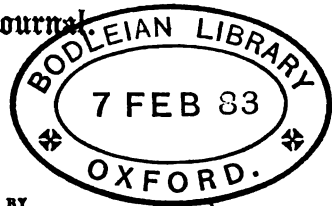


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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal



CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

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VOLUME XXVIII.

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THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1881,

ENTITLED

THE CAPTAINS' ROOM,

WILL BE FOUND AT THE END OF THE VOLUME.

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 667. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1881.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART II. PHOEBE'S FATHERS.

CHAPTER VI. A SUDDEN LEAP.

FOR some days after Phil Nelson's adventure with the guitar, Phoebe's garden walks were uninterrupted. Stanislas Adrianski had vanished, and had left a sense of emptiness in his place which she had never known before. The withered laurel-bush, once so suggestive of boundless forests, had become but a withered laurel-bush not only in fact but in seeming, and sunset upon the snow-covered mountains was reduced to the falling of blacks upon a prospect of damp linen. Even Phil had taken himself off to distant countries with a "Good-bye" so cold and short that it had almost made her angry; and his absence made her miss her romance-hero all the more. She had known nothing of the serenade; for, just as if she had been the most sensible of girls, sentiment with her never disturbed sleep, and she had only heard of it next morning as a drunken street row—a belief which neither Phil nor Dick, for different reasons, cared to overturn.

So Phil had gone, and her hero had disappeared, and she had nothing to do but to make up her mind that life, real life, was a sadly empty and unsatisfactory condition of things. She had absolutely nothing else to do, for domestic affairs in that household were matters of minutes, and, these over, she had the rest of the day upon her hands. She could not help thinking of Stanislas, if only by way of filling up her time. Now she thought he had fallen ill: and, if so, what was the

duty of a heroine towards a hero and a patriot, sick and friendless in a foreign land? Alas! the duty, considered from a romantic point of view, was so inconveniently clear, that she gave that guess up as not to be thought of. No; he could not be ill, because that would oblige her to go and nurse him—a duty which presented such a formidable list of difficulties that she gave up conquering them even in fancy before she was halfway through. Besides, the fact of a neighbour's illness would have found its way through the party-walls, which, in their street, had tongues as well as ears. Had Phil's savage rudeness offended him? But surely a nobleman would not condescend to notice the insults of a sullen boor. Or—could it be, could it possibly be, that the patriot feared for the heart that should be his country's alone?

Such thoughts, if thoughts they can be called, do not grow weaker in solitude. She not only thought a great deal of Stanislas Adrianski, but also of the Associated Robespierres, and of the mystery of her own life; and she thought that she was thinking hard. In spite of her instincts in that direction, nature had not yet taught her to be enough of a coquette to keep resolutely indoors, so that she might learn from a corner of the window if her absence had the power to draw Stanislas into his back garden. She would learn maidenly cunning soon enough, no doubt; but, meanwhile, she behaved with a simplicity that will be called either straightforward, or only forward, according to varying views. She could not walk up and down stairs all day for exercise, or look out of the front windows all day long for pastime, so she made herself look as

nice as she could, and took a book out into the garden. And that book was Thaddeus of Warsaw.

But it was in vain. And it was with real vexation and disappointment, as if somebody had failed to keep tryst, that, after reading three pages at the rate of a page an hour, she went indoors again. She had expected nothing definite when she went out, but felt, none the less, that life was using her badly. That was the day on the morning of which Phil, at desperately short notice, had started for Russia; and her present mood made her wish him at home. She wanted to quarrel with somebody about something, and Phil would have done better to quarrel with than anybody she knew. Altogether, she was very lonesome and very dull; so much so, that by the close of another empty day she began to feel quite superior to the rest of the world, on the score of her capacity for being lonely and dull. She sought food for lofty scorn from the vulgar high spirits of the boys, and found what she sought, and listened to her father's eloquence without being able to screw herself up to the proper pitch of enthusiasm for a cause that, in the person of Stanislas, had once more become invisible to her. "Revolutions aren't made with rosewater," he had quoted to her, with his fiercest voice, over his sixth cup of tea. "No; I suppose rosewater would not go well with whisky," she had answered, without a thought of sarcasm, and with a real sigh. She felt like growing old before her time, and getting behind the scenes.

The next day she did not feel it worth while to take any particular pains to make herself look nice; she rather underdid her toilette, if anything. The garden looked so empty and ugly, that she did not care to go in, and Thaddeus of Warsaw had grown as stupid as a book could be. It was honestly without the least expectation of seeing anybody that she went out at last; just as one must when there is the barest apology for a garden, and when one is tired of being alone indoors. So her heart gave an honest leap when she heard, over the wall and behind her:

"Good-morning, mademoiselle."

Stanislas Adrianski's voice was always soft, and his accent always, even when talking about himself—perhaps especially then—caressing and tender. But it was in the coldest of tones, a tone so cold as to surprise herself, that she answered him, shortly:

"Good-morning."

There was absolutely no reason for her even pretending to be cold, and she was not pretending. And yet she felt her heart fluttering all the while. She turned round, and, in a moment, her coldness left her. Stanislas Adrianski looked very pale, and more melancholy than ever—and no wonder, for he wore a long strip of plaister from the middle of his forehead to his left cheek-bone, crossed by another strip above the eye.

"Oh, what has happened? You have been ill!" she cried.

"But it is nothing," said he. "Nothing at all. I have been wounded worse as that, twenty, thirty, forty times. I am glad—the sun shines from your garden into mine, and I forget the pain."

"But what has happened? Is it the Czar?"

"No, not the Czar. Never mind. I should not have shown myself, but I saw you, and——"

He did not finish his sentence, and she was not much attending to his words, full of romantic promise as they were. She was wishing that she had made herself look her nicest to-day, instead of yesterday. She was thinking how it always happens that when one looks for something nothing happens, and that something only happens when one expects nothing. And she might have asked herself how far she was answerable for a meeting that she had courted, though it had come without courting. She did not object to the effect of the plaister, nor, though it looked comical enough to common eyes, did it look so to hers. She did not think that the count looked like a fiddler who had been fighting at a fair. Why should a broken head be less interesting than a sprained ankle in a woman or a broken arm in a man?

"But you have been wounded——" she began.

"I tell you it is nothing. I do not make brags, mademoiselle. Only, when one insults a lady before a gentleman, what can I do? In my country we do not speech, we blow."

"Blow? Ah, I see; but who——"

"Pardon, mademoiselle. What I have done, I have done; but what I have done, nothing shall make me tell—no, not even you. We will speak of other things. I hope you are quite well."

She thought for a moment. Then a glorious hope came to her—for is it not glory to be fought about by two brave

men? If Phoebe had been told that Helen of Troy was ashamed of the fuss made over her, she would not have believed.

"Oh, please, pray tell me," she said eagerly, laying both her hands upon the wall, while her cheeks glowed; "pray tell me you have not been quarrelling with Phil!"

He removed his cigarette, bowed down, and put his lips to her nearest hand. The kiss felt like a little sting, and she snatched her hand away, looking round to be sure that Mrs. Goodge or any of the neighbours had not seen. It was the first time such a thing had happened to her, and it frightened her, while it made her proud.

"A patriot and a soldier does not lie," said he. "I did not mean to say my secret. But, as you surprise him, I cannot deny. I hear to-day he is gone—that young man. He will trouble you no more."

It did not strike her, even as a coincidence, that Stanislas Adrianski's first reappearance was on the day of his hearing that Phil Nelson had gone away. She was simply thinking that he was indeed a noble gentleman.

"And Phil said nothing about it," said she. "I am very angry with both of you—very angry indeed. Are you very much hurt? And—how was it that Phil didn't seem hurt at all?"

"If you are angry," said Stanislas, "I am miserable: the most miserable in the world. He did not seem hurt—no? Because he attacked me like a man in fury. I challenged him, I mean to say; but before I could cry 'En garde,' on he came, and with his weapon struck me where you see. Well, mademoiselle, if you will look, you will find him all over blue and black—under his clothes. I must speak the truth, since I speak something at all. I challenge, but I do not hurt the face—no. That is for cowards; and in my country we are brave. You must not be angry, mademoiselle."

"You beat Phil? Why, he is as strong and as brave as a lion! I didn't think there was a man who could beat Phil."

For a moment Stanislas Adrianski did not look quite so amiably melancholy as usual. But it was only for a moment.

"For any good cause I would do as much as that," said he, "and for your sake I would do more. For your sake I would beat him ten times."

"Once is too often," she said. "Promise me—"

"Pardon! I promise what else you will. But not to fight a man who insults you—no."

"You must be very strong and very brave. How is it your country is conquered, if all the Poles are like you?"

"Ah, mademoiselle, but they are not all like me. If they were— But I am glad they are not, because then I should not be here."

Phoebe wanted to say something, but could think of nothing to please her. How was it that he was so ready with everything that a man ought to say? She could not, somehow, manage to think that, were Phil's skin examined, it would be found so very black or blue. But that was all the better; for, as she would scarcely have liked to think of him as being seriously damaged, she was thus able to imagine what she liked without any compunction.

"Mademoiselle," said Stanislas, after a short but impressive silence, "you know me what I seem to be. You do not know what I am. It is not the first time I challenge a man who insults a lady. But that time I did not beat with a stick. I killed him with the sword."

Phoebe started, and almost gave a little scream. It was grand and beautiful, but it was also terrible.

"You—you have killed a man?"

"I am a soldier, mademoiselle. A soldier must kill."

"Oh, in battle, of course, but— Is she very beautiful?"

"She?"

"Didn't you say it was for a—a lady you—you killed that man?"

"Did I say that? But—I did not mean to say my secret. But, as you surprise him, I cannot deny. She was beautiful— But, on the faith of a patriot, she is nothing to me—nothing at all. We will speak of other things. The poor Natalie! But she is nothing to you."

This was a little more than Phoebe had bargained for, and her curiosity about this new element of romance was almost more than she could restrain. To talk to a man who had killed another man for a woman's sake was better than reading Thaddeus of Warsaw for the first time. She almost felt jealous that Phil had escaped with only a drubbing. She would not have wished anything worse, of course; but it lowered her own little romance before Natalie's great one.

"It does interest me very much," she said gently. "How unhappy she must be!"

"Why?"

"To think of you, who did all that for her sake, in exile, and——"

"Oh no. After all, they console themselves, those women, for what we risk our honour and our lives. She loved me well. But not so well, when my country called me away, to say, 'Go.' I loved her very pretty well, too, but not so well as Poland—no. And so she consoles herself, and I love her no more. She is grand dame. I am the poor exile. And that is all."

"Why did you call her 'poor?'"

"Because she is rich, mademoiselle. Because she chose gold, and grandeur, and all such things, before me."

Phoebe was touched in a very weak point indeed.

"I would have said, 'Go'!" she said, not only out of her fancy, but out of her heart; "and if you had not gone, I would never have spoken to you again!"

She was certainly a girl with the most chaotic of brains, supposing her to keep such things. Even as she spoke the words, she was pleased with them as the echo of something out of some half-remembered story-book; she meant them to be effective, and yet she felt them and meant them, not thinking of how much farther they might be taken, in all simple sincerity and zeal. If she believed in shams, and in nothing else, she believed as much as she knew how, and never stopped halfway. To her confusion, Stanislas, without dropping his cigarette from his lips, placed his hands upon the low wall, and vaulted over to her side with much grace, if little dignity.

"I know it!" he said. "You would say, 'Go,' and you would make it death to go! I thank you, mademoiselle. I believe in woman once more. You wake a dead heart out of the grave."

It was indeed lucky that Phil had gone. Though he must needs be miles away, Phoebe could not help looking round for a moment out of an habitual fear of a presence that she now knew she had always feared. Stanislas took one of her hands, and smiled down upon her with an air of defiant protection.

"No," he said, "I am an exile. I am alone. I am friendless. I am poor. I have only my sword, and my name—Stanislas Adrianski, nothing more. But if you were the Queen of England, I would not be afraid. You would not say, 'Go away; I am, perhaps, great lady. I show you the door.' You will only ask, 'Is Adrianski

a patriot? Is Adrianski brave? Does Adrianski love?' And you will say, 'Yes. Adrianski is a patriot; Adrianski is brave; Adrianski loves; for it is true, mademoiselle. I leap over the wall because you are the angel of my dream. You are the queen of the soul of Adrianski. Ah, what I suffer for you! If you have not pity—ah, what death! ah, what despair!'"

This was another sort of wooing, indeed, from poor Phil's.

He was now holding both her hands, with the tender strength that is not to be denied, and her eyes were held and fascinated by the light and fire that glowed and deepened in Adrianski's. Did she love him? She no more knew that than she knew Stanislas Adrianski. But one thing she did know—that Phoebe Burden, not to speak of the adopted daughter of the Grand President of the Associated Robespierres, and a possible duchess in her own right, could not tell a poor, homeless, friendless, noble, patriot hero to leap back over the wall from the garden of hope into that of despair without a more than commonly kind word. Had he been a czar, romance itself would have compelled her to say, Go. But how could she do what Natalie had done? Where Natalie had said, Stay, Phoebe must say, Go. Where Natalie would have said, Go, was not Phoebe compelled to say, or at least to look, Stay?

It was rather a yellow afternoon, bad for health, but fairly safe for sentiment, seeing that the neighbours were not likely to be looking out of their back windows.

"Ah," said Stanislas, looking down into her eyes with a less glowing but more tender gaze, "when you know who you are—well, you will be like the rest of them; all I have ever—heard of. You will forget; and you will be consoled."

He was taking possession of her, it seemed, without doubt or question. Had Phoebe given herself and her life into the keeping of Stanislas Adrianski? She could not tell for certain; but the situation itself was claiming her. Supposing that she had given herself to him, then the charge that she, Phoebe, would or could forget and throw over a man because she turned out to be rich and great, while he remained poor, was a charge too outrageous to be borne.

"Never!" she exclaimed, speaking half for herself, the true Phoebe, but at least half for that heroine with whom, at last, and after years of waiting, she had become fully and fairly one. "How could I—how could

any woman do that—how could she do it ; that other girl, I mean, who gave you up because you were unhappy ; because you were so brave ? The greater I was, and the poorer and more unhappy anybody was——”

“The more you would stoop and raise him up ? I know ; you have a soul made of diamonds and pearls. You may be a princess, and you accept the heart and the lyre and the sword of the poor patriot, the poor exile. I am in heaven, mademoiselle. Ah, but I fear !”

It was too late to ask herself if she loved him now. She knew something at last—that, whatever might happen to-morrow, she had to-day fallen into a net from which she could not escape without treason to her views of life, and a sense of being as unworthy as Natalie. Not that she wanted to escape ; but it was rather sudden, this conquest by storm, and she wished this invincible hero had allowed her a little while to think everything out, and say Yes out of a little more freedom of will. And yet it was a proud thing to have love made to her by a real hero, in the real heroic, unquestioning, all-conquering style. It gave her no time to think, and thinking would have meant having to face all sorts of mean and paltry difficulties in detail from which she had been saved. In short, Stanislas Adrianski was as clearly her fate as if she had read it in large letters in the sky. Right or wrong, for good or ill, it was a glory to spend an hour in having secret and passionate love made to her, by a man like this, who had now acquired, in addition to his other attractions, the fascination of being terrible. For had he not proved that he knew how to love, not only with the heart but with the sword ? He had said, “But I fear.” What could “fear” mean to such a man as he ?

“Ah, but I fear,” he said again. “Say it is pride, say it is jealousy, say it is what you will. How can I tell this will not be a dream, that I shall wake to-morrow and find you have opened your wings and fled all away ? I, Adrianski, am afraid. Say whatever happens, whatever comes to you, you will be true as I. You will be a princess, near to a queen, when Poland is free. But one may wait, and wait, and ah, meanwhile ! Say, whatever happens, whatever comes, you will be true. Oh, mademoiselle ! do not again throw me into despair ! Hold my hand, and say, ‘Stanislas, my friend, whatever comes,

whatever happens, I will be true ; I will be your wife, and of no other man.’”

For such absolute, downright committal as this she was certainly unprepared. In her heart she would have preferred an exciting chapter of vague feelings, secret meetings, unfettered castle-buildings, ending in something or nothing, whichever the pleasantest end might be. This pledge sounded rather solemn—a distinct pledge to a real man, who had already shown himself her master.

“Oh, don’t ask me to say that now,” she stammered, beginning to be really afraid of him. “It is late, and I must go in——”

“Now or never !” said he. “To-morrow ! It may never come.”

“Oh yes it will. And there—— Hark !” She started, for she heard, even in the garden, the sound of a knock at the street-door, so long and so loud as to make it probable that it was the second or third time of knocking. “Oh, please let me go now—I must go. Somebody is at the door—father, most likely, or one of the boys, and if——”

For answer he clasped both her hands more tightly. “Now or never ! I go not back till you say, till you swear. Your father and your brothers may come. What do I mind ?”

It was true they could not come without breaking down the door. But she was really frightened now.

“What am I to say ?”

“Say — whatever happens, whatever comes, I will be the wife of Stanislas Adrianski, and of no other man.”

Again came the knock, louder than before. “I say it—there,” she said, as she felt herself kissed quickly on both hands, on her forehead, and on her eyes. She saved her lips, and escaped into the house, while Stanislas, even more quickly, vaulted back over the wall.

AN AFRICAN CITY OF FLOWERS.

It was in trying to convey in the briefest manner possible an idea of one of my earliest impressions of Tunis, that I used the phrase which stands at the head of this paper.

