this man's leg is marked in the same way." "Stop," said Mr. David, jumping up. "Gentlemen, I object." "You're quite right," said the magistrate with the big nose, "that's not evidence, and we shall dismiss it from our minds." "Well! I shall call the supervisor to prove that," then said the other lawyer. "Now, as to the assault. After you had drunk your whisky—you did drink it, eh?" "Yes, sir," said the young man. "It didn't choke you going down, eh!" said the lawyer, looking round to the 'semblage, as much as to say, "you see I'm not one with these chaps, although I'm bound to work for 'em."

But the little magistrate caught him up sharp and told him not to waste time; and then the lawyer pulled up his shirt-collar and looked as if he could say a good deal if he chose, but wouldn't. And he went on. "Well, after you'd drunk your whisky you told him who you really were." "Yes, I did sir." "And what happened then." "He called me a bad name, sir, and jumped up and said he'd kick me out of the place." "What, on one leg? did he jump up on one leg?" cried the little magistrate. "No, he'd got his leg strapped on by that time, sir?" "Screwed on by that time, ah; well, what followed," went on Mr. Lawyer. "I dared him to do it, and he made at me and I ran out." "And did he actually kick you." "He did, sir." "You're quite sure that a kick was actually delivered?" "I've proof positive, sir. I've got it in my hand, sir;" here the young man hastily undid a brown-paper parcel, and drew out a black cut-away coat. "The floor of the shop was a fine white clay, sir, and rather damp, and you'll perceive that the man's foot left a clear impression upon the skirt of my coat. I've kept it carefully ever since." The young man held up the coat for the magistrates to see, and there, sure enough, was the print of a naked foot, two dabs of white for the heel and ball of the foot, and then the marks of the five toes, all in a row.

I was quite bewildered-like for a minute,

knowing as no such thing had ever happened; and then all of a sudden it struck me what the truth of it was. They'd took me for Sam—but how was I to prove the difference—Stop a bit! and with that I makes signals to Mr. David, and he jumps up and comes over to the dock and I whispers something in his ear. He nods several times, and his eyes twinkles like dimonds and he goes back to his seat.

"Well!" says the other lawyer, stroking his mouth with the palm of his hand, as if he was trying to get the creases out of it. "Ha, hum! I don't want to ask you anything more," so he sits down, and up jumps my man, full of fight. "Allow me," says he, "to have a look at that coat as you hold in your hand, witness!" "Certainly," says the young man, politely, and hands it over. "Ha!" says my little lawyer, holding up the coat as if he was an old clothes-man. "That's a pretty plain footprint. You're quite sure you didn't make them marks yourself." "I've sworn otherwise," says the young man, quite dignified. "Hum, sworn otherwise; you swear in fact that this footprint was indented by the man who assaulted you." "I do most solemnly!" "You'll observe gents," said Mr. David, holding up the coat before the eyes of the magistrates, "that this is the impression of a right foot." "Eh, ah, yes!" says the hook-nosed gent, looking through his gold eyeglass. "Clearly we can see that for ourselves." "I think," cuts in the other lawyer, with a grin on his face, "my friend will find it is the wrong foot for his client." The excise seemed to relish this joke amazing, and likewise the police, but little David looked at them quite scornful. Says he in a soft oily voice. "Robert—defendant, will you have the kindness to show the magistrates your right foot!" Whereupon I whisks my peg-leg on to the top of the rail of the prisoner's dock.

You never saw people look as blank as them as was against me. That young chap as went and proved too much got it hot, I expect, from his ganger, and that was nothing, I reckon, to what the super got from his head-quarters. Their lawyer did his best for them, I must say. First, he pooh-poohed the count altogether; it wasn't an element in his case at all, he said; and when he saw that wouldn't do, he tried to make out that people's toes weren't always on the inside edge of their feet. Then he put it that praps, being a one-legged man, I'd got a right foot on my

left leg. At that I offered to show the gents my other foot, but they didn't want that. The magistrates said that clearly the excise had made a mistake, and they hoped I should be properly compensated for what I'd suffered, and so they set me free without more ado.