Later and more varied experiences have added greatly to the store of memories, associations, and mind-pictures which rise before me as I think of the ancient city of “Barbarie” and its gentle inhabitants ; but Tunis will always be associated in my

mind more or less with the perfume of violets and daffodils, jasmine and roses.

It must be confessed, however, that my very first impressions of the Barbary coast were quite otherwise than flowery; and very different odours recur to my mind as I recall staggering up on to the deck of the steamer lying off Goletta, after a stormy February passage. Finding that we had cast anchor, although the ship was still rolling and pitching horribly, we scrambled up on deck full of hope.

"But where is Tunis?" broke from some of us, as we looked dismally round on a waste of rolling green water.

"Oh, you are still some distance from Tunis," was the reply; "but there is Goletta, where we land. We shall have some boats off presently to take us ashore." Looking "there" in the direction of the pointing hand, we saw a line of angry-looking crested waves tumbling in shore, and beyond that a second white line, this latter stationary—the buildings and houses of La Goletta. Presently a speck was seen rising and falling on the waves, and on a nearer approach was found to be the post-boat, manned by six stout rowers, and guided by a native pilot. We had brought the mails with us, and all Tunis was waiting for its letters and newspapers, so, rough or smooth, the bags must go ashore.

A friend, forewarned of my arrival, had taken this opportunity to send to greet me, and as his ambassador was "the post's" brother-in-law, I found my path over the waters smoothed for me, figuratively speaking. That is to say, I found myself sure of being one of the first to land. My respect for the pluck and good seamanship of the famous pirates of the Barbary coast, of terrible memory, was, I must say, greatly increased by coming to a practical knowledge of the difficulties of "boarding" in rough weather in the Mediterranean. It was clear to me that I could have picked off three or four of our boarding-party as the boat came plunging alongside, and then lay right over; while the man who was trying to grapple our chains with a boat-hook was nearly pulled into the sea, and certainly could not have defended his head at that moment against a well-directed cutlass-stroke from above. The fact, however, being that we were even rather more anxious to be boarded and deliver up the spoil—I mean the mail-bags—than the pirates—I mean the postman—were to board us and take possession, the feat was soon accomplished, and I, by favour of the

post's brother-in-law, was allowed to jump in after the bags, and twenty minutes later stepped on shore at Goletta, pretty well drenched with salt water, but otherwise safe and sound.

Goletta has no attractions to delay the passing traveller. There are small craft, with their lateen sails, darting about in the roadstead, or gliding into the little canal which conducts to the landing-steps, whose dark-faced, turbaned occupants remind the new arrival that he is in Africa; but otherwise Goletta is not much more picturesque than Sheerness-on-Sea, one part of which place, in fact, it rather resembles on a small scale, with its little draw-bridge over the canal, its blocks of bare little one-storey houses, divided from each other by hillocky little wastes of sand and rubbish, and its numerous drinking-shops and cafés, frequented by sailors of all nations. A short railway journey of about half an hour divides Goletta from the capital. The line is well-engineered, and the railway-carriages are sensibly constructed with a view to coolness and cleanliness, having nice elastic cane-bottomed seats, and a covered gallery running outside the length of the carriage on both sides, which serves the double purpose of affording shelter from the sun, and ensuring the safety of the traveller in entering and alighting from the carriages, as it slightly overlaps the platform of the station when the train is drawn up.

This railway, as most people now know, belongs to an Italian company, who bought it from its original English proprietors, in whose hands, from some cause or other, it was not very prosperous. Since it has changed owners, however, it has been in a much more satisfactory condition financially, and, in fact, the passenger traffic, especially in the summer-time, when all the Tunisians who can afford it go to Goletta for the sea-bathing, is very considerable. It is also at present the only line connecting the city of Tunis directly with the port, and hence has also a large goods traffic.

But should the French succeed in carrying out their project of constructing a new port at Rades, at the opposite horn of the bay, and connecting it by a branch line with their Bone-Guelma railway, it will establish a formidable rivalry to the little Rubattino line, and, in fact, will probably ruin it. The Italian company thought to guard against this possibility by the wording of the special promises and concessions

obtained from the Bey's government, and by the possession of documents conveying an exclusive concession to the right of constructing, if they chose, a railway round the other side of the bay. As a set-off against this, the French immediately demanded and obtained the exclusive concession of all other railways to be constructed in the Regency.

But even with this they are not content. They profess to find flaws in all the claims preferred by the Italian company, and under the new order of things it appears not unlikely that they will succeed in having all their own way, and in causing their own claims to override all other interests in Tunisia.

The line from Goletta to Tunis crosses a sandy waste tract of land, and runs for some distance at the edge of the so-called Lake of Goletta, which is only connected with the sea by a narrow inlet.

On the marshy pools, and standing in the shallow waters of the lake, may be seen numerous flocks of flamingoes, with whitish necks and bodies, and wings of the most delicate rosy pink. The sudden movement or flight of these birds in any numbers has a most beautiful and curious effect, especially in the evening light. The expansion and movement of the wings, seen from a distance, produces the appearance of waves of rosy light passing over the surface of a white cloud.

The first aspect of Tunis is not striking. The town has little or nothing of architectural beauty, and, of course, the newer quarter, where the railway-station and the French hotels and the gas-lamps are to be found, is as thoroughly ugly and commonplace as new quarters seem destined to be everywhere.

Afterwards, when we came to know the place better, we found plenty of quaint picturesque bits in the narrow streets of the older portion of the city and in the bazaars. These latter are simply covered lanes, lined on both sides with little open-fronted shops, in which the proprietor sits cross-legged, bearing much the same proportion to his shop-front as a rabbit might to the open door of its hutch.

But what is most striking to the newly-arrived European, even from the first moment, is the motley character of the population, the apparently harmonious terms on which they live together, and the perfect liberty enjoyed by all.

There is no prohibition or tax on carrying arms of any description, and yet, in a popu-

lation of one hundred and fifty thousand, crimes of violence are almost unknown. When they do occur, I am sorry to say it is most frequently among our fiery fellow-subjects, the Maltese, who are, of course, only subject to the jurisdiction of the English Consular Court. The oriental part of the population gives little or no trouble to the authorities, and an Italian gentleman, long resident in Tunis, told me that during thirty years passed there, he had never carried arms either in town or country, by day or by night.

I am speaking, be it understood, of the period preceding the French occupation of the country.

There is no sharply-defined line of demarcation between the European and Arab quarters as one sees in other oriental cities. A widely extended tolerance appears to be a striking characteristic of the Tunisians, as compared with other Mahomedan peoples; and certainly in Tunis, under the Bey's government, Jews and Christians, Greeks and Turks, Nubians and Maltese, Moors and Spaniards, French and Germans, Italians and English, all pursue their various avocations peacefully side by side, and follow their own manners and customs with the most absolute freedom.

In the singularly picturesque and varied crowd which fills the streets of Tunis, whenever anything calls forth such an assemblage, the bronze-tinted Arab of the plain may be seen side by side with the scarcely less bronzed Sicilian labourer; elegantly dressed French or Neapolitan ladies pass along in startling juxtaposition with rolling bundles of clothes, surmounted by a queer pointed headdress, and supported on two stout and, generally, slightly bandy legs, whose form to above the knee is distinctly visible—this latter apparition being the outward presentment of a Tunisian Jewess. Pale-faced Levantine gentlemen, whose dress is entirely European, with the exception of the red fez, or sheshéah, as it is called in Tunis, are jostled by negro-women, whose one petticoat is of so flimsy a texture, and apparently so carelessly adjusted, as to inspire a certain feeling of anxiety in the spectator, but who, to make amends, pile quantities of heavy woollen clothing on their heads and shoulders. The variety is, in short, endless.

Let the reader try to imagine the effect of all this during the carnival, which this year, for the first time, was regularly organised by the European community.

It was certainly a curious scene, and one

which few travellers can have witnessed. There were the usual long lines of carriages, filled with brightly-dressed ladies and pretty children, charming miniature editions of the costumes of all countries; the colossal cars filled with noisy masqueraders; the vehicles of all sorts piled with bouquets; the storm of flowers in the air; and, as a setting for the living picture, the dense crowd of Mussulmans, curious and observant, whose richly-coloured flowing garments and turbanned heads were, in many cases, more picturesque than anything the masquers had to show us.

The "one touch of nature" was not wanting either to make us Europeans think upon our common kindred. There were the boys—real street Arabs—who entered into the spirit of the thing as if they had known it all their lives: darting in and out among the carriage-wheels in defiance of the mounted Tunisian guards who kept the line, and the upraised whips of the "gentlemen of the committee" on their prancing Arab steeds, picking up the fallen flowers to pelt each other, or reselling them in great bunches for a karouba—a Tunisian copper coin worth something less than a sou—with all the spirit and all the business talents of a Roman "monello," a Parisian "gamin," or a London street-boy.

There was just one little oriental touch to give an agreeable diversity. One flower, and often the freshest and handsomest, was, I observed, invariably reserved by the lucky finder for his own personal decoration and refreshment. The Tunisian Arabs have a passion for flowers, and as soon as their spring commences, even the poorest and raggedest may be seen with a delicately-scented blossom stuck above his ear, the stalk resting amid the folds of his turban and the flower projecting forwards over his dark cheek.

I have been told by those who have thirty years' knowledge of these people, that they will almost go without bread to buy flowers. And there is something in the sight of a gaunt, toil-worn Arab, whose sole garments may consist of a piece of coarse sacking and a ragged old turban, with a bunch of delicate spring blossoms drooping their cool freshness against his swarthy cheek, which stirs a strange mingling of sympathy and pity and admiration.

The prettiest social gathering of the whole carnival was, perhaps, the children's fancy ball, held in the theatre; for, be it known, Tunis possesses a very pretty little theatre. At this fête, naturally, there was

little to remind the spectator that he was in Africa. It had not to European eyes the charm and originality of the street scenes, and, as all fancy balls must be more or less alike, does not require a detailed description. But this particular ball was quite remarkable for the variety, correctness, and extreme richness of the costumes. The Jewish population of Tunis is very large, and includes many of the wealthiest and most prosperous citizens, and the children of this portion of the community, lovely as Jewish children so frequently are, were especially noticeable for their rich and accurate costumes.

The Greek, Albanian, and oriental dresses, of which there was a good sprinkling, were, in most cases, the real thing; fashioned of the most costly materials, heavy with gold or silver embroideries, and perfect at every point, even to the jewelled daggers and miniature scimitars of the small wearers. There was one pretty little girl whose dark eyes flashed from under the bright silken head-gear and rows of glittering coins of a Bedouin bride, who attracted much attention. This little maiden, I afterwards discovered, was the daughter of Mr. Levy, of Enfida celebrity.

One saw, of course, the usual pierrots and débardeuses, Watteau shepherdesses, and dashing matadors; but there were also many disguises, on which time and thought, as well as money, must have been expended. Such as an accurately got-up Doctor Sangrado, a tiny tambour-major of the last century, a Chinese flower-seller, and an idealised little figure of Sicily, with the symbol of the "Trinacria" artistically introduced into various parts of the dress. A noticeable figure, too, was the Goddess Flora, a fat baby-thing of some three summers; so much of a baby, in fact, that when led forth to dance, she was half smothered in the crowd of tall young persons, ranging from six to twelve years of age, and cried, and afterwards had to be carried about on the shoulder of one of the carnival committee.

Prizes were given for the best and most original costumes. And I heard, afterwards, that the first prize fell to a small couple attired in the highest fashion as a modern bride and bridegroom. In respect of elegance and correctness, even to the smallest details, the prize was certainly well bestowed, and the little bridegroom especially had fully earned it by his exemplary behaviour under trying circumstances. For though so very small as to run con-

tinual risk of being knocked down by the whirl of giant waltzers of nine or ten, and requiring, like the Goddess Flora, an occasional lift on a friendly shoulder, he did not cry once, but went through the fatiguing ceremonies of the ball with a stoicism and self-command which many a real bridegroom might have envied.

The Moors of Barbary are still famous for their saddlery, and the elegant workmanship which they bestow on all the accoutrements of their horses. The embroidery used to decorate the saddle-cloth and reins is often of the richest description; and, however elaborate may be the design, is always worked by eye, without the aid of any traced pattern.

The tourist may satisfy himself on this point by a stroll through the quarter where this kind of work is done, where he may see it in progress in the hands of the workmen sitting at their open shop-fronts.

This and the wares displayed in the perfume bazaars are perhaps the two most characteristic manufactures of the place.

The perfumes distilled at Tunis have been famous from time immemorial, and I really think the Tunisians are right when they declare that their roses are sweeter than all others.

There is one very large, rather pale rose in particular, from which the famous attar is extracted, which exhales an odour so powerful and yet so delicate, that it scarcely seems a figure of speech to speak of "odours of Paradise," and one can understand that the Mahomedan's heaven would hardly be complete without it.

But at Tunis it is not only the rose which is made to yield up its sweet breath, to be afterwards imprisoned in cunning little caskets, and sparkling crystal flasks enriched with gilding, suggesting to the wandering fancy of the Arabian Nights' haunted traveller (and who is there who is not continually haunted by that wonderful book from the moment he finds himself among oriental scenes?) the imprisoned spirit of some fairy, in eternal subjection to the powerful genii man.

The odours of the violet, the jasmine, the orange-flower, and many others are extracted with equal skill, and in the bazaars mingle their scents with the perfume of sandal-wood and other sweet-smelling woods whose names I do not know, and with that of the curious most odoriferous dark substance which the natives call amber.

If you go to buy perfumes, the vendor

will perhaps offer you a little ivory box (Arabian Nights again!) or porcelain vase containing a scented unguent for the hair, or may be a string of beads to hang round your neck; apparently thinking it of small consequence in what way you perfume your person, so that the desired odour is conveyed to the senses.

In Arab households incense and sandal-wood are frequently burnt on charcoal braziers. The Arabian women of the higher class are extravagantly fond of highly-scented earrings, bracelets, etc., and a lady told me that on being introduced into the apartment of a newly-married wife, she saw, suspended on the wall, a magnificent kind of necklace, almost as large as a collar of the order of the Golden Fleece, formed of scented woods and amber, enriched with plates and beads of pure gold finely worked. This ornament perfumed the whole apartment, and my friend was informed that in well-to-do households it was always to be found in the chamber of the newest wife.

I believe that these necklaces figure on various occasions in Mussulman households, being placed round the neck of the mother when a child is born to the house.

But it is rather difficult to get at these little secrets, the Tunisian Arabs being more than ordinarily jealous and reserved about all pertaining to the sanctity of the harem. Their rigidity on this point, and the fact that no Christian is permitted to enter any of their mosques on any pretext whatever (the European who should attempt to do so in Tunis would undoubtedly risk his life), are in strong contrast with their tolerance in most other matters, and their easy-going desire to live and let live.

They are highly imaginative and superstitious, and their religious fervour—fanaticism is, I believe, the correct term to employ in speaking of the Mahomedan religion—is undoubtedly very serious and real.

Their small superstitions are endless.

The female relative who was the companion of my travels in the Regency, paid a visit later to the family of a high court official at a time when a new member had been added to the household.

Although this member was not many days old, the two European ladies, one of whom was a perfect stranger, were introduced into the chamber of the mother and treated with every courtesy by the entire circle of relations and attendants assembled there.

The stranger asked if she might take the

baby—being, I am afraid, simply curious to inspect its clothing more nearly—and it was immediately handed to her on its embroidered pillow. The little creature's grave black eyes looked out of a nest of the most brilliant-coloured silks, two handkerchiefs of red and yellow silk enveloping its head. The smiling politeness of the Tunisian ladies did not vary when my friend imprudently said what a pretty child it was, although probably some exorcism was muttered *soto voce* against the evil eye, and to ward off the misfortune or deformity which might thence be expected to fall on the infant. When its age was enquired, however, more precautions were taken against evil influences. After some hesitation it was declared to be eight days old. My impulsive friend was about to exclaim that it looked older and was a wonderfully fine child, when her more experienced companion checked her by a look; and afterwards explained that the child's age was probably about three weeks, but that they thought it well, under all the circumstances, not to state it correctly, "for fear of the evil eye."

Again, in paying a visit to a friend at his beautiful country house, I noticed that in the central hall, a really princely apartment, there was a defect in the pattern of the beautiful tiles lining the walls. Two tiles had been inserted upside down, forming a break in the design. "Oh, that is done against the evil eye," I was informed by a European gentleman. "Arabian nights again," thought I, as I recalled Aladdin's unfinished palace.

There is a palace in Tunis, by-the-way, which is worth a visit, if only for the sake of one dome-shaped ceiling which it contains. This is in the entrance-hall, and is a most exquisite specimen of Moorish art, being ornamented with a series of the most intricate arabesque designs, deeply cut with the knife on the mortar or stucco lining the dome. The effect is unassisted by any colour or relief of light and shade, except that of the small cavities in the work itself; but it seems as if no greater degree of beauty and elegance could have been attained by the employment of the most elaborate means.

The work occupied about three years, and the artificer had no other guide than his correct eye and his heritage of the spirit of the graceful Moorish art to aid him in his labour.

This wonderful ceiling is in the Dar el Bey (House of the Bey), which is, or was,

inhabited by his highness when in the capital, and by his first minister, Mustafa ben Ismail, who is his adopted son, and is treated in all respects like a member of his family.

The Bey of Tunis, like many Christian sovereigns, does not seem to be fond of his dwellings of state. He is never to be found at the Bardo, the big palace outside the gates of Tunis, which is his official residence, except when it is necessary for the transaction of public business, and only comes to Dar el Bey for a winter month or so, and again during the fast of Ramadan. In the spring and early summer he goes to Goletta, where he inhabits an anything but regal residence; and at other times he is to be found at the Manoubia, a country house about six miles out of Tunis; or, oftener still, at Castel Said, another country residence, with beautiful gardens, which is within pistol-shot of the Bardo itself. It was at Castel Said that I first had the honour of speaking with his highness, whom I found to be a vigorous man of seventy years of age, of remarkably dignified and agreeable manners. In person he is under the middle height, but his carriage and bearing are such that one does not think so at first sight. His eyes are large, dark, and extraordinarily bright, contrasting agreeably with his white beard. They seem to look through rather than at you; and it is easy to believe that when he administers justice the evil-doer would cower before that penetrating glance, and the innocent man gain courage from the thought that the Bey himself is judging his cause.

Doubtless most of my readers are aware that the Bey of Tunis is, or was, an absolute sovereign, having power of life and death over his subjects. There is no appeal from his decree, and at the weekly court of justice held at the Bardo, the principal actors and witnesses in the cases to be tried are introduced into his presence, and after hearing the evidence on both sides, he then and there publicly pronounces judgment. His native sagacity, and, latterly, the experience of a thirty years' reign, enable him to do this with astonishing quickness, and, I am told, with almost unerring justice. Such, at least, is the opinion of his own subjects, who highly value the privilege of being judged by their sovereign in person.

An old resident in the country told me that, prominent among the causes of discontent which were rife during the rebellion

of 1864, were certain reforms proposed to be introduced at European instigation, one of which was to establish something like a trial by jury in local courts all over the Regency.

Whatever be the defects of a despotic form of government in our eyes, it appears to have been preferred by the Tunisians, and certainly, under the rule of the present Bey, has been attended with but few of those dark deeds of personal revenge which defile the histories of so many oriental governments.

There have not been wanting incidents in the reign of Mahomed-es-Sadock when, tempted by the absolute irresponsibility of his position, he has done deeds which had better have been left undone; but they have been few. He is by no means a cruel bloodthirsty tyrant, as some of his French friends have thought fit to describe him. He has been always, for instance, most averse to giving the order for capital punishment, and in one case, some years ago, in which a man was slain, and the life of the murderer justly forfeited according to the law, though with what we should call "extenuating circumstances," the Bey, whose sense of justice had forced him to pronounce the sentence, afterwards offered to the family of the victim, from his own private purse, the sum of "blood-money" often accepted as a compromise for such offences, where it can be shown that the murder was not vindictive or premeditated. In this case, however, the relatives, although very poor, declined to accept the "blood-money," the son of the murdered man saying:

"I do not say that there were no excuses for the crime, but if I accept that money I can no longer live here. If I wear a new pair of shoes, my neighbours will say they were bought with my father's blood. No; I must have justice."

And the Bey—I must say I think to his honour—acquiesced, and said:

"Let justice be done!"

In our complex civilisation, we should, of course, feel it right to ponder and argue both these points; but, going back to the principles of strictly human equity, we must, I think, find something admirable in the absolute sovereign who yielded his own desire to abstract justice, and the subject who sacrificed a fortune, not to vengeance, as he admitted, but to an ideal of honour.

Towards Europeans the Bey is most generous and friendly, and he shows, or did show, a special regard towards

those of English nationality. But this I observed to be the case with all, from the sovereign himself down to the meanest of his subjects. It would be difficult to say what we have done to deserve it, but the fact is so, or was until a few weeks ago. My nationality has been demanded by a poor Arab under his black goatskin tent, and on its transpiring that I was "Ingleez," a frank smile and an extended hand were the immediate response, and I was informed that the Arabs liked the "Ingleez" because they thought he told the truth, and did not profess friendship with any after-thought of gain.

The Bey is very proud of possessing the Order of the Bath, bestowed on him by our Queen. Her portrait hangs in his private apartment, where it is the only picture which decorates the walls. When the Prince of Wales visited Tunis about twenty years ago, he was, I believe, the only guest for whom the innovation was made of preparing an apartment for him under the Bey's own roof at the same time that the palace was inhabited by all the family and household.

On the occasion of my first presentation to the Bey, my companion was at the same time introduced to the Lallah, by which title the chief wife of the Bey is known, and also to the wife of the minister Mustapha, so that I afterwards learnt from her some of the secrets of the harem. The Lallah was described to me as an elderly lady, wonderfully well preserved, and very richly dressed, her arms, neck, fingers, and ears being adorned with jewels of great value. She has never been a striking beauty, but has regular features, and a most pleasing, kindly expression, together with perfectly simple, agreeable manners.

The minister's chief wife is a very pretty little personage, and intelligent to boot. She appears to be four or five and twenty, and possesses a well-shaped face, with handsome dark eyes and very white teeth. These ladies, it would appear, do not use paints or cosmetics, except for the embellishment of the hair, eyes, and eyebrows. It is not unusual to paint a small dark sign (like the "patch" of a beauty of the last century) on the forehead. One of these, in the form of a trefoil, adorned the pretty face of the minister's wife, just between the eyebrows, and was declared by her English female critic to be most becoming.

The dress of the Tunisian woman in her own house is invariable in form, the out-

ward difference between a princess and her slave consisting only in the richness of the materials. The costume consists of trousers, which fit closely to the leg from a little above the ankle to the knee; this part is generally richly embroidered or braided. From the knee upwards they are looser. The upper part of the dress consists of a vest, over which is worn a loose shapeless jacket, closed in front, with wide hanging sleeves. But this garment is very short, only just covering the hips; and, taken in connection with a highly-ornamental head-dress, from which depends a flowing veil of silk or gauze, the first aspect of the whole costume conveys to European eyes the startling impression that the otherwise elegant wearer has forgotten to put on her petticoat. Such, at least, was the idea which occurred to the English lady to whom I am indebted for this description. Very fine silk stockings and embroidered slippers without heels cover the feet of a Tunisian town lady, which are generally small and pretty.

The suite of rooms in which the princesses receive, and through which the Lellah led her English visitor by the hand as a mark of honour, are richly decorated. There is a fatal taste for Parisian upholstery, which, to a certain extent, vulgarises the spacious and handsome rooms; but the eye is consoled every now and then by carpets, divans, or hangings of real oriental manufacture, whose rich and harmonious colouring and dull soft textures repay one for wandering through these partly Europeanised apartments, with their looking-glass walls and gaudy French clocks. Of the latter there are, I believe, nineteen in one of the larger apartments.

But there was one thing even worse than the gilding and the clocks. In some magnificent Sèvres vases (a present from Louis the Fourteenth to a former Bey) were stuck bunches of common gaudy artificial flowers—artificial flowers in Tunis, of all places in the world!

Well, princesses who live in perfumed halls, and can have the real or the false at will, may perhaps be pardoned such an error in taste, in consideration of their kind intentions to honour European fashions. But it is to be hoped that the poor Arab will not be speedily "civilised" into preferring a miserable scrap of coloured muslin or paper to the fresh rosebud or carnation he sticks above his ear.

Of all merely sensuous pleasures, those conveyed by the delicate tints and sweet

perfumes of flowers are surely the most refined and poetical. The extravagant fondness of the Tunisian Arabs for these lovely objects, although not an important trait, seems to me to be indicative of character to a certain extent, and, one fancies, has relation to much that is so gentle and agreeable in the denizens of my African City of Flowers.

IN THE SUNNY RHINELAND.

IX.

SUNDAY in Schlangenbad is just as bright and cheerful on that as any other day. The band plays one out of bed in the morning; the old bath-master for once seems actually pleased to turn on his taps of hot and cold—carriages are in request; donkeys rattle about with their gay trappings; and the girls with the baskets of roses offer their bouquets with their usual unconcern.

We have a pastor here, it is true, but he is beaming with good-natured satisfaction. He chucks the flower-girls under the chin—I won't swear he does not kiss some of them, as he trots up and down the pleasant sunny walk, in the long gown that streams behind him, the velvet cap, and crisp Lutheran bands, full of a patriarchal kind of bonhomie. But, after all, there is a considerable procession of people filing up the hill with hymn-books, and presently appears the grand duchess herself with a bigger hymn-book than anybody, and thereupon our pastor feels it is time to begin.

My window commands a view of the little chapel. And presently I hear the sounds of psalmody, a leisurely self-contented psalmody, evidently led by capacious elders, but sustained by the fresh sweet voices of children. It has a strangely familiar sound, such as one can remember welling out of country chapels long ago in the midst of orchards and cherry-gardens, and green daisy-pied meads. The sermon, too, seems familiar, although I can hear nothing of it but the sustained monotone, rising and falling a little, so lulling to the sleepy heads of youth. A pause, it is over; no, it is another head—seventhly, and lastly; but this is the longest of all—a regular double-headed performance in the way of pulpit oratory. But it is over at last; another hymn, and the congregation stream out, not a powerful stream, as far as numbers go, but with an air of that cheerful relief which so often seems one of

the common feelings of humanity in leaving a place of worship. And the pastor appears quite as pleased as any of the rest.

The vicomte has left, Madame Reimer has just told us. He found Schlangenbad too unexciting—no baccarat, no écarté. His family, it seems, blame John's wife very much. She might very well have permitted him to adore her for a time; indeed, she might have been the means of reclaiming him from his evil—that is to say, expensive courses; but to dismiss him thus brusquely was not at all *comme il faut*. Thus we may expect a coolness on their part towards us. They have, indeed, asked Madame Reimer to join them for the rest of their stay at the baths. But she has refused to leave us. Now the effect of all this, joined to the Koriloff business, has been to strengthen very much the bonds of amity between our little party, which before were, perhaps, getting a little, just a little strained.

It is so sometimes in life as well as in dream. Across the smooth pleasant path a chasm suddenly opens of which the depth cannot be guessed, and yet there is no stopping. But our little chasm is happily closed and the turf firm beneath our feet.

To crown all, it is a heavenly evening, neither chilly nor sultry, but of soft genial warmth. Curious waved clouds glow in the evening radiance, and as darkness comes on, the sky assumes a deep purple hue, studded with golden stars. The fountain to-night dances with joyful buoyancy, and the warm spray it scatters over the flower-beds seems to take life in the foliage and float away in wandering flakes of light. They are marvellous mysteries, these wandering lights, that might be chips broken from falling stars, and they are everywhere: sometimes rising high in the air, sometimes drifting close to the shaven lawn; fireflies, indeed, only fireflies, but coming with all the charm of unexpectedness; we have seen none before, we shall see no more of them, they come to adorn this one perfect night.

Though Schlangenbadians as we are, we find it incumbent upon us to pay a formal visit to Schwabach. John and I set out one day after dinner, intending to drive back by diligence. The wood winds among the hills, following the course of a tiny stream, which, tiny as it is, keeps green and bright a respectable strip of meadow on either hand. Here and there is a mill, but plain and prosaic, as if millering were too good a business to

allow of picturesqueness, and with the mill goes a prosperous-looking farmstead, with one of its sheds cleared out and arranged with benches and tables, and "Restauration" in large letters on a board. Nobody is there, but we are told that on Sundays and holidays the water-wheel is stopped and the beer wheel turned on, the benches are well filled, the tables covered with jugs and bottles. It is a device this, worth recommending to the British agriculturist in these hard times.

As the valley widens out and strips of cultivated land succeed the wooded hillsides, a village appears. Its name is announced conspicuously on a board by the roadside, with a description of the particular company, regiment, corps to which this little village belongs, and where its mustering-place. There is nothing warlike in the aspect of the quaint little village itself, with its prim church, its rambling Gasthaus, tidy little shops, and comfortable, cosy-looking houses. The grocer is at work at his books, the waggoner has halted his team at the Gasthaus, and is refreshing himself after the manner of waggoners; the carpenter is sawing a balk of timber; and a tall burly veteran, in a very small garden, gravely passes in review his crops: his row of three small cabbages, his little patch of beans, his one rose-bush, and the half-dozen flowers that grow on his borders.

Beyond, on the hillside, the villagers are hard at work in their patches of land, their wives as well, and the old cow drawing a bush harrow. The young women are at the well for water, or boiling the kettle, or busy with the needle—not failing to leave their various occupations and enjoy a good look at the passing strangers—while the old grannie sits in the sunshine in the doorway busily knitting, and thinking of other days when the sun was brighter and warmer than now. But at this moment a little bell might ring in some unapproachable office in Berlin, and at the touch of a wire the whole scene might be changed. The villagers might be called in from the hillside, the carpenter, throwing down his saw and leaving his balk half cut, the grocer debiting his last sale and stepping out as Sergeant Würze, while the veteran turns his back on cabbage and beans, and casts his eye over the little squad with critical appreciation. And so would march away all the able-bodied men of the village, while the women would go with them for a little way, and then sadly watch the

moving patch of dust along the white road, till lost to sight "over the hills and far away"—all which is very unlikely to happen just now, but still the possibility gives a certain interest to the scene, and, perhaps, adds a certain zest to the even tenor of this quiet rural life.

A noticeable thing is the quantity of wild flowers that grow by the roadside, with the contrasts and harmonies of their varied hues, and the richly-coloured crags and points of rock that rise even from the midst of the garden-like cultivation of the village patches. But we soon leave behind the peasant crofts, and come to a wide expanse of rolling country, from the higher points of which we get grand views of the swelling hills of the Rheingau, and of the long undulating Taunus range, with a gleam of the Rhine winding its way through the wide valley. At the crest of the hill the streams divide; the little rivulet we have just left making pretty straight tracks for the Rhine, while the stream that rises on the other side of the hill joins the Lahn, and then passing Ems on its way, only reaches the Rhine just opposite Coblenz. Strange to say, on this high ground we hear the shrill whistle of a steam-engine, and, by the roar and rattle, evidently a locomotive—a thing not rich or rare in itself, but how did it get there, with no railway-line within miles? But there it is, a full-blown contractor's engine, running to and fro with ballast trucks on a short line beginning and ending in nothing. How was it hauled up here, and how will it be slid down? The thing remains a mystery to this hour.

But a more alarming phenomenon for us presents itself. This is the diligence slowly lumbering up the hill.

We have lost too much time looking for points of view, and now, if we walk to Schwalbach, we shall have to walk back again, or hire a carriage. Besides, the evening is drawing on. No, we must leave Schwalbach unvisited. Can we say that we have seen it? Yes, surely that clump of trees marks the little valley where it lies, and so we trudge home satisfied.

But next morning comes a blow, a decided facer. We have been here four days, and on this, the fifth day of our stay, there comes a knock at the door, which I take for the postman's, and cry "Come in" unsuspectingly.

Is it? Yes, I believe it is really the friendly violin, but instead of the case of his instrument, he carries a big book under

his arm, and a small book in his hand. He has assumed, too, that rigid stoniness of demeanour that shows the official. He is no longer a musician, but a collector of the kingly bath-tax.

"It is twelve marks," he observes severely.

But I have paid for my baths already. That, of course, but it has nothing to do with the kur-tax.

"It is twelve marks," with still severer emphasis.

An emphasis so severe that I feel it is useless to ask him to call again, or to intimate that I will make enquiries, or that I will write to the head tax-office on the subject. I drag forth my purse reluctantly, and then a bright thought occurs.

"Can't I shelter myself under John's assessment in the case of a family?" now I ask.

"If the respectable Herr had a family he would pay for each member at the reduced rate of nine marks."

"Very well then, I belong to the family of the respectable Herr downstairs, and will only pay nine shillings."

The collector shakes his head.

"A family is wife and children; no others are allowed to plead family ties."

And so I yield the point and my twelve shillings at the same time.

Has the collector visited the respectable Herr downstairs? No, he begins his collection at the top and works downwards. I feel more cheerful at hearing this. I shall hear news of John before long, then. Indeed, a few minutes afterwards John bursts into the room.

"Did you ever hear anything so iniquitous. Thirty-three shillings demanded for a tax. I'll never pay it. They may send me to Spandau if they like."

And then appeared John's wife in her dressing-gown, with her hair all hanging loose.

"John, don't be foolish; you must pay. Oh," turning to me, "do persuade him to pay."

"Nonsense!" cried John; "I'm not a child. I'll go to Spandau!"

"Very well," said Mrs. John, white and desperate. "I don't mean to go to prison with you. Perhaps you, sir," turning to me again; "will see me safe to my mother's roof?"

"He," cried John. "He will be in prison with me, for, of course, he doesn't mean to pay."

"But I have paid," I faltered.

John threw up his hands, while his wife clasped hers in thankfulness.

"Of course," said John, after a pause, "if you've paid there's nothing more to be said. I could have made a stand, but when I'm deserted in this way—Amy, pay the man and get rid of him."

Amy did not require a second bidding, but ran downstairs to settle with the tax-collector.

When we had a little cooled down, we agreed that while it was only fair that we should make some payment for the expenses of band, reading-room, and so on; yet that it was decidedly unfair to make the flying visitor of a week pay as much as people who stop the whole season. A daily payment would be more just, with an alternative tax for the whole season.

Knowing people, who have studied the thing, contrive by never staying more than four consecutive days at one bath-place, to avoid the tax altogether, and save their travelling expenses handsomely by the method. Thus they will go from Kreuznach to Schwalbach, and from Schwalbach to Schlangenbad, and then to Wiesbaden and Baden-Baden, and round to Ems, perhaps, with no taxes to pay, and the pleasure of variety and change of scenery. However, now that I have paid my tax, I march about as if the place belonged to me, feeling that I have contributed a most handsome sum to its maintenance, at twelve times as high a rate as the grand duchess herself, who is staying for three months, while I shall be away within the week.