And when that job was finished Tracey beckoned me aside into a corner of the room, and, says he, "Who was it, Bob, that did it? Was it Sam?" "How can I tell, Mr. Tracey," says I; "it warn't me, anyhow." "Ah," says he, "I remember now—the two wooden legs, P. L. B. Well," he says, looking quite solemn all in a minute, "You've made a better use of yours than Sam did. But Bob," says he, "here's a fiver for you for expenses, and let it be a warnin' to you, and don't you go breaking the law."

Whereupon I thanked him, and said I never would, and didn't neither as long as I was in that part of the country, for there was eyes upon me all round after that, as you may be sure.

BLIND KATE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

DOWN at Spanish Cove lived an old fisherman who had once been a smuggler, and a notorious wrecker besides. The place where he had built that odd-looking hut of his, with its strong doors and huge prison-like bolts and fastenings, was one of the most gloomy and least frequented of all the bays in the neighbourhood. The sharp cliffs, with their cruel jags and rocks—all the strata twisted as if some giant hand had pulled them hither and thither, and wrung them like so much paste when they were soft and plastic—seemed to hide a world of wicked secrets and to suggest as much as they hid; and the one steep dangerous path, that led to the bay and old Martin Hoyte's grim cabin, was rarely traversed by day, and carefully avoided by night, by every one in the place. Even the coast-guardsmen avoided it; ever since one of their number had been found dead and mangled at the foot of the cliffs—when there had been a wreck hereabouts, and Martin Hoyte had been reported busier than was quite necessary over some bales and boxes that had been cast up.

He had had a bad name enough, none worse; but some years ago he had attended a revival and got religion, and so had repented of his former errors. Even his comparatively harmless vice of smuggling

had been laid aside of late years, when there was nothing more to smuggle. He was the prodigal reclaimed of the district; and the mingled sentiments of theoretical respect for what he was, and shrinking disfavour for what he had been, with which he was regarded, made a curious psychological study.

He had still, however, the old dare-devil spirit in him; and aged, reclaimed, converted as he was, was good at a pinch for all service that smacked of intrigue or danger. Mary had not known him all these years for nothing. She knew that he was incorruptible where fidelity to a friend was required, and that his place was impregnable in its own manner; and when she had got Blind Kate safely through the darkness over the cliffs without meeting even a coast-guard by the way, she felt as secure under old Hoyte's grim roof as if she and her charge had been in the Tower of London guarded by the Queen's men. Search was in vain: even if the searchers hit on the place as one likely. How could they find two women who, on the slightest alarm, were through a trap-door and down into a cavern that ran far out seaward?—with branching passages cunningly concealed, and the old smuggler's oat-flight bed dragged across the hollow part of the floor? People came and went, but no one could come or go without being a full half hour right in view of the inmates of the cabin, some of whom were always keeping watch; and the talk was still of the two missing from Pentreath, and how it must have been that they had been drowned, for no trace of them could be found on land. All manner of well-fitting theories were made as to how Kate had wandered into danger, may be to find Mary in the darkness, and how Mary, following to save her, had gone down to destruction with her. The two used to hear what was said, as they clung together in the cave which had been used by old Hoyte for storing away such jetsam and flotsam as he had no mind the lord's agents should see; also such runs and cargoes as for reasons of his own he kept from the eyes of the revenue men. And they used to hear the old man's cautious answer to all the suppositions propounded: "Belike, belike:" his new-found religion forbidding him to lie, but his fidelity to friendship forbidding him to tell the truth. So the search, like the talk, came gradually to an end, and then the marriage was completed; and Mrs. Cawthorne, now Mrs. John

Smith, left Pentreath with her husband. The younger man, whom Mrs. Cawthorne's choice called Cyril but who called himself William Smith, lingered for a few days in the neighbourhood, and then he too went away; and the worst of the danger had passed.