And the week runs away very quickly. The conjuror has given his entertainment. I hoped at one time that there might be a tremendous run upon it so that I might negotiate some of my tickets. But, alas! no. I fancy old Korloff sold a good many tickets, he had such an insinuating way with him. I believe he would have prevailed upon me to take tickets had I not been already provided. But the people did not come. As a rule, they won't turn out at night for anything but music. And so Korloff cut the entertainment short, and presently John came to fetch me. Old Korloff wanted us to come and have some supper with him. His daughter was going to sing, and she sang divinely.

So altogether we had a very pleasant evening, enjoyed ourselves I daresay a great deal more than if we had been entertained by Prince Lorikoff in reality. And there

was one day to pack up, to settle with the washer-wife, or, what was better, with the pretty blooming washer-maiden, and to wander about and pay farewell visits to the little haunts which had somehow become quite familiar and home-like. And there was the house-reckoning to be paid, a complicated, but, happily, not formidable undertaking.

I confess that my reckoning with the kingly commissary for my room put me into a good humour. One looks for some kind of extra, either expressed in the bill or understood in the expectant attitude of servants. But here there was nothing of the kind. Just fourpence for candles, and nothing in the world else except the shilling a day. "Give the man who cleaned your boots a trifle," says the kingly official, "but nothing else."

But this last is an injunction difficult to carry out when there is a rosy-cheeked chambermaid who says "guten morgen" so prettily. Then there is the bill of the restaurateur, everything charged at the established tariff, which is quite reasonable, and not a kretzer more.

John, too, finds his bill reasonable enough, but the kur-tax has entered his soul. "It is worse than the dog-tax," he groans. But, even though we applaud his little joke, his discontent is not thereby appeased.

We are going on to Wiesbaden by the early diligence, and then by rail, having taken tickets at the post-office overnight, and this involves early rising. Why didn't we always get up at this time of the morning? is our united exclamation. For the air is inexpressibly fresh and sweet, and the hills are shining through the light haze of morning. The peasants are trudging to their work, and bright-looking maidens come tripping to the spring. A girl draws up a little cart, and presently establishes her stall by the piazza for the sale of milk, while a grizzled old man appears with a second equipage, where he forthwith instals his daughter, who deals in mineral waters and wine.

The ladies cry out for milk, but the milk-girl will supply none for cash. The sight of raw money seems repugnant to her feelings. "Nein, nein!" she cries; and not even silver will tempt her. You must have a ticket, you must be a regular subscriber, or else no milk; and smart subscribers come tripping up with their cards, and carry off milk, and one of the Parisian femmes-de-chambre even, looking very yellow and discontented. It is Madame de

Beaulien's maid, by-the-way, and when she has discounted her ticket, she catches sight of Madame Reimer and advances with an injured air. If madame could see madame for one little moment before she leaves? Madame Reimer says that she will come, and Justine retires, indulging in an irrepressible yawn as she moves away. In the meantime, breakfast has been laid in the piazza, and, after all, tea is better than raw milk for civilised beings at an early hour of the morning. The fountain murmurs a soft farewell as the breeze carries it to and fro in showers of spray that sometimes catch beautiful rainbow hues from a glancing sunbeam. And the birds fly twittering about us, quite delighted to find people with such sensible bird-like notions on the subject of early breakfasts.

And now, adieu Schlangenbad! For we hear the brake grating against the wheel as the diligence comes down the hill. And, indeed, the porter, who has been on the look-out, warns us that the vehicle is in sight. And still Madame Reimer has to visit her dear friend. Well, she will not be one little minute, and the diligence will surely wait two or three! And the comtesse has her quarters in the lower Kurhaus, which is on the way to the post-office.

And so John hurries down with his wife to the office, while I take care of Madame Reimer, undertaking to bring her, dead or alive, in time for the diligence. And I stand sentinel outside while Madame Reimer has her little minute with her friend.

The post-office is well in view from the verandah where I stand, and I can see the diligence, which has already drawn up, and the little group of passengers by the door of Zur Poste. The baggage is hoisted up. I have the satisfaction of recognising my own modest portmanteau, and seeing it well thumped on its way to the roof. The conductor has given out the baggage-tickets, and the driver is about to clamber up to his seat. If you delay another instant, Madame Reimer, we shall be left behind. And then she appears, half laughing and half crying, while the comtesse, wholly crying, shows herself for a moment.

"Adieu, monsieur. Take care of Gabrielle!"

We reach the diligence, and are thrust in, breathless, just as everybody's patience has reached its last gasp.

ULSTER FOLK-LORE.

THE GREEDY EYE AND THE EVIL EYE.

THE collector of folk-lore in Ulster finds many superstitions brought from Scotland by the settlers, as well as legends and fancies peculiar to the Irish population. The latter consist principally of fairy tales and ghost stories, many of them very poetical and graceful; and the former chiefly of superstitions regarding good and bad luck, and tales of witchcraft, which are more weird than poetical.

But as the two races have mingled in the course of three centuries, so their folk-lore has lost something of its distinct characteristics, though preserving them in the main. Thus the Presbyterian will sometimes tell of his adventure with the fairies, and the Roman Catholic will assure you that the butter has been spirited out of his churn by a "witch-wife."

Most old and middle-aged people of the cottier class in Ulster have strong ideas on the subject of luck. To enter a house where churning is in progress without washing your hands, taking the churn-staff in them, and "giving the churn a brash," is thought the acme of ignorance; and on leaving the house it is de rigueur that you should say, "God bless your churn, an' gie you the good of your milk an' butter." If a neighbour comes in to borrow a coal or turf, and neglects this formula, he lays himself open to the worst suspicions, and the people of the house will be sure to throw a pinch of salt into the churn as soon as his back is turned.

To receive alms without blessing both giver and gift is considered very wrong. The present writer was in her kitchen lately when a beggar was helped by the servants, and she was surprised to see the cook run after the woman and bring her back. The cook explained the proceeding thus. "She took we'er meal an' praties, ma'am, an' she didna bid God bless we'er house an' place. She'll just bless the house an' place before I let her go."

A certain old pedlar, a kind of Edie Ochiltree, welcomed alike in cabin and farmhouse for his story-telling powers, was given a little jugful of sweet milk one day, with which he was leaving the house much pleased. Two children ran to the door as he crossed the room, and startled him so that he let the jug fall. His joy was turned into lamentation, and he angrily complained that the children had "blinked" his milk. He thinks it lucky to meet a

horse and cart when he is setting out upon a journey, and will wait, leaning his pack against a ditch, for an hour until one appears in sight. He earns all the tobacco he smokes by curing elf-shot animals, and his skill is widely believed in.

The Down and Antrim peasants on their way to fair or market will turn back if they meet a red-haired woman. The people of Tyrone and Armagh think it quite as unlucky if the first person they encounter should happen to be a barefooted woman. Others are uneasy if anybody runs across their path, or takes a short cut; and others again are miserable if a neighbour should make any remark about the animal they have purchased without praising it and wishing the owner luck of it.

Old people say that the proper thing to do on meeting a fine horse or cow is to lay your hand upon it, saying, "Dear, but thou's the purty horse or cow! God gie you luck wi' it."

In some counties no well-minded persons will make any remark whatever about any neighbour in his or her presence without adding, "God bless you." This custom has reference to belief in a greedy eye.

There are people by whom it is not good to be admired. The fate of bonnie Rosie Carlin is still told in Letterkenny with sighs and shakes of the head. Rosie was standing at her father's hearth when a poor farmer from a distant parish came in to beg a little seed corn to sow his land. He was given what he asked, but he still stood at the door staring at Rosie and muttering, "Dear, but she's handsome,—dear, but she's handsome!" but, as her parents afterwards remembered, without saying, "God bless her." The sequel to his admiration was most disastrous. Rosie had been plump and strong, and rosy like her name; she began to pine away from that moment, lost flesh and colour, and died soon afterwards.

We asked the woman who told this story why the poor farmer's glance had been so fatal.

"He was one that had a greedy éye," was the answer. "There's them that has a greedy eye; an' if they look at a nice wean, or a handsome girl, or a cow wi' a good show of milk, some ill will be sure to follow; an' it'll be no fault of theirs, for they canna help it. It was the fault of their mthers for half weaning them an' then giving the breast back to them when they cried an' fretted an' kept them frae their sleep. There's plenty of mothers does that, an' the poor child has a greedy

eye ever after. There was a farmer, a very respectable man, a neighbour of my own, an' his wife wouldna let him see his childer till they were six weeks old, his eye was that unlucky, an' him that fond of them he was just doting about them. If the people wad meet him, an' them going to sell a beast, they'd turn back, an' feen a bargain they'd try to strike that day. They wouldna like to see him cross their fields or look at their crops; but there was very little said about it, the man was that respectable."

A Kilmacrenan woman tells the following story of another of these unlucky people:

"There was a man owned a good farm of land an' lived hot an' full. But it was noticed that things went wrong wi' him, an' he couldna look at a single thing he had without doing it harm. His wife would ha' made him lie wi' his face to the wall till she riz the childer in the morning an' give them their breakfast, for if he'd ha' looked at them an' them fasting, something unfortunate would ha' occurred to them. It was the same wi' his cows an' horses, till he nearly stopped going into his fields. The woman was a second cousin of my own, an' she tould me how it was he was cured."

"Why, Bell, I did not think a cure was possible."

"There is cures, miss dear, an' this was how it happened: he hired a boy frae the Sheriff's Mountain—they're very knowledgeable in them back countries—an' the boy heered the way it was wi' the master. He was ploughing soon after he come, an' he sent for the master to see what he had done. The man was na willing to come; but the boy sent again an' fleeced him out, an' while he was coming he set up a big stone in the field, for he knowed that the first thing the man's eye lit on wad be the thing the harm wad be done to. Weel, as I was sayin', the master come out, an' his eye lit on the stone first, an' it split in two wi' a loud noise. I ha' seen the stone mysel'—split in two paerts. The man was cured, an' his eye never did any harm after that."

The evil eye is a very much worse thing than the greedy eye, because it has been gained by a compact with the enemy of mankind.

"There isna as many witches now as there used to be in times gone by," said an old man the other day.

He possessed a fine cow, and over the room that served him for a dairy he had nailed a large horseshoe to keep witches

and fairies away. Observing the horse-shoe, and knowing very well why it was there, we took the opportunity of asking if witchcraft was active in the country just then.

"There was witches an' warlocks in plenty when I was a wee boy," said Davie, "but there isna many o' them now. Maybe because the Scriptures is spread abroad, an' the people isna just as ignorant as they used to be. It's allowed the bad man hasna the same power. Will I tell you what happened, to my grandfather's own knowledge, at the graveyard-wall, near St. Johnston?"

"Please do, Davie," and we composed our features to the gravest attention.

"There was an Ellie Connolly that had a bad name in the country, an' it was said she could tak' all shapes she pleased when she went out marauding an' stealing. Whiles she'd be a cat or a hare, an' suck the cows in the byres or in the fields. My grandfather was acquaint wi' her, an' often he'd ha' gone into her house for a light for the pipe.

"He was passing the graveyard-wall one evening, him an' a little dog he had, when a cat leaped down frae the wall an' attacked his dog. She snarled an' scratched, an' he barked an' yelped; but my grandfather seen that his dog was getting the worst of it, so he aimed a stone at the cat, an' she limped off mewing maist pitiful.

"It was the next day he was passing Ellie Connolly's, an' he went in as usual for a crack an' a light for the pipe. 'Where's your mother?' says he to the daughter that was spinning in the kitchen. 'She's in the room there,' says she. 'An' why is she in the room?' says he. 'She's lying,' says she, 'it's just sick she is.' 'What's her sickness?' says he. 'I'll not tell you,' says she; 'it's no business o' yourn.' 'Troth, it is my business,' says he, 'for your mother an' me's very big. I be to ax her what way she is.' The daughter tould him he wouldna get seeing her mother, an' she got up an' stood before the room-door, but my grandfather pushed her away, an' went up to the bed where Ellie was lying. 'What is it ails you, Ellie?' says he. 'Sure you see I'm sick, Davie Doherty.' 'Ay, but what ails you?' says he, for he juped (i.e. suspected) what it was, an' wi' that he pulled down the clothes an' seen that her arm was lying broken. 'What done that on you, Ellie?' says he. 'Oh, Davie Doherty, Davie Doherty,' says she, 'weren't you the

hardened man to hit me wi' a stone an' break my arm?' 'Why did you attack my dog then, Ellie?' says he. Weel, she was forced to give up her bad ways after that, an' the neighbours got milking an' churning in peace; but there was nae mair plentiness in her house; it was like other poor cottier houses in the country."

"How did she get the power to turn herself into a cat?" we asked.

"Some says," replied the old man, rubbing his head and looking reflective, "that witches touch their heads an' the soles of their feet on Midsummer Night's eve, an' gie themselves up to the Evil One for a year an' a day, sayin' some words o' a charm."

"Do you know the words?"

"God forbid, ma'am! But others says they go out on May morning before sunrise, an' trail a rope, made of hair frae the cows' tails, over the grass while the dew is on it, singing: 'Come all to me, come all to me, milk an' butter come to me.' 'Deed my grandfather seen them at it, an' he was a man that wouldna ha' told a lie no more nor the clergy in the pulpit."

"I'm sure of it, Davie. It was he who broke Ellie Connolly's arm, wasn't it?"

"Ay, ma'am, it was. As I was sayin', he seen two auld wives, neighbours that he knowed rightly, trailing a rope along the grass, an' he heered them singing:

"'Come all to me, come all to me,
Milk an' butter come to me.'

"'Would yous steal we'er butter from us?' says he, an' wi' that he jumps over the hedge an' snatches at the rope. He pulled an' they pulled, an' half o' the rope came away in his hands. The scare was that big on him that he didna stop to see what they'd do next, but home wi' the piece o' rope, an' throwed it down in a corner o' his father's house. They'd one cow near the calving, an' it was only a wee drop she was giving, but that morning there was a quare milking. My grandfather was a wee chiel then, but he minded it to his dying-day. He saw his mother fill piggin after piggin, an' pail after pail, till all the vessels in the house was full. She was quarely frightened, an' when he tould her about the rope, she throwed it on the fire, for she said she'd ha' no witches' wark in that house."

Variations of the same tale meet us in every county in Ulster. Sometimes the witch is hunted in the form of a hare for a whole winter.

A large black hare baffled the Derry harriers for an entire season some years ago, and the country people said it was no wonder she escaped, for she was no real hare—she was old Fanny Callaghan, and the devil helped her.

A white hare lived for many years on the island of Inch, in Donegal. She disappeared in 1858, the year Rose Martin, the "white wife," died.

Sometimes the hare is seen making her way to a cottage, and there the scent is lost. The huntsman of the Tullyannan harriers is reported to have seen a hare escape from the very jaws of the hounds and make for a hole in the wall of a cabin. Unable to believe his eyes, and trembling with superstitious dread, the man dismounted and went into the house, where he found no living creature of any description excepting Dan Murphy, the shoemaker, lying on his bed panting, unable to speak from loss of breath, and bleeding from a wound in his leg which looked like the bite of a dog.

A County Antrim woman tells the following story:

"Francis Dillon had three cows on his farm in Cushendall, an' one o' them, the best o' the three, failed in her milk, an' not a drop could be got from her. Says the wee boy that herded the beasts: 'Master,' says he, 'I seen a white cat sucking Moiley in the field.' Francis loaded his gun wi' siller, an' watched for the cat next evening. Sure enough there she came, an' he fired an' wounded her, but she was fit to make off. Francis was a man that had a great skill in setting bones, an' he was sent for by the neighbours as regular as the doctor. That night there came an express for him to go to Rose Mullan that had got her leg broke. (Rose was allowed to be a witch-wife frae Cushendall to the Giant's Causeway.) When Francis heered that her leg was broke, of course he knowed what to think. Says he, 'It was me did you the injury, an' it's me you get to mend it,' says he, an' Rose an' her man hadna a word to say."

"A poor traveller looking for her bit"—i.e. a beggar-woman—tells the following story.

The narrator was once a servant in a lodging-house at Bundoran, a fashionable watering-place, filled with bathers in summer; and Biddy Gallagher, her cousin, was housemaid in the hotel next door.

When the bathing season was over, Biddy remained alone in the hotel to

take charge of the premises. Her wages were good, but she disliked the loneliness of her life, especially at night, when the wind blew off the ocean and rattled every window.

She dusted and cleaned and lit fires in the empty rooms during the day, and before retiring each night she swept up the kitchen, made a bright fire, and left everything comfortable there.

One night, before she put out her candle, she heard the hall-door open, and, full of terror, jumped out of bed and ran to the head of the stairs to listen. There were many footsteps in the hall, and many voices were talking. The voices were all saying, "Good-bye, Miss Gallagher! Good-bye, Miss Gallagher! an' thank you kindly for your fire! We're away to the County Cavan; but you'll find an oat-cake, made of the best grain of Tyrone, on your parlour-table. Eat that to your tea, an' good-bye."

Terribly frightened, Biddy ran back to her room, and there was her sister Kitty, that was lost one Hallowe'en, lying in her bed. "Biddy! Biddy!" cried Kitty, starting up, "dinna taste their cake, or they'll have you away wi' them, as they took me." She disappeared as she spoke. Biddy utterly refused to remain any longer alone, and her cousin, who tells the story, came to keep her company.

The gentle race, now banished from the green banks of the Foyle, haunted that fertile valley some sixty years ago.