There was no reason now why Mary should not breathe a little fresh air for her own part, and give some sense of freedom to her young co-prisoner. She was very sure that no one would betray their whereabouts, even if they were discovered, but she took good care they should not be discovered; and though she stole abroad for a little health and pleasure for both, she never relaxed in her watchful vigilance, and never went beyond the shadow of the safe, if gloomy, cabin, which had become their ark. Still, a long spell of safety, of absolute silence of or from Mrs. Cawthorne, and the withdrawal of the men induced her, as time went on, to be less strict in her supervision; and now, when Kate had come to her majority, it seemed to both as if she were absolutely safe, and that no one dare to attempt her injury. She was no longer her mother's charge. She was free and independent, and the possessor of her own fortune—when the necessary legal forms should have been gone through. And acting on this reasoning, the two went back to Pentreath, to the astonishment of men.

Presently word came to the village that Mrs. Cawthorne was dead, and that her husband, John Smith, was returning to settle her affairs, administer to her will, and pocket the inheritance she had bequeathed him. And, sure enough, close on the heels of the rumour, the man Rainforth, or Smith, returned, dressed in decorous black, with a face of decent melancholy, and a will, all duly signed and attested, in his breast-pocket. Then Blind Kate confronted him, and the parchment become of no more value than a handful of withered autumn leaves. By the terms of the father's will, as well as of her marriage settlement, Mrs. Cawthorne had power over her property only in the event of Kate's death. All she had possessed was left absolutely to her children after her—the half going to them at their majority; and thus John Smith had married only half the fortune he had intended to espouse, and by that fatal and mysterious slip on the Swiss glacier, which had caused his wife's death, had lost even that half.

There was no help for it. The thing

was patent and not to be denied. Blind Kate was once more an unwelcome fact that had to be accepted with good-will or bad, and a life that asserted its own right to live.

The man concealed his disappointment with admirable tact and skill; but something in his eye told nurse Rayner that all was not as smooth as it looked, and something in his voice whispered the warning of danger to Kate. Still, his ways and words were sweet and gracious, and none could deny that he acted like a gallant gentleman and gave no cause of offence to anyone. Only Mary Rayner and Blind Kate distrusted him, and wished that he would leave the place; which he showed no sign of doing.

It was a wild and boisterous winter's night, when the wind tore and raved about the house and through the pitch-black sky, drowning all other sounds save its own. There never sure was such a night before!—and old Hoyte sat up in bed to listen to the wild turmoil of sea and sky with a strange kind of regret that it had not occurred in the bygone time, before old age and the day of repentance had rendered wrecks, and half-dead men with gold upon their persons, less profitable to him now than of yore.

Strangely enough, Mary Rayner and Blind Kate slept profoundly through it all, though both were "light sleepers" whom the chirp of a cricket or the patter of a mouse would, for the most part, awaken. Mr. Smith had been at the cottage that evening, and had asked for wine. And when he had gone, Mary made Kate some negus from the bottle from that which had served him, and took some herself, by his kind advice, to ward off the head-colds beginning with both. Perhaps that was why they slept so soundly that neither heard the opening of the drawing-room window below; neither heard the pair of stealthy feet come creeping up the stairs; nor the creak of Kate's bed-room door—creaking for all its cautious opening; neither saw the hand that was pressed on the mouth of the nurse as a strong, dark-haired man leaned heavily on her chest till the last sob of life had sighed itself away. Nor, even then, did poor Kate, the only one alive in this Chamber of Horrors, hear the stealthy feet go back again as the house was once more left to its midnight silence, broken only by the raging of the storm.

The next day the whole tragedy was known. There lay the good, faithful,

loving woman—dead; turned over on her face, suffocated. She had died drunk, said the village, suffocating herself in the stupid sleep of intoxication; and Mr. Smith, on hearing this, bore his sorrowful testimony to her bad habit of drinking—learnt by him long ago.

So now Kate was left quite alone, and the man's path cleared of one obstacle the more—and the only one left between him and her.

Where was William Smith, or Cyril, all this time? He had made no sign, put in no appearance, since the marriage of poor Mrs. Cawthorne with his father.

"Finishing his education," John Smith used to say with a laugh, when asked by the rector and others; though, as the rector said, he looked as if he had finished that, long ago.

But now, immediately after Mary Rayner's death, he came down to Pentreath; and his father was evidently not so glad to see him as might have been expected. People said they heard sharp words pass between them, and there was evidently some matter of dispute on hand in which they took different sides; for John Smith said "I will;" and William answered back with an oath, "You shall not, or if you do, then I will live there too."