It was in 1820 that the McElhinney family went to live on a little farm between Porthall and Strabane, in sight of the river. Joe McElhinney was a mischievous lad of seventeen, and he soon became intimate with lads who were as fond of tormenting as himself. There was a stretch of gravel for a short way along the Foyle, two or three fields below his house, and there the young girls of the country used to bathe. When Joe and the other lads found this out, they made a practice of hiding the girls' clothes, till at last two girls were always obliged to remain sentinels while the others bathed. But one summer day the lads found no sentinels. They peeped over the hedge, and saw all the girls in the water. Maggie Lavens, with her floating yellow hair, Jenny McBride, Ellen Morrison, towering a head above the rest, and beside her little Annie Kearney, with her sparkling eyes and rosy cheeks.

"Ay, there they are, an' there's your Kate," said Joe to one of his companions. The girls looked up and laughed; then,

taking hands, they danced about in the water, and at last did what no mortal girls could do—swam across the Foyle and were seen dancing on the Tyrone shore. Very much alarmed, the lads hurried to the different cottages in the neighbourhood. The girls were all at their spinning-wheels—Maggie, the yellow-haired, little Annie Kearney, Jenny McBride, and Ellen Morrison.

“It put us from playing a trick on anyone for many a day,” said Joe McElhinney, looking across the Foyle with dim wistful gaze at the smiling cornfields of fair Tyrone. We felt wistful too, and would gladly have re-peopled the gentle hills and broad river with the elfin race.

“Can you tell any other story about the Foyle, Joe?”

“Do you know the Castle of Montgavlin, ma’am? I’ll tell your ladyship what my mother seen there, for it was not in my time. When my mother was a wee girl, there was a mermaid lived in the river, an’ on summer evenings she’d ha’ sat singing on a flat stane near the edge of the water.”

“What was she like, Joe?”

“I don’t mind to have heered. I think she was handsome, but her hair was green.”

“Did she comb her hair?”—

“*Sie kämmt es mit goldenem Kame,
Und singt ein Lied dabei.
Das hat eine wundersame
Gewalt’ge Melodie.*”

“Eh, ma’am; what were you sayin’?”

“I was speaking about a German mermaid, Joe. I never thought there had been a mermaid in the Foyle.”

“Deed was there. The boatmen goin’ up an’ down in their lighters between Derry and Strabane wad ha’ seen her often. They called her Sheelah, an’ there’s a deep pool near Montgavlin that they still call ‘Sheelah’s Pool.’

“There was a Rhoda Gildea lived at the door wi’ my mother, an’ a harsh, ill-natured body she was. She went to draw water one evening, an’ just out o’ mischief she overturned Sheelah’s stone. She thought the crathur didna see her, but next day, when she came home from an errand to the shop, she found Sheelah in her kitchen, putting her child on the fire. Rhoda let a cry out of her, an’ ran to take the child off the fire, an’ Sheelah went out at the door an’ down to the river, singing:

“When I think on my stane,
An’ you think on your wean,
We may weel speak an’ look,
But treens we’ll e’en be nane.”

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

CHAPTER XXIX. A NEW LIFE.

JANE MERRICK punctually kept her engagement with the concierge at the house at Neuilly. She received from Madame Moreau a report of the visit of Mr. Lisle, an assurance that the parcel left in Moreau’s charge had been given to him, and the additional information that Mr. Lisle had appeared to be totally unprepared to find that madame had departed to England, and that monsieur himself was so changed she (Madame Moreau) could hardly believe he was the same person who had taken the apartment, and engaged her daughter Delphine as an attendant for the lady.

“You can hardly believe it,” repeated Jane quickly. “Are you quite sure this person was the same?”

Oh, yes. Madame Moreau was quite sure; there could be no doubt at all; what she had said was only a way of speaking, it was very surely Mr. Lisle. And he had remained a good while up there, and had gone away, finally, leaving no word or message for any one. Madame civilly hoped the young couple were happily re-united, and that all was well with Madame Lisle. Jane made her but a vague reply, and returned to Paris, troubled and confounded by the result of her visit to Neuilly. She had not expected to hear anything of Mr. Lisle; she had come to believe, with her aunt, that he had merely forsaken Helen; that he should return to look for her, and, finding her gone, take no further step in reference to her, was out of Jane’s calculations, and she was afraid of the effect which this inconsistent conduct might produce on Helen. Mrs. Morrison and Jane were both of opinion that she must be told; and they were surprised at the way in which, after her first agitation and tears, she took the incident.

“I am so glad, so happy, so relieved,” she said, “that he was not so bad as you thought, as you were afraid he might be. And I am so thankful to know, to be quite sure, that he is living, and that no harm has come to him. You will forgive me, I am sure, if I cannot yet think much of anything else.”

She said very little more on the subject, and though she was very quiet, and would sit absorbed in thought, and seemingly

unconscious of things around her, for long lapses of time, she improved in health day by day. Her aspect was too grave for her years, the impress which is not to be shaken off had been set upon her beauty; the glow, the glitter, and the gladness had passed away from it never to return, as had the girlish trust, the universal hope, and the innocence that does not fear harm, because it does not know the existence of evil; but there had come something in their place that lent to Helen a deeper and a more potent charm. The varied suffering she had undergone within a period really brief, but which seemed to her to have been endless in duration, had educated Helen's mind as years of mere teaching might have failed to educate it. The self-confidence, the fearless expectation of youth and inexperience, had departed from her for ever, but precious things had come in their place, accompanying and taking the sting out of her condemnation of herself for the grave fault of which she had really been guilty. Those precious things were the gifts of humility, of self-knowledge, and of patience; the dawning of a perception that happiness is not a flower of this world's growth, and therefore they who seek for it labour in vain, and to the hurt of their own souls; and the release, accomplished only with an almost intolerable pang, from the bondage of a love which was for the most part visionary.

Helen became aware of this release shortly after she had heard from Jane the result of her visit to the house at Neuilly; and she suffered, perhaps, as terrible agony in the first consciousness of it, as in any of the hours of miserable suspense from which she had been delivered. So many feelings went to the composition of the state of mind into which she fell, and among them there was burning shame, self-contempt, and self-condemnation. The two good women who loved the girl, and watched her with deep commiseration that was never intrusive, and patience that never gave way before her variable moods, could not, probably, define the phases through which she passed, but their sympathy availed as much as if they had accurately analysed her feelings. They regarded her as a sick person, snatched from death, and now needing to be nursed back through convalescence into health; and they did the nursing accordingly, without bothering their patient, or even so much as asking her in words how she did. Their intelligent observation of

symptoms, and judicious administration of nourishment and stimulant, brought the happiest results to the mind diseased. It was a condition of her state that Helen should but dimly, if at all, apprehend their wise and constant care of her, and it was not until long afterwards, when life had taught her many another lesson, and she had extended perceptions and enlarged sympathies of her own to help her to a comprehension of them, that she rightly understood and duly estimated the skill, the tenderness, and the sympathy with which she had been treated in that terrible sickness of the soul. But when that time came, Helen wondered at these things no longer, for she had learned the meaning of that "grace of God" that Jane had been used to speak of in their schooldays, and she knew the smile, the touch, and the whisper of the chief among its ministers—Charity; which knowing, there was no more "amazement" for her.

The time of such refreshing and establishment as this was, however, in the far future, and it is with the fever and the feebleness we have to do.

When Helen knew that Frank Lisle was not dead, but that he had made no sign, she began to feel conscious of a growing freedom. All was dim and doubtful beyond the fact that his conduct was not explained by the only solution that would have proved it to be involuntary; and after a short time of great misery, she knew that she no longer suffered from that dimness and uncertainty. Her youth asserted itself, though its elasticity was impaired; the new atmosphere of cheerful activity and happy helpful companionship aided her; the imaginary world gave place to the actual, and Helen had to realise, with a great shock of conviction, and a sense of something like self-loathing, that she no longer loved and lived upon the memory of Frank Lisle.

"I must be the worst and wickedest creature that ever lived," such were her hard thoughts of herself; "for I can bear to be without him now, and when he was with me, I did not grieve for papa. Oh, is there nothing real? Does nothing last? Or is it only I who am so fickle and so wicked?"

Thus did the unlessoned heart strive against itself, and against the inevitable law of human life. It was with feelings which she could summon up in her memory all her after days, that Helen

asked herself whether, if she really had been Frank Lisle's wife, she could ever have ceased to love him? If he had been faithful to her, if the life they had pictured to themselves had "come true," the life of the hard-working artist, and his helpful, admiring, trustful wife—what then? But Helen, for all her dreams and fancies, and for all her ignorance of life, was not devoid of reasoning faculties, and she was insensibly learning to use them; so she knew that she need not torment herself with such a vain question, for it was because Frank Lisle was not "true" that the fabric of her fancy had revealed itself as air-woven, and had vanished in the revelation.

And she? Was she false because she could bear to live without him, because she could lift her sorrow-bended head and heavy eyes, and look out once more on the fair world in which he had no more part for her? She knew very well in her pure heart, that she had loved loyally, with a great humility too, and willingness to take the lord of her life for its law in all things, small and great, and there was something beyond and different from the sad repining of a love-sorrow in the conviction that this love was a dead thing, only fit to be buried out of her sight, by no power to be raised from that death, though she should wear her weeds for it for ever.

The strangest thing about this mood of Helen's to her own perception, was the way it dealt with time. She seemed to have lost the measurement of that; between her and the past there was a great gap, a gulf with dim vapours floating up from its depths, and she sometimes asked herself whether the Helen Rhodes who now stood on the near side of that gulf was really the same Helen Rhodes who had stood upon the far side? She was still so young that she could not but make of herself her chief occupation, and her good friends made all allowance for this, while they tried to substitute other interests.

For instance, Madame Morrison laughed at Helen's French a good deal (as she had laughed at Jane's, when her niece left Miss Jerdane's establishment), and proposed that she should take lessons in the language. And then, she set her to learn some of the lighter and easier details of her own business, and she employed her occasionally to write English letters for her. Helen took to it all very kindly, and Jane proposed that she should be called Kate Nickleby, but an objection to that sportive

plan was raised by Helen. Were Madame Morrison and Jane prepared to become respectively Madame Mantalini and Miss Knagg? When Helen propounded this query, with her old smile, and brought the book and read the Mantalini scenes until the two girls cried with laughter, Jane began to feel a comfortable conviction that she would "do."

It was not very long before Helen, with all the heartfelt acknowledgment of their goodness to her that she could put into words, and carefully fencing herself from being supposed to think that any such matter was in their thoughts, broached the subject of doing something for herself! Then there arose a discussion that might have reminded the friends of that which they had held at the Hill House on the day when Helen had seen Mr. Townley Gore for the first time. Helen maintained that she should never be able to make herself sufficiently useful to Madame Morrison to be of any "real good" in the business; indeed, she told Jane she was perfectly aware—for she had found out a good deal from the young ladies—that her own share was the merest make-believe; and she wanted Jane to fulfil her promise of getting her employment as a governess. She had now some additional qualifications for that occupation, but she was still disqualified by her too good looks, her youth, and her sensitiveness. That the incident which had made so sad a difference in her life was one which she was, or her friends on her behalf were, required to regard as a drawback, never entered Helen's mind, or Madame Morrison's; the one was too innocent, the other was too sensible. Jane had some difficulty in persuading Helen to let the matter stand over for discussion at a future time, and she had only just gained her consent to this, when the first interruption of Helen's isolation from the past of her life took place. Mr. Townley Gore's letter reached Madame Morrison.

The terror with which her kind friend's suggestion that this renewal of communications, slight though it was, might lead to a proposal for her restoration to the protection of Mr. and Mrs. Townley Gore, filled Helen's heart, was accompanied by a scruple of her mind. Was she not, by shrinking from such a possibility with the unqualified dread that she had plainly displayed before this scruple occurred to her, imposing upon the generous kindness of Madame Morrison? If Mr. and Mrs. Townley Gore would indeed receive her, had she any

right to reject this means of relieving Madame Morrison from the charge of her? That view had not for a moment presented itself to her generous friend, whose sole consideration was Helen's own advantage. After fretting over it a great deal, Helen spoke to her frankly, and the matter was set at rest for her in a few sentences.

"Of course," said Helen, "if they offered to take me back, I must tell them the whole truth. They would have a right to know it; except, I suppose, I should not be bound to give up the names. I could not do that, on account both of—him—and his friend. And then, I do not think Mrs. Townley Gore would let me into her house."

"No, I suppose not," said Mrs. Morrison thoughtfully; "I never considered that necessity. And I tell you this, Helen, once for all," she added, with her characteristically brisk and decided air, "if she had to be told, and if she did agree to take you back, with my consent you should never enter her house. She was a detestable tyrant to you, when there was nothing to blame you for; what would she be with a secret to hold over you? No, no, my dear, we may look upon that matter as over and done with, and I am heartily glad your conscience has made a way of escape for mine."

How glad Helen was, she could not have told. Her eyes brightened, her tread grew lighter; her needle flew more quickly through the light tasks that were set her; she took a livelier interest in the show-rooms, and disconcerted Madame Morrison's ideas of her want of taste—founded, not unreasonably on her doggedly English mourning—by some very ingenious and original suggestions. Indeed, the "treatment of jet" on Miss Chevenix's gown which Mrs. Townley Gore was so good as to admire, and so shrewd as to recognise as a test of expense, was a "treatment" of Helen's devising. The impertinence of the agent whom Madame Morrison employed for the looking-up and stirring-up of her unpunctual customers in London, and who had found Miss Chevenix one of the most unpunctual and impracticable of the number, had been condoned by Beatrix, when she found herself enabled to pay the long outstanding bill.

"Nobody dresses me like Morrison," said Miss Chevenix when she was arranging matters with Mrs. Mabberley; "and, after all, I suppose these people have to be rude sometimes to get their money."

"No doubt," assented Mrs. Mabberley, with her usual obliging readiness.

It was September, a beautiful mild September with no chill upon it as yet, and the woods at Chantilly, at St. Cloud, at St. Germain, and elsewhere in the neighbourhood of Paris, were putting on the autumn tints that are so beautiful when one has not English woods to look at, but which sink into such insignificance when one has. Madame Morrison and her husband had made a short excursion "aux eaux," but Jane and Helen had not been away at all. There was a great deal to be done at such an establishment as Madame Morrison's, even in the slackest season, and Helen had got on very well indeed with the correspondence. Jane gave her a fair share of the work to do, and she liked it. She was well, and although she would not have consented to make the statement in words just then, she frankly admitted afterwards, in looking back upon that time, that she was happy.

A great many orders for England were on hand. Madame Morrison's country-house costumes were much admired, for she had been in, at least, second-rate favour during that wonderful time when visitors to the beautiful arbitress of fashion took twelve costumes to Compiègne, to be worn in three days. Some of the orders were for wedding-trousseaux, and, in one instance, the prospective wearer had come to Paris, and was a good deal about at Madame Morrison's. She was a pretty, rather awkward English girl, and Jane and Helen were quite interested in her as she came, day after day, with her fat, rich mamma, and had her mind expanded and her taste corrected on the subject of dress. Her name was Ellen Smith, and she has nothing to do with this story, except inasmuch as that she was the cause of Helen's being placed in an absurd and embarrassing position. The wedding order was completed, the fat, rich mamma and her pretty daughter were about to seek once more the white cliffs of Albion, and to spread astonishment, not unmingled with envy, among their female friends, for the dresses were costly and beautiful, and the owners were feasting their eyes on them previous to packing, in the last of Madame Morrison's three spacious and handsomely fitted-up showrooms. The doorways between the rooms were draped with velvet of a dark neutral tint, which did not "try" the colours that had to be displayed, and velvet divans lined the walls underneath the mirrors.

Mrs. Smith and her daughter, Jane and Helen in attendance upon them, were intent upon business, in which all four seemed interested, in the third room. Two dress-baskets lined with spotless Holland, and covered with shining leather, gaped open-lidded for their splendid load, a part of which was spread over the tables and heaped on the divans, while the four ladies were eagerly considering two objects which lay on a chair within easy range of the bride elect's bright shy eyes. Those objects were a large square of very rich Brussels lace, and a wreath of myrtle and orange-blossoms tastefully composed.

"Nothing could be more beautiful," said the bride elect, "only I never quite know how a square veil should be worn; and there's so much in the way a thing of that kind is put on; don't you think so?"

Jane assented. The fat mamma wheezed, and looked doubtful; she had misgivings about the Lancashire methods in such matters.

"It is quite easy," said Jane; "I could show you in a moment. It depends on whether you wish to wear it thus, or thus."

She held a couple of fashion-plates, with two happily impossible young women simpering at their prayer-books depicted on them, for Miss Smith's selection of a method.

"I am sure I could not look like either of those," said Miss Smith frankly; "my head is too big, and not the right shape. Could you not show me some pretty way of your own?"

"I think I can," said Jane, smiling; she liked this English girl. "Helen, your hair is dressed quite rightly. If you will allow me, Miss Smith, I will put the wreath and veil on Miss Rhodes's head, and you can judge of the effect."

This proposal was acceded to with eagerness. Helen seated herself, and Jane, having set the crown of flowers on her head, draped around her slender lissom figure and folded over her glossy braided hair the rich filmy lace; and then, bidding Helen stand up, stepped back to observe the effect.

"How extremely becoming!" said the fat mamma.

"How beautifully done!" said Miss Smith. "Thank you so very much; I

quite see it now. So simple; only two long pins and a little twist."

But at this moment Helen started violently, for in the long mirror before which she was standing meekly and patiently, like a lay-figure, she caught sight of a man's face intently gazing at her image, and two voices in the second room uttered simultaneous exclamations of "Oh! oh!"