Had this any reference to the intention announced by the elder man of taking up his abode at the cottage? As the orphaned girl's step-father, he claimed his right of guidance and protection; and carried out what he claimed. And he kept her so well, surrounded her with such tender care and guardianship, that she could not complain, and soon ceased to resist. Her new care-taker too was a woman of pleasant manners and kindly nature. John Smith had brought her down—after some trouble and many tears, and a loving woman's pardon bought by many false assertions, and oaths and vows and protestations not a whit more true. She was a pretty woman too, whom Kate called Mrs. Moreton; but her step-father and his son called her Jenny. She did her duty well and faithfully, and Kate got to like her in a way; though she felt she could not rely on her for protection if ever the day should come when it would be needed, as she had relied on her dear old mammy Mary. Perhaps, however, that day would never come.

Ever in and out where she sat, and hovering about her, William seemed to watch over the girl somehow with more

zeal and love than even the others showed. He seldom left her; and there was a certain tenderness in his voice and manner when he spoke to her, a certain timidity and respectfulness mixed with his protection, that won on Kate with daily more power. But indeed so far as that went, she had become more and more under the influence of the trio. Still always somewhat afraid of her step-father, she was yet half fascinated if half dominated; so that he prevailed on her to make a will in his favour, to which, as she was of sound mind and full age, no one could object, and which indeed it was only business-like and wise in her to do. William or Cyril had advised her not to make a will at all; but she had been over-persuaded by his father; and so the matter stood. She had twenty thousand pounds to leave; and, as the rector said, it behoved her to appoint her inheritor. Thus the winter went by, and the sunny spring time came; and the constant care and flattering attention with which she was surrounded had had their due effect on the blind girl, so that she had learnt to trust herself by now almost without fear. The Voices had ceased to sound, and the smell of blood had passed.

"Come out with me, my dear," said John Smith, one day. "Let us go down to Mawr Bay. You have not had a walk there for a long time, and it is just the day for it."

"And you too?" said Kate, turning her gentle face and sightless eyes to where her care-taker sat sewing.

"No, Jenny, you need not come," said John Smith.

And Jenny answered pleasantly; "Well, if I can be spared, I would rather stay at home and finish my work."

"Where is William?" asked Kate.

This was the first time she had ever been alone with her step-father, and she shrank from the idea of a long *tête-à-tête* ramble with shy nervousness.

John Smith laughed. "One would think that boy was your doll or pet lamb," he said, with a perceptible sneer. "You are never happy out of each other's sight, you two! No, William has gone over to Rhyl, so there is no pet lamb for you to play with to-day! You will have to do the best you can with me. Now go with her, Jenny, and see that she is dressed warmly enough. The day is fine but the wind is treacherous, and she is but a tender flower, our sweet Kate!"

It was kind of him to speak so; and Kate, stifling an uneasy something, said, as she

went up-stairs, that he was kind for wanting her to be well clad; and Jenny answered back cheerily; "Yes, he was. But that was his way. He was always so good, was Mr. Smith, and his son was his exact copy!"

The special features of Mawr Bay were its enclosed and isolated character, and the long line of rocks that ran far out to sea, leaving quite a large tract uncovered when the tide went out. It was a reef made famous for the dainty creatures to be found in its pools and under the thickly growing seaweed; and it had been one of Kate's best-prized childish pleasures to be taken out to the extreme point of Mawr Reef, and to hear a description of all the beautiful things turned up in the more difficult places. It was over a year now since she had been there; and naturally the remembrance of the mother, and of the nurse she had lost, a little saddened the poor child, and made her more than ordinarily conscious of her practical loneliness—and John Smith's self-appointed guardianship.

Her step-father seemed almost to divine her thought; for leading her gently across the difficult places, he set her on the farthest peak of the ridge looking out to sea, and drawing her to him tenderly, spoke to her in soft, sweet, soothing words, passing his hand lightly over her face as he did so. The mild south wind, the monotonous sound of the lapping waves, the man's low pleasant voice falling into drowsy murmurs, and the passing of his hand over her face, all lulled Kate into the stillness that precedes sleep. Soon her head drooped gently on his arm; he passed his hands over her face again and again; then laying her down on the rocks, drew off and left her—going back to the shore and watching.