"Who is there?" said Jane, hurrying into the second room, while Helen hastily took the pins out of the veil, and snatched the wreath off her head.

"I beg your pardon," said a gentleman, to each of whose hands a pale-faced little girl was clinging, as she stood on tiptoe trying to see more of the lovely vision in the next room. "I am afraid I have intruded; but a young lady told me I should find the representative of Madame Morrison in the show-room, and I did not find anyone in the first room, so I went on."

"I am Mrs. Morrison's niece," said Jane, directing him by a polite gesture to retrace his steps to the outer room, and accompanying him thither, much against the will of the children, who pulled at him spitefully, "and I can attend to any business you may have with her."

"My business with her is not on my own account," said the gentleman, who had by this time shaken off one of the children, and removed his hat, and he smiled as he spoke in a singularly pleasant manner. "I have been sent here by my sister, and these little ladies would come up with me. My sister is Mrs. Masters; she said Madame Morrison would know all about it. She has, unfortunately, sprained her ankle, and can't get out, and she is anxious to see Madame Morrison. I was to ask if it would be possible for Madame Morrison to call upon her."

"Mrs. Masters from Chundrapore, I suppose," said Jane.

"Yes; come home on account of the children. This is the address, madame, Avenue du Bois de Boulogne"—he handed Jane a card. "Will you have the kindness to give my sister's message?"

Jane took up the card when he had bowed himself out of the room, and read the name on it. The Paris address was written underneath the following: "Mr. Warrender, Chesney Manor."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART II. PHEBE'S FATHERS.

CHAPTER VII. PHEBE'S PICTURE.

WHEN the door was at last opened, John Doyle (for it was he) saw before him a girl, woefully ill-dressed, and looking, in her fright and confusion, as if she had just been startled out of a sound sleep, or had been interrupted in the middle of a piece of mischief. He had looked for nothing less than to be met on the threshold by the very girl about whom he had come to enquire, and he had formed an idea of her very different, as a matter of course, from the reality presented to him by Phoebe.

"Does Mr. Nelson live here?" he asked, "and is he at home?"

He did not put his question very courteously, for his temper, already tried by Mrs. Urquhart, had not been improved by having to knock three times at a door which he had intended, on coming to London, to avoid.

It was not in the child that he was interested, but in the behaviour of his friends.

"Yes—no," said Phoebe; "I mean he does live here, but he isn't at home."

"Will he be in soon?"

"I expect him every minute."

"Then I will come in and wait for him. It is on business, and I shall not be able to call again."

It was an extraordinary thing that any person, other than a collector of debts and rates in arrear, should wish to see Mr. Nelson on any sort of business any more than for pleasure, and Phoebe felt that she saw before her an Associated

Robespierre. He far more nearly came up to her ideal of such a character than her father or any of her so-called father's so-called friends, with his height, his breadth of chest and shoulders, his deep, slow, heavy voice, his bronzed complexion, and big beard. Perhaps he might be the chief of all the Associated Robespierres all over the world; for even in her present excitement she could not leave unused the smallest loophole for a flight of dramatic fancy.

The world had become full enough of colour at last; almost too full for one time. What with love and mystery, she felt plunged at once into the second volume of a novel without having read the first.

"Pray come in," she said; and wished she had had the presence of mind to say: "Pray enter"—obviously a more appropriate phrase.

He followed her into the parlour, where it suddenly struck her that she had clean forgotten to lay out tea.

The room was now dark, as well as in a general muddle. It was always more or less the last, for what can one unpractical girl do against a host of impracticable boys?

So he waited at the door while she tried to turn on the gas—and failed. No hiss followed her attempt; and, when she struck a match, the air from the pipe blew it out, and left everything as dark as before.

"Perhaps it isn't turned on at the meter," suggested her visitor.

"I'm afraid," she said, "it must be one of their days for cutting off the gas; they do, every now and then, two or three times a year. It's very tiresome. I'm afraid you must wait while I run out for some candles. It's only just round the corner. I sha'n't be a minute gone."

She ran upstairs for her hat, and Doyle, finding his way to a horsehair sofa, sat down upon a pair of boots.

He gave up the idea of sitting down, and walked to the window, whence nothing but fog was now to be seen.

The girl had been gone rather longer than the promised minute, when he heard the click of a latch-key, and then a scuffling and stumbling sound from the passage, followed by an oath or two.

"Phoebe, Phoebe! I say!" the voice called out, "is this a plant to break a fellow's shins?"

The owner of the voice looked in at the parlour-door for a moment, but, seeing nobody, went off again and ran upstairs.

"So that was Phoebe, I suppose," thought Doyle. "One of the Nelson family, I suppose. A pleasant household this seems to be at first sight—the gas cut off, and people who show they've come home by swearing at Phoebe. I've half a mind to be off again. If this is the way that Urquhart has taken to try experiments, and Ronaine to turn out a she-Phoenix, and Esdaile to do I forget what, and Bassett to do everything, I don't see why I should be bothered to turn out a decent shop-girl or housemaid. I didn't pay my share that the admiral might get into trouble with the gas companies. But——"

His mind did not follow out the But, which certainly could not have come to much, any way. But he had not made up his mind to escape by the time that the knocker sounded again. And, as neither the person who had sworn at Phoebe, nor anybody else, came to open it, Doyle was himself at last obliged to let Phoebe in again.

She did not apologise, but took a couple of candles from a newspaper, stuck them into a couple of bottles, after a good deal of balancing, and lighted them.

"It seems a bad fog," said he.

"Yes; I nearly lost my way coming home. Please sit down," she said, suddenly seeing the boots and throwing them into a corner. "Father will be back any minute now."

He sat down, while she began to lay out the tea, and was glad that this Phoebe did not resemble his idea of the child whom he did not know he saw in her.

It is true that this form of candlelight was not good for the study of a girl, beyond that one might look at her longer and more steadily than daylight, or even London gaslight allows. But he saw that she was

a more than commonly pretty girl; and in his view, beauty in a woman was the greatest curse that nature could give her.

We have hitherto seen Phoebe with no eyes at all, for her father's and her brothers', even Phil's, were all too accustomed to her to count for anything, and those of Stanislas Adrianski, it may be presumed, were able to see beauty wherever they might find sufficient occasion. For poets are wizards, and can see much, where common eyes perceive nothing but an income paid quarterly.

But Doyle, as a disinterested, or rather absolutely uninterested stranger, saw her simply as she was, and nothing less or more; neither as one who, like Phil, knew her faults and loved them; nor as one who, like Stanislas, could know nothing of her but that she was a good deal of a goose, whose eggs might turn out to be at least of silver if not of gold.

She was, as seen in the foggy candlelight by Doyle, a bright-looking, rather fair-complexioned girl, not short, though by no means tall, and lithe, slender, and graceful in every way.

The north London air had not given her depth or height of colour, but it had not robbed her of a delicate freshness which spoke well for her health, and, despite all likelihood, of her breeding.

Her hair, not too neatly arranged, was of the very light tender shade of brown which has no kindred with either flax or gold; it hung down in a delicate curly cloud over her forehead, and brought out by contrast the darkness of nearly straight full eyebrows which of themselves were enough to give her face a peculiar dramatic picta-resqueness of its own.

The nose was rather small, and slightly curved in what some people hold to be the wrong, that is to say, the anti-aquiline direction. But others call it piquant; and anyhow, it harmonised in Phoebe's case with a fresh, sweetly-curved mouth that was apt, by its silent speaking, to show just the edges of the teeth, whether smiling or grave.

Doyle, woman-scorner as he was, and non-observant on principle, knew how to look at pictures, and just as on a picture he looked at Phoebe, and saw what was to be seen. The mouth, he thought, was rather large and generous for academic drawing, but it was womanly in the best and sweetest way; so much so that, had he known the history, or rather mythology of her life, he would have wondered a good

deal at the contrast between the lips and the mind.

I, who hold all the doctrines of physiognomy in sweeping contempt, do not wonder at all; but physiognomists will know what I mean.

He noticed, too, her fine little ears, like ears, and not in the remotest degree like shells, and the graceful turn of her slender neck, which was not the least like a swan's—though something of a goose's it may have been.

Lastly, strange to say, he tried to see what her eyes were like; and, failing in his first attempt, tried, as a matter of course, a second time.

There was something mysteriously beautiful about Phœbe's eyes. They were rather large, but the strong dark brows concealed them a little, and their long dark lashes veiled them a good deal more. They were soft rather than bright—that could easily be seen. But though Stanislas Adrianski, who had looked into them both closely and deeply, might know their colour, that secret defied common and distant looking. They were not black, they were not brown, they were certainly not blue. And so it seems to follow that they must be grey—and perhaps they were. But they were by no means of that clear, constant, open grey that everybody knows. They could soften into one shade, and brighten into another, and then soften into a third, and seemed to take as many expressions in a second as there are seconds in an hour. And change of expression means change of light and change of shade, as all the world knows; and sometimes the change of shade comes from quick change of thought and feeling, while—"Sometimes," thought Doyle, "it's the other way round, and we fancy all sorts of things behind the scenes because eyes have a trick of changing: your fine windows mean an empty house nine times out of ten. But, all the same, that girl's face would be her fortune—on the stage. . . . You are Mr. Nelson's daughter?" asked he.

"Yes," said Phœbe, thinking over her garden-scene with Stanislas Adrianski.

"He has a large family, hasn't he?"

"Who?" she asked, almost with a start: for the question, coming upon the heel of her thoughts, sounded like charging Stanislas Adrianski with being the husband of that poor creature, Natalia. "Oh; you mean father. Yes, I suppose it is large. We have six boys, five at home," she added with a sigh.

He could not help thinking her voice also a part of her beauty, for he was now, having once fallen into that track, observing her from a theatrical point of view. Bohemia was bringing back its own thoughts to the archdeacon. The voice was rich and soft, and yet full of character, and with a vibration that spoke of healthy strength and the power of making even a whisper, if it pleased, clearly heard.

"And no girl, then? None but yourself, I mean?"

"No."

"But, surely, I should have thought you would have called yourselves sisters, you and——" He saw her puzzled look. "Do you mean to say that no girl lives here but you?"

"But me? No."

"Nor ever did?"

"Never. . . . I wish father would come home," thought she.

"It is strange. I hope your father is not likely to be long? . . . This is strange," he thought. "Basset, Urquhart, and now this fellow of an admiral. What can have become of the child? And where has my money gone? . . . I am interested in a girl of about your age. She would be now——"

A new light came into Phœbe's face. For weeks she had been dreaming the dream that the mystery of her birth and life were on the eve of being revealed. It was Stanislas Adrianski who had put it into her head, or at least had made the dream active, for it had always, more or less, been there. Her own mystery had always been a fancied sorrow, a real spring of pride. Everything had of late taken to happening. The foster-daughter of the grand Robespierre, the betrothed of a hero of romance, the adopted daughter of Destiny! What was left to happen next but the revelation of the life to which she had been born? There was nothing strange to her in the manner of its coming. Nothing strange could possibly seem strange to her—for that matter, nothing had ever, except poor Phil's offer, seemed strange.

She was about to speak, though without knowing what she was about to say, when yet again the summons of "Phœbe!" was heard from the front passage—this time in a high key that the archdeacon would have recognised as the admiral's had he heard it on the other side of the world. Phœbe ran out at once, and after a hurried word or two, led the admiral in.

"At last!" thought Doyle. "There, at last, is one thing that has not changed!"

He rose, but, till this mystery of the child should be cleared up, did not hold out his hand.

The archdeacon recognised the admiral at once, but it was clear that the admiral had not the faintest remembrance of the archdeacon. And that might well be, for a big beard and a heavy build are too common to swear to, and no man on earth had, in all essential things, within and without, changed more in all those years than Doyle.

The admiral stood in a hovering sort of attitude, and looked enquiringly.

"You are Mr. Horatio Collingwood Nelson?" asked Doyle.

"The same. I am."

But the voice seemed to rouse no memory of Gray's Inn Square.

"Then," thought Doyle, "I shall soon know where I am. I shall be able to ask questions without getting answers that I sha'n't know to be lies. . . . I have been asking for you at your office—Mark and Simple, Gray's Inn Square. They gave me your address, here. I am acting for a friend who is engaged in an enquiry that interests him profoundly. Can you give me five minutes of your time—alone?"

The admiral looked at the tea-table, and sighed. But then he looked at the candles in the bottles, and sighed more deeply still. He was thirsty for his tea, but five minutes' private conversation might prove something he could ill afford to lose.

"Leave us, Phœbe," said he.

She left the room, and did not think of listening at the keyhole. That is a thing that heroines of romance never do. Nor did she brave the fog and go into the garden. She could only go into the only room in the house that was fairly safe from invasion from the returned or returning boys—the room where Phil had used to sit up at night working—and wait in the dark, doing nothing, and thinking of too many things at once, and in too equal measure, for a girl who has just promised to be the wife of the man who, therefore, ought to be her whole world and her one thought—at any rate, for a little while.

"I am come, ad—Mr. Nelson, on behalf of a friend of mine (I needn't mention names) who has found reason to think that somebody in the office of Mark and Simple might know something about a child that was lost in Gray's Inn Gardens a good many years ago."

"Ah! H'm! Perhaps— But before we come to that, may I ask your name? Not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee—"

"My name? I'll give you a name if you like—say Smith—for you to call me by; but, I tell you honestly, it won't be the real one. Well? You do know something of the matter, I see. I'll tell you how much I know and my friend knows. A matter known to six men at least isn't much of a secret, as you may suppose. Sir Charles Bassett, of Lincolnshire; Mr. Urquhart, a barrister; Mr. Esdaile, a painter; Mr. Ronaine, a surgeon; and a Mr. Doyle, charged themselves with the child's maintenance, and left her with you and your wife to bring up and take care of according to your views. Is the child alive? I asked Miss Nelson just now, and she told me she had never heard of the child!"

"Eh? That is a curious thing, now—a very curious thing. You have been asking Phœbe? And you tell me that Phœbe had never heard of such a thing? Very well, sir. I am in a position—none better—to satisfy any lawful gentleman, or lady, who is interested in this concern. To tell you the naked truth, I've been expecting some such enquiries all along. But it is but fair I should see my way clear, for, though I hold a political position as high as any going, I don't hold it for lucre, and, in some respects, I'm what may be called a struggling man. You might hardly think it, but I have had the child entirely on my hands."

"What, with all that money paid for the child's maintenance? That is part of the history, mind. Do you mean to say that a man like Sir Charles Bassett—"

"Yes, sir, I do mean to say that a man like Sir Charles Bassett. He was like the child's grandfather at first—always turning up with toys and sugarplums. He brought her a wonderful thing that went by clock-work before she could walk, and Phil, one of my boys, took it all to pieces, and never could put it together again. It was about the time my poor late wife had a cousin staying with her to help her when my youngest boy was born—an uncommonly pretty girl. But that didn't last. After the third quarter, Mr. Bassett—I should say Sir Charles—went abroad, and there was an end of him. He forgot all about it, I suppose."

"I see. But the others—"

"Mr. Urquhart. He went on paying,

like that piece of clockwork, for years. But I expect one day his wife got hold of his cheque-book, or something; any way, there was a row or a rumpus of some sort; and one day Mr. Urquhart sent for me to his chambers, and told me that he'd done all he could, and really couldn't do any more. He gave me a half-sovereign—that was before he was known at the Bar—and I expect he hadn't a penny in his pocket but what the grey mare allowed. And that was an end of him."

"And—?"

"Mr. Esdaile! Oh, he tumbled off a scaffold and got killed, or something of that kind. And Mr. Ronaine—nobody knows what became of Mr. Ronaine. And Mr. Doyle—"

"Well?"

"Well, sir, between me and you and all the world— In fact, Mr. Doyle cut and run off to the West Indies, and there was an end of him. Yellow fever, I daresay."

Doyle, for a moment, felt a desire to take from his breast-pocket a pocket-book, and from the pocket-book the admiral's last receipt for the five pounds received from John Doyle just three months ago, and to confront the admiral with the evidence of his own lie. But he thought delay would teach him more, and only asked :

"Then why have you kept the girl?"

"Well, it is difficult to answer that question in a way that a man of common sense would understand. But sentiment, sir, is a very wonderful thing; else why would you, or any other lady or gentleman, be asking after a girl who has been lost from time whereof the memory of man, as we say, runneth not to the contrary? I have thought of things—advertising, and private detectives, and—but they're costly things; and sentiment is cheap, sir; it is just the cheapest article alive."

"Let me see the girl." He spoke sternly.

The admiral, with Phœbe's turn for fancy, was beginning to wonder whether his visitor might not turn out to be a peer in disguise. And why should he own that Phœbe's little fortune had been spent in trying to keep his own wolf from his own door, or commit himself to anything that might open up communications with the absent and forgotten Jack Doyle, and thus deprive him of this annuity, welcome, though small, for evermore? Phœbe had cost him nothing, for Phil, without saying a word to a soul about it, had continued to pay for her clothes, and she had saved

him the cost of a maid of all work ever since Mrs. Nelson had died.

He went to the door. "Phœbe!" he cried.

Phœbe smoothed her hair as well as she could by the light of a lucifer-match, and came slowly downstairs.

"This," said the admiral, "is Marion Eve Psyche Zenobia Dulcibella Jane Burden, called Phœbe because—well, because—because it is not her name."

TONGUE TAMING.

ST. JAMES says, "The tongue is a little member," and he adds in another place, "The tongue can no man tame." This experience of his must have been handed down from previous times, and it undoubtedly is confirmed by succeeding writers. But Man, ambitious Man, who essayed to build a Tower of Babel, who subjugated the beasts to his use, was not likely to sit down quietly, and accept scolding as inevitable, and an evil for which there was no remedy. It is not given to every man to possess the philosophical phlegm of Socrates, who, when Xantippe wound up one of her "little speeches" with a bucket of water over the poor patient, henpecked man, could calmly observe that "after thunder, rain generally fall;" and consequently poor puny man, who actually at one time considered himself the Lord of the Creation, essayed to battle with the evil, with what success let every man secretly ask himself.

St. James was right; "the tongue can no man tame."

In his time there was no vent for women's feelings; they had not arrived at that safety-valve, "Women's Rights," nor was the platform invented, from which they might hurl their withering but comparatively harmless sarcasms, which, scattered over a crowd, are more easily borne than when addressed, either in public or private, in an extremely pointed manner to one individual. It is probable that this outlet may relieve the bosoms of the more educated; but it is strongly suspected that, in other classes of womankind, the genus scold is not yet extinct, and the practical means for its suppression, which our ancestors used, being unavailing, it is to be feared that it will be perpetuated, and many a man will yet have to mourn, as the host did in *The Squire's Prologue*,

I have a wif, though that she poure be
But of hire tonge a labbing shewre is she.

Of woman's voice, what praises have not men written and poets sung, especially when they were young, and all the world looked bright before them!

Take Evelina, when she is being courted by Augustus; is not her voice

ever soft,
Gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman?

And perhaps, for some time after marriage, the new dress, or the box at the theatre, is obtained

With blandish'd parleys, feminine assaults,
Tongue batteries, she surceased not;

but somehow, in the course of time, Augustus feels that these "tongue batteries" have changed their tone; there is a feeble resistance, a weak striving for mastery, a desire for peace which will never come, and then he bows his combed crest to be pecked at, and the poor biped is lost. Nor is this the worst. Evelina, proud of her victory, burnishes and sharpens her weapons, and repeats the attack, glorying in her success—at more frequent intervals—until at last she becomes a shrew, a "mulier clamosa." Once things have arrived at this pass, the state of that man is sad indeed. Caudle recorded his woes, and even a "distinguished nobleman" confessed that "Meary had a timper," but these were exceptions. The poor man, as a rule, does not trumpet forth his troubles; he remembers

Le bruit est pour le fat,
La plainte est pour le sot,
L'honnête homme trompé
Se tait et ne dit mot.

Even

Wine, that makes cowards brave, the dying strong,
Is a poor cordial 'gainst a woman's tongue.

He has no resource but to bear his lot.

The term "shrew" is supposed to be derived from the German "schreien," to clamour, or cry out, and a full definition of the word in English is given in Shakespeare's play of "The Taming of the Shrew." But perhaps the most usual word to express this feminine error is a "scold," which (showing that even our remote forefathers were not exempt) comes from the Anglo-Saxon. Blackstone says, "A common scold, 'communis rixatrix'" (for our law Latin confines it to the feminine gender), "is a public nuisance to her neighbourhood;" and so they undoubtedly were if they were anything like the lady in a little poem published about a hundred years since, called *The Scold*, who thus describes herself:

* * * * *

The instant that I ope my eyes
Adieu all day to silence;
Before my neighbours they can rise,
They hear my tongue a mile hence;

When at the board I take my seat,
'Tis one continued riot;
I eat and scold, and scold and eat,
My clack is never quiet.

* * * * *

But when to bed I go at night,
I surely fall a weeping;
For then I lose my great delight,
How can I scold when sleeping?

But this my pain doth mitigate,
And soon disperses sorrow,
Altho' to-night it be too late
I'll pay it off to-morrow

This lady was probably of the same kind as that mentioned in one of the Roxburgh Ballads, "How the Devill though subtle, was guld by a scold." He, pitying her husband, took her away with him; but even he could not stand her behaviour, and brought her back again to earth to her husband, declaring he had no place down below for her, as she would upset all his arrangements.

Our forefathers were men of mettle; they grappled with this social evil, and they found a possible remedy handy in the Cucking Stool—which certainly had come to them from Saxon times, as it is mentioned in Domesday Book, although it seems then to have been used to punish offenders of a different description. In speaking of the city of Chester, it says: "Vir sive mulier falsam mensuram in civitate faciens deprehensus, iiii. solid. emendab. Similiter malam cervisiam faciens, aut in CATHEDRA ponebatur STERCORIS, aut iiii. solid. dab' prepotia." Here we see it was then used for the exposition of those giving false measures, or selling bad beer. But it was a convenient and harmless punishment. It involved no physical hardship, and was applied to a scold in a very simple manner. She was only placed in it (being, of course, duly fastened in) and exposed outside her house, or in some other place, for a given time, and so left to the gibes and insolent remarks of the crowd. This was the first and gentlest treatment of the disease. It gave no personal pain, as did the stocks, and rather shows the wish of our ancestors to begin with moral suasion; but finding still that "her clam'rous tongue strikes pity deaf," they invented the tumbrel, on which she was drawn round the town, seated on the chair. For instance, in the Common Hall accounts of the Borough of Leicester, 1467, it was ordered "that scolde be

punished by the mayor on a cuck-stool before their own door, and then carried to the four gates of the town." And this failing, the tumbrel was turned into the trebucket or movable ducking-stool, and this, in its time, yielded to the permanent ducking-stool, which, according to Gay, seems at all events to have had terrors for some:

I'll speed me to the pond where the high stool,
On the long plank, hangs o'er the muddy pool;
That stool, the dread of every scolding quean, etc.

Several old cucking-stools are yet in existence, and might, even if not used, be of great service as warnings to ladies of intense and impassioned verbosity. There is one at Leicester, and in the old town records before quoted we find some curious facts relating to these stools. One was made in 1548 at a cost of five shillings; but could not have been very strong, as in 1552 there is an entry, "Paid for mending of the cuckstole tow tymes, viijd." In 1558 and 1563 it was repaired at a cost each time of one shilling and fourpence. In 1566 it required much mending. In 1578 a new one was made at a cost of fourteen shillings, and another in 1646 cost sixteen shillings and sixpence, and the last one seems to have been in 1768-69: "Paid Mr. Elliott for a cuckstool by order of Hall, two pounds." There is another chair at Wootton Bassett, which bears the date of 1686, which was also used on wheels, backed into the pond, and tipped up. There is one in the museum at Scarborough, in which the patient is fastened by an iron pin fastened through the arms, after the manner of a baby's chair. At Neath there used to be one; but the scold had to be found guilty by six men before she could be punished. There was a fine one at Sandwich previous to 1792, on which were a man and woman calling each other names; whilst on the cross-bar were the words:

Of members ye tonge is worst or best,
An yll tonge ofte doethe breeds unreste.

Of the movable stools, or tumbrels, which were sometimes used for ducking, there is a very fine example at Leominster; it is a low platform on four wheels, having at one end two upright posts, through the top of which goes a pin, which pierces a long horizontal bar, having a chair at one end and a rope at the other. This seems to have been last used for the purposes of ducking in 1809, when a somewhat notorious character, one Jenny Piper, was ducked. It was brought out again in

1817, in order to punish Sarah Leeke, but she escaped, the water being too low.

The wheels of a tumbrel were, a few years since, and may probably now be, preserved in the crypt of the Church of St. Mary, at Warwick.

A tumbrel was formerly kept at Gravesend, and many are the records of its use. At Devizes, at Lyme Regis—where the cucking-stool was kept in the church porch, and the corporation was presented for not keeping it in proper repair—and at Kingston-on-Thames, where, on 14th October, 1738, an old incorrigible was duly ducked, and, "on her return from the waterside, she fell upon one of her acquaintance, without provocation, with tongue, tooth and nail, and would, had not the officers interposed, have deserved a second punishment, even before she was dry from the first." The last time this was used was in 1780, but the stool was long afterwards kept ready for use in the old town barn, now pulled down.

One would have thought that this public shame would have acted as a deterrent to the exercise of injudicious volubility, but perhaps it may be accounted for, as the poet says:

All women dread a watery death,
They shut their lips to hold their breath,
And though you duck them ne'er so long,
Not one salt drop e'er wets their tongue;
'Tis hence they scandal have at will,
And that this member ne'er lies still.

But the institution was losing its temporary character, and was becoming permanent, and fixed engines were erected, showing the prevalence of the fault, and the determination of the sterner sex to put it down.

One of these ducking-stools is described by M. Misson, in his *Travels in England*, in 1719: "La manière de punir les femmes querelleuses et débauchées est assez plaisante en Angleterre. On attache une chaise à bras, à l'extrémité de deux espèces de solives, longues de douze ou quinze pieds, et dans un éloignement parallèle, en sorte que ces deux pièces de bois embrassent, par leur deux bouts voisins, la chaise qui est entre eux, et qui est attachée par le côté comme avec un essieu, de telle manière, qu'elle a du jeu, et qu'elle demeure toujours dans l'état naturel et horizontal, auquel une chaise doit être, afin qu'on puisse s'asseoir un pôteau sur le bord d'un étang ou d'un rivière, et sur ce pôteau on pose, presque en équilibre, la double pièce de bois, à une des extrémités de laquelle la chaise se trouve adessus de l'eau. On

met la femme dans cette chaise, et on la plonge ainsi autant de fois qu'il a été ordonné, pour rafraîchir un peu sa chaleur immodérée." And in a little poem, published in 1780, we read :

There stands my friend, in yonder pool,
An engine call'd a ducking-stool;
By legal pow'r commanded down,
The joy and terror of the town.
If jarring females kindle strife,
Give language foul, or lug the coif :
If noisy dames should once begin
To drive the house with horrid din,
"Away," you cry, "you'll grace the stool.
We'll teach you how your tongue to rule."

The fair offender fills the seat
In sullen pomp, profoundly great.
Down in the deep the stool descends,
But here at first we miss our ends.
She mounts again, and rages more
Than ever vixen did before.
So throwing water on the fire
Will make it but burn up the higher.
If so, my friend, pray let her take
A second turn into the lake ;
And, rather than your patience lose,
Thrice and again repeat the dose.
No brawling wives, no furious wenches,
No fire so hot but water quenches.

The ducking-stool proper was a permanent affair, and was erected by the side of some river or pond. They were numerous, but not so numerous as the stocks, which were in almost every village. There was one at Newbury, where, according to the Quarter Sessions Book, on 27th January, 1673, "Margaret Adams, widow, hath appeared and pleadeth Not Guilty to her indictment for a common scold, and put herself on the jury, who, being sworn, say she is guilty of the indictment against her. Resolved—That she is to be ducked in the cucking-stool, according as the mayor shall think the time fitting."

At Broadwater, near Worthing, was one, till lately, where a post was driven into the river, and a long beam of wood, at one end of which was the stool, was attached to it by a swivel in its centre, so that the culprit was put in on dry land and then swung over the river, the other end serving as a lever to raise and depress the stool. There was one at Rugby, which was last used, about sixty years since, to duck a man who had beaten his wife. Fordwich possessed one. So did Coventry, where it was used on "scolds, brawlers, disturbers, and disquieters of their neighbors." There was one at Marlborough; another at Honiton, where old women were ducked for witches; and another at Stoke Abbot.

At Nottingham there was a sad tragedy attending a ducking in 1731, for the mayor having ordered a woman to be ducked,

she was so ill-treated that she died. The mayor was prosecuted for it, and the ducking-stool removed. At Scarborough, one, which used to stand on the old pier, is still preserved in the museum.

Beauminster, Ipswich, Cambridge, Canterbury, Banbury, Shrewsbury, Edgware, Stafford, Salisbury, and other places had them; indeed, the cause for their use seems to have been only too prevalent. As Poor Robin said :

Now, if one cucking-stool was for each scold,
Some towns, I fear, would not their numbers
hold ;
But should all women patient Grizels be,
Small use for cucking-stools they'd have, I see.

There was also one in the reservoir in the Green Park, now filled up. But, perhaps, Liverpool was the last town to use it habitually—certainly as lately as 1799. Mr. Neild, the philanthropist, alludes to it in a letter in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, December, 1803 : "The House of Correction, built in 1776, is much improved since my former visit. The wanton severity of the ducking-stool, used upon a woman's first admission, is now discontinued."

So that we find it was in use—and, presumably, found of use—from the latter part of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth, or over three hundred years, a time long enough to give the institution a fair trial, and yet to prove it a failure, as far as tongue-taming went. Before quitting the subject of the ducking-stool, we may recall those lines in *Hudibras* :

There is a lesser profanation,
Like that the Romans called Ovation.
For, as ovation was allow'd
For conquests purchas'd without blood,
So men decree those lesser shows
For vict'ry gotten without blows,
By dint of sharp hard words, which some
Give battle with, and overcome ;
These, mounted in a chair curule,
Which moderns call a cucking-stool,
March proudly to the river's side
And o'er the waves in triumph ride,
Like Dukes of Venice, who are sed
The Adriatic Sea to wed,
And have a gentler wife than those
For whom the State decrees those shows.

But the ducking-stool was not the only remedy tried to tame a scold's tongue.

At Carrickfergus they tried another plan, as this extract from the town records will show :

"October, 1574.—Ordered and agreeed by the hole Court, that all manners of Skoldes which shal be openly detected of Skolding, or eville wordes in manner of Skolding, and for the same shal be con-

demned before Mr. Maior and his brethren, shal be drawne at the sterne of a boate in the water from the ende of the Pearle round about the Queene's Majestie's Castell in manner of ducking, and after when a Cage shal be made, the party so condemned for a Skold shal be therein punished at the discretion of the maior."

And a cage was made, and women were so punished, and a regular list kept of scolds.

These cages, however, seem to have been rare, but there were two, one each at East and West Looe, and another at Penzance.

Sometimes scolds were treated differently, as the Quarter Sessions for the Liberty of Westminster testify: "July 8, 1732. Mary Millicent was indicted for being a common scold, pleaded Guilty to her indictment, and submitted to the mercy of the court, who, in consideration of her having been in prison ten weeks already, fined her only one shilling, and ordered her to be discharged."

A very curious punishment obtained at Sandwich, and in the Mayoralty of Robert Michell, 1637, "A woman carries the wooden mortar throughout the town, hanging on the handle of an old broom upon her shoulder, one going before her tinkling a small bell, for abusing Mrs. Mayoress, and saying she cared not a — for her." Boys, in his History of Sandwich, 1792, says: "In the second story (of the Guildhall) the armour, offensive and defensive, of the trained-bands, and likewise the cucking-stool and wooden mortar for punishment of scolds, were preserved till lately, but they are now dispers'd;" but he gives engravings of both, and the wooden mortar certainly is a curiosity.

In the Historical Description of the Tower of London, 1774, is the following: "Among the curiosities of the Tower is a collar of torment, which, say your conductors, used formerly to be put about the women's necks that scolded their husbands when they came home late; but that custom is left off nowadays, to prevent quarrelling for collars, there not being smiths enough to make them, as most married men are sure to want them at one time or other."

But our ancestors were beginning to find out that

A smoky house and a scolding wife
Are two of the greatest plagues in life.
The first may be cured, t'other ne'er can,
For 'tis past the power of mortal man.

And yet they did not despair. Men's wits were set to work, and a triumph of inge-

nuity was produced — the brank, the scolds' or gossips' bridle, which had the immense advantage over the cucking or ducking stools, of compelling the victim to be silent, a punishment almost fiendish in its conception. Its inventor is unknown, but he probably hailed from the "North Countree," as "branks" is a northern name for a kind of bridle. It never seems to have been a legal punishment, as the ducking-stool was; but, nevertheless, it obtained, and there are many examples in existence. It was, in its simplest form, described by Waldron in his Description of the Isle of Man: "I know nothing in the many statutes or punishments in particular but this, which is, that if any person be convicted of uttering a scandalous report, and cannot make good the assertion, instead of being fined or imprisoned, they are sentenced to stand in the market-place on a sort of scaffold erected for that purpose, with their tongue in a noose made of leather, which they call a bridle, and having been exposed to the view of the people for some time, on the taking off this machine, they are obliged to say three times, 'Tongue, thou hast lyed.'" It was commonly made as a sort of cage of hoop-iron going over and fitting fairly to the head, with a flat piece projecting inwards, which was put in the mouth, thus preventing the tongue from moving. It was then padlocked, and the scold was either chained up or led through the town.

The earliest dated brank is preserved at Walton-on-Thames, and bears the date 1633, with the inscription:

Chester presents Walton with a bridle,
To curb women's tongues that talk to idle.

Brayley, in his History of Surrey, says that it was given by a gentleman named Chester, who lost a valuable estate through a gossiping lying woman; but, as there are several examples of branks in the Palatinate, one being still kept in the gaol at Chester, some people think it was a present from that city. There is one at Leicester, and another at Newcastle-on-Tyne, which used to hang in the mayor's chamber, and tradition has it that many cases of disputes between women have been speedily and satisfactorily settled on his worship pointing to these branks.

There is one in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, which is very tender as far as the gag is concerned, but which has the leading-chain fastened between the eyes. Hainstall, Ridware, Lichfield, Morpeth, Shrewsbury, Holme, Kendal, Altrincham,

Macclesfield, Congleton (where it was last used in 1824), all have examples, whilst Chester has four! There are several in Scotland; and there are some in private hands, notably that in Mr. Mayer's museum, which came from Warrington, where, however, the brank formerly used at Carrington is preserved, and there are several places, Newcastle-under-Lyme (now in Mr. Mayer's museum), Manchester, and others, where they have existed. There is a very grotesque one at Doddington Park, in Lincolnshire, which is a mask, having eye-holes and a long fannel-shaped peak projecting from the mouth; and there were some terribly cruel ones, with fearful gags; but these can scarcely come under scolds' or gossips' bridles. There was one at Forfar, with a spiked gag, which pierced the tongue, and an even more severe one is at Stockport; whilst those at Ludlow and Worcester are also instruments of torture.