The tide began to turn; it rose higher and higher, came nearer and nearer to the sleeping girl. Now it had surrounded the jut of rock on which she was lying; now it had crept up to her feet. Then she awoke; the lap of the waves coming nearer, sounding closer, and the splash round her feet mounting higher. She called to her step-father; but only the sea-gulls screamed back a reply. She stood up, holding out her arms beseechingly—to vacancy; stumbled a few steps forward, her poor sightless eyes serving her for nought; then fell; and the waters came creeping nearer and nearer. She thought she heard a mocking laugh from the shore, but when she called again no answer came. She was alone. He had

left her there in her helpless darkness to die. Alone—with the great blue sea creeping nearer and nearer, higher and higher, like some flattering siren singing her sweet death-song, or like some crouching wild beast stealing on, step by step, till it could make its last fatal spring.

Soon she thought she heard a footstep running down the steep cliff path, and now surely her ears did not deceive her!

"Kate! Kate! have courage! I am coming, and I will save you!" shouted a voice—his voice—young William's, he who had of late made the light and happiness of her life.

"Back Cyril! back, you fool!" said John's deeper tones. "You have stood between me and my rights long enough: you shall not balk me now."

"Murderer! I will!" returned Cyril. "Kate, have no fear, you shall be saved!"

What more there might be to know she never clearly made out. All she heard was the sound of two men in desperate struggle, and then the heavy fall of a body from the height, with a few low moans to follow before all was still again.

After this she knew no more but that Cyril's arms were round her, Cyril's voice in her ear, Cyril's lips against her cheek, as he bore her through the waters, now risen breast-high, and set her on the sands, safe and rescued.

"Miscreant as I am, Kate, I love you," he said, with a sob; "and I have saved you."

She put her arms round his neck.

"What your sins are, I do not know; but you can repent of them," she answered softly.

He strained her to him and kissed her reverently. She might have been a saint and he her devotee, for the almost pathetic tenderness and reverence of his embrace. And what was that which fell on her up-turned face? A large hot drop that fell slowly, heavily, as he took her head between his hands and looked down on her lovingly.

"I am not worthy of you!" he then said. "Some day, perhaps, when I have proved my repentance by suffering for my sin, and so can look up to the light as an honest man again, I will come to you, and you will let me sit at your feet and

serve you; you will believe in me and pity me, if you cannot love me."

"I believe in you now," she said clinging to him, her sweet blind face beseeching him. "You have grown to be a very part of me, I cannot live without you now. And I want you, too, to protect me against him." She shuddered and clung closer.

"He will trouble you no more," said Cyril turning away his head. "But you offer me what you do not know, innocent, beloved, as you are! A forger, a felon, and now in your defence his murderer—rather, his executioner—no! for very love of you I must not let you link your fate to one so infamous as mine!"

"I love you," she repeated; "and Heaven will forgive you."

"But man," said Cyril, looking backward to the land; "man has to avenge himself, and the law will not pardon as Heaven does."

"Whatever happens, I am always yours," said Kate. "If you have to suffer, I will wait till your time of penance is over. You have saved me; you love me; and I love you. What do I want more?"

When the time of his imprisonment was over—for Cyril made full confession of all that bad business of the coming; and told, too, how it was that John Rainforth was found dead on the shore at Mawr Bay; this, however, counted as justifiable homicide under the circumstances—he found the blind girl, now a woman with silver streaks among the brown, waiting for him at the prison-gate. Her innocent love knew no natural shame, and her ignorance of life denied her that conventional shame which would have held back others from such public confession of love for the liberated convict. To her Cyril had only departed for a while, and had now returned to the love he had left. She never asked herself if he had sinned or no. She only knew that she loved him, and that he loved her; and that life was very drear without him, but good, and fair, and smiling when he was there. So they lived, far away from the old place, with poor Jenny, Cyril's sister and Rainforth's widow, as their house-mate; and Love, once more, as so often before, purified man and redeemed the guilty soul.

END OF THE ELEVENTH VOLUME.

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