We have seen men strive and fail to cure scolds, and we know the race is not extinct. But may not custom have robbed the punishment of its terrors? And might it not now, if revived, have a beneficial effect? This is a question worth discussing. As for branks, scientifically made, and soothingly applied, no home should be without them, if only as a precautionary measure. No one can tell the amount of domestic unhappiness that might be avoided by a gentle pointing to the branks à la Mayor of Newcastle, or, if the ducking-stool were again introduced, by a quiet remark as to the probable temperature of the water, and the inconveniences of getting wet.

BRAMBLE.

THE corn is reaped, the bare brown land
Is sleeping in the sunshine bland

Of late September time;
Now after harvest toil and mirth
In restful calmness lies the earth,
Like good lives past their prime.

Red tints of autumn touch the trees
That rustle in the freshening breeze,
And wave their branches strong;
From hillside meadows, loud and clear,
Comes, clarionlike, a note of cheer,
The thrush's thrilling song.

The busy wild bee fitteth by,
Where honeysuckle waves on high,
And late clematis grows;
A fair brown butterfly floats round
A bramble branch that on the ground
Its dainty tangle throws.

The lowly bramble, taking root
In common hedgerows, bearing fruit
For common hands to pull;
A boon to travellers on the road,
It shows its gracious purple load
With blossoms beautiful.

White flowers like pearly-tinted snow,
Fair foliage red with autumn's glow,
Ripe fruit—on one fair spray;
Ah me! my heart, what beauty lives
In lowliest things that Nature gives
To blossom on our way.

Ah me! my heart, what beauty shows
In lowly lives that to their close
Bloom sweetly out of sight;
Meek hearts that seek not worldly praise,
That find in life's secluded ways
Dear love and deep delight.

Fair lives that have a humble root,
Sweet lives that bear a gracious fruit,
Yet keep their springtime flowers
Upon the bough where fruit hangs ripe,
And where the fading leaf is type
Of life's decaying hours.

We meet them in our daily path
These humble souls, and each one hath
A beauty of its own;
A beauty born of duty done,
Of silent victories dumbly won,
Of sorrow borne alone.

And when the frosts of death fall chill
On these fair lives, that blossom still
Though summer time is past,
We, sighing, wish for quiet ways,
Wherein, like theirs, our shortening days
Might blossom to the last!

MRS. PENNY'S LITTLE MISTAKES. A STORY.

JUST on the brow of a gently sloping hill, commanding a rich and varied view, on one side of a road cut into the solid hill, stood Elmholt Church. Crowning the opposite bank was an ivy-clad, grey, stone wall, behind which two solemn, alumbrous yews kept sleepy watch on their theological brothers in the churchyard; and, behind the yews, also solidly built of the grey stone of the district, and keeping homely state with its mullioned windows, was Elmholt House, the residence of no less a personage than Mrs. Penny, who now sits with a sort of blue woollen antimacassar over her plentiful frowsy iron-grey ringlets, deeply immersed in a political pamphlet. The room is barely and somewhat incongruously furnished. An old-fashioned grand piano, of which the legs and rather rich carvings had at one time been gilt, occupies one corner of the room; in another stands a harp, whose better days belonged to the years when George the Third was king; and other articles of furniture bear the same impress of faded gentility. Mixed with these are homely, uncushioned Windsor chairs; a plain deal table, scantily covered by a threadbare common cloth; and other furniture not quite too far gone to be rejected from the kitchen of a house where the exchequer is very limited.

Mrs. Penny's studies were interrupted by a loud but not unkindly voice outside.

"Put it down, I tell 'ee. I won't ha'e thee do it."

With a snort, Mrs. Penny tossed down her politics and strode out with masculine tread.

"Let the boy alone, Penny," said she. "I won't have you interfere with him."

"I tell 'ee," said Mr. Penny, for it was he, "he shan't fling stones at the jenny-wrens. They be Godamoighty's birds."

Mr. Penny was a hale-looking old man, rather florid, with wiry-grey beard and moustache, and somewhat bowed in figure. He wore gaiters, corduroy breeches, and a drab coat with brass buttons, which looked as though it had formed part of some discarded livery.

The boy who was the subject of the threatened altercation stood irresolute, with the stone in his hand, and his eye on the bush where the jenny-wren had disappeared. Just in the nick of time a black-bird started out, and, that the stone might not be wasted, he hurled it at the golden-billed lover of cherries, and then ran off laughing.

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Penny. "Dang the blackbuds. Hull at they if thee likes."

Mrs. Penny pushed her blue antimacassar a little more on one side, hitched up her dress in nautical fashion, and retired to pursue the interrupted consideration of woman's rights.

She was a lady of good birth, respectable education, and fairly well endowed with those "good gifts" of which Sir Hugh Evans had so high an appreciation. She had been left an orphan before she was out of her teens, and having always very strong opinions as to woman's ability to do anything that men could do—and do it better, too—with a marked partiality for a country life and for independence, it was not long after she became her own mistress that she took into her own hands the farm on which Elmholt House stood, and began to manage it on strictly original principles, although she condescended to dip into Virgil and Columella for a hint sometimes.

The neighbours occasionally made merry at her expense when she committed a more egregious mistake than usual, but she bore such jests as reached her ear with imperturbable good-humour, for, without having any of his morbid sensitiveness, she rivalled poor Haydon in a sublime contempt for criticism.

There was an element of practicality in

her nature, however, which led her at times to contemplate the necessity of considering her ways.

Penny occupied the nominal position of steward on the farm, but Miss Gurteen was too much an autocrat to admit of this position being more than nominal. His advice she by no means felt bound to follow, though she did not prohibit it. He had, on one occasion, urged the necessity of having more sheep on the farm, and as this suggestion seemed to her reasonable, she purchased a small but beautiful flock on what she thought to be favourable terms.

"Well, Penny, what do you think of the sheep?" she asked, after he had returned from inspecting them.

Penny, whose face was unusually red and rigid in the lines of it, opened his lips to reply, and a loud laugh, which he had been at much pains to suppress, took the opportunity to escape.

"Have you lost your senses, man," said Miss Gurteen angrily, "that you behave in that way before me?"

"I beg pardon, miss," he said, recovering his gravity with an effort that nearly choked him, "I couldn' help it."

"Penny, you're a great baby," said his mistress; "that's what you are. And now about the sheep——"

"Why, lor' bless you, miss——"

He stopped suddenly, grew purple in the face, resolutely compressed his mouth, turned his head, and burst into an uncontrollable roar of laughter.

Miss Gurteen looked on with amazement. When the paroxysm was over, she said severely:

"Penny, you've been taking too much cider."

"I haven' had a drop o' zider sin'—ever so long," said he, substituting an indefinite phrase, as it flashed upon him that he had just refreshed himself with a cup in the kitchen. "But they sheep—they be all rams!"

Some time after this, Miss Gurteen, who had been meditating much, said:

"Penny, I've been thinking about those sheep. I shall always be making mistakes."

"Like enough, miss," said he, with all the gravity he could command.

"I can only see one way to keep clear of them," she went on. "I shall have to marry you."

Penny grinned from ear to ear.

"Oh man," she said petulantly, "don't

grin like that. It makes me sick. What do you say to it?"

"Well, miss," said he, "if you be willin' I be."

And with that brief wooing Miss Gurteen became Mrs. Penny. The relations between the pair were scarcely altered. She remains autocrat still, and he, good easy man, was still steward, with but little increased responsibility. He was placid and obedient, and their life was happy enough. In the course of time a son and heir was born—the young malignant whom we found casting stones at the jenny-wrens, then about fourteen years of age, a plump, well-grown, affectionate boy.

Mrs. Penny had from his birth destined him for the church, the living of Elmholt being in her gift, and the lad, with a placidity which would have done no discredit to his father, acquiesced in the destiny. Not that he felt any special vocation for that sacred office, of which he would even (the young scapegrace!) with considerable humour make fun when he made his way into the kitchen, and extemporised a pulpit with a couple of chairs, and a surplice with a tablecloth, to the infinite merriment of the servants.

This proclivity of the boy for finding companionship in the kitchen was Mrs. Penny's greatest trouble. She had been at infinite pains to make him understand that he was a gentleman, and must avoid "low company," such as that afforded by the servants and — his father. That "Penny" should prefer to sit in the kitchen, smoking his pipe and chatting with the labourers after his day's work, was natural and right; he belonged to "that class of people;" but her son was expected to keep state with her in the parlour, or in a dignified promenade up and down the filbert-walk. 'Gus opposed to this arrangement a passive resistance. When caught and marched off with Mrs. Penny's hand in his collar, he made no complaint, took his book or his pencil, listened to his lecture, and rendered obedience so long as the maternal eye was on him; but the moment he was released from that stern gaze, he slipped back with unimpaired cheerfulness, and with as much perseverance as a moth pursues its own shadow on the ceiling, evidently regarding the parlour existence as merely parenthetical.

"He will grow out of it," said Mrs. Penny, when she cautioned her steward not to encourage him in the practice.

But he did not grow out of it. Even after his experiences at a genteel boarding-school, he would come back to shudder away from the dull decorum of the gentlefolks' quarter of his home to the cosiness, warmth, freedom, and fun of the common folks. Gradually, too, there grew up in his mind a painful sense of his father's position. It did not come to him early, for from his babyhood his father had been always a quiet, good-humoured cipher, and the perception of strangeness in conditions rendered so familiar to us comes slowly and comes late. In him it came surely, and while he grew more studiously polite with his mother, he grew more and more affectionate with his father. He loved to walk round the fields with him, pick up from him scraps of natural history and folk-lore, listen to his broad but innocent jokes, his kindly gossip of village affairs.

"College will knock all that out of him," said Mrs. Penny when she was, with something of reticent pride, giving a hint of her trouble to the rector; but college did nothing of the kind.

'Gus passed through his university career respectably, though without attaining any distinction; but he came back to Elmholt with a fixed determination, which he was quite prepared to maintain, that he would not be a parson.

"Eh lad," said his father to him once, soon after he left college, "I ain't fit company for the likes o' thee. You go and talk to your mother."

"Ah, you sly old gentleman," answered 'Gus, taking his arm as he did so. "What mischief are you thinking of that you want to be quit of me? I have just had a very long talk with mother, and now I am coming to have a long talk with you."

The old gentleman was inwardly delighted. He was immensely proud of this tall, fine, handsome, happy son, such a fine scholar and such a fine gentleman, and yet so companionable.

His pride notwithstanding, the old man said:

"Eh lad, th'our't pleasant to me as harvest to a hay-suck" (a hedge-sparrow); "but don't 'ee go for to vex your mother. Her'll be like a dry drock" (water course) "wi' outen thee yet."

"What a self-willed old boy it is," said 'Gus, smiling. "No; I am coming with you, and with nobody else, for I have something very particular to say to you."

"Well, lad, well. It makes bright day to me to have thee; but thee mustn't vex thee mother."

"That's just what I'm afraid I shall have to do," replied 'Gus gravely, "and that is what I wanted to tell you. You know mother has always intended me to be rector of Elmholt!"

"Yes, zartin."

"Well, I never shall be. I am not going into the church."

The old man stopped abruptly, and looked with awe-struck dismay in his son's face, as he ejaculated, "Scissors!" There was a whole world of wonderment and horror in the exclamation.

"No," said the young man, "I cannot do it. I have never thought seriously about the matter till quite lately, but, as the time came near when I should have to take orders, I was obliged to look it in the face, and I am sure I am not fitted for such a position. I could not take up that work as a trade, or a mere profession. I don't feel called upon to censure those who do; but such a course would be utterly hateful to me. I could never respect myself, nor could I look for respect from others. I shall be very sorry to vex mother. If it were a matter of inclination only, knowing how her heart is set on it, I think—but one never knows—I think I should have given way and said nothing about my feelings; but, as a clergyman, I should be a conscious humbug and a hypocrite, and I won't be that for anybody. I wouldn't try to be it even for you."

"What you say is right good, lad," said the old man with unwonted decision. "It's crubbin" (food) "to me to hear thee say it. I didn't think thee had so much grit in thee. But it'll vex your mother more'n anything sin I've known she. Her'll be wild about it. Don't thee tell it right out, but break it to she bit by bit like."

The conversation was earnest and prolonged, but it travelled, as is the wont of familiar talk, very much in a circle, and did not go beyond what has been indicated, though father and son varied the form of expression from time to time.

Meanwhile Mrs. Penny had been engaged in a most interesting tête-à-tête. An old schoolfellow of hers—now a widow in comfortable circumstances, with a married son and two unmarried daughters—had made a call at Elmholt Farm, and Mrs. Penny, who had lately meditated much on her son's settlement in life, with characteristic frankness and directness had proposed a match between him and Mrs.

Burrowes's daughter. The proposal met with a gracious reception, for 'Gus was a decidedly eligible young man. The living of Elmholt was more than comfortable, and Mrs. Penny, though not stingy, was frugal, and had always lived below her income; so that he would inherit from her no inconsiderable property. He was a healthy, good-looking, almost handsome young fellow, frank and modest, high-spirited, and without a particle of vice. Any mother might be well pleased to find such a son-in-law, and Mrs. Burrowes, who could almost answer for her daughter, saw no obstacle in the way of the match, unless it lay in the young man's inclinations.

"As to that," said Mrs. Penny, "we are quite safe. Augustus" (she never condescended to the abbreviation) "has really seen no one, and he has no foolish romantic notions. A more charming girl than Marion I know he could not find, and I know we have only to bring the young folks together, as you and I will manage it, to have everything settled happily—and soon."

Mrs. Penny and Mrs. Burrowes went to work with gusto, and when Farmer Penny and his son returned from their walk they were still at it.

But there was an obstacle to the fulfilment of the scheme even more serious than the anti-clerical determination of the young man; and of this even Farmer Penny knew nothing.

There had lately come to the farm, as a sort of upper servant, a niece of the good farmer, a bright-eyed, neat-handed, and really bewitching young woman. If Mrs. Penny had made a love-match with her steward, she might have suspected mischief here. But hers had been merely a matter of convenience of the most prosaic kind, and the possibility of 'Gus falling in love with his father's niece Alice had never flashed upon her, even as a remote contingency. Nor, in truth, had it upon the honest old farmer, though, living much in the kitchen regions, he had seen them together far more often than the autocrat had done, and had listened to, and laughed at, their bright wit-combats which she had never heard.

And the dénouement was destined to come upon them all very suddenly, for 'Gus, rightly arguing that his mother would never give her consent to such a match, and that his father, from whom certainly he anticipated neither opposition nor disapproval, would unquestionably be severely handled if he

were made privy to the scheme, kept his own counsel till he should be able to say, "We are one till death do us part: what use are reproaches!"

So just before little Alice took her holiday to visit her friends at Thornbury, 'Gus elected to spend a week or two with an old college friend at Bristol, and one morning a quiet little wedding-party stepped into the quiet little old-fashioned church of St. John the Baptist, and Augustus Penny, of Elmholt, and Alice Covington, of Thornbury, glowing with radiant happiness, stepped out of it man and wife.

On his way to church, 'Gus had posted a long letter to his mother, explaining his invincible repugnance to the career she had destined for him; his determination to be a farmer, the rare qualities of the wife he had chosen, and her eminent fitness to adorn that sphere of life; his warm affection for his mother and father; and the hope which he and Alice indulged that it would be their happiness to minister to the comfort of both in their declining years. It was a good, honest, sensible letter, but it made Mrs. Penny furious.

She tore her hair, stamped, screamed, flung herself on the floor, went into violent hysterics, and then lay for half the day on the sofa, sobbing and moaning. Utterly unreasonable it was, as everyone must see; but not unnatural. The cherished purpose of five-and-twenty years had been, just as it seemed on the eve of accomplishment, irrevocably dashed into ruins, and the poor lady's desolation of soul was complete. Her boy, her hope, her one love, passionately loved under that queer, eccentric, autocratic, half-comic exterior, was dead to her, and the cloud which had taken him away blotted out all the brightness of life. Presently, like David of old, she arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed herself, and changed her apparel, and caused bread to be set before her, and she did eat. There was nothing now to weep for, to toil for, to joy for any longer.

When her husband approached her, somewhat awestruck, with homely words of comfort, she repelled him with fierce scorn, and imperatively forbade all reference to the subject in the household. No stranger had intermeddled with her joy; her bitterness was all her own. She went about her household and farm affairs as usual, but more silently, with pale face, compressed lips, and a fierce fire in the clear grey eyes of hers.

Then, upon a day, the old gates swung back, and she saw the young man coming up to the house with his bride, whose face was rather pale and anxious, on his arm. She went out and stood on the top step of the doorway to receive them, her tall form drawn to its full height, her grey hair blown hither and thither by the wind, and her face burning as with white heat.

"Mother," said Gus, as he stretched out his arms to her.

"No mother of yours, ungrateful boy!" shrieked she. "All that is past and buried. You have scorned my love; you have trampled on my heart. And now go and take your beggar-bride, and work out your own low tastes, and ditch, and delve, and starve! Never more shall you enter these doors; you are no child of mine!"

"Nay; but, mother," he exclaimed, aghast at her angry vehemence, "hear me."

"It is too late; I will never listen to your voice again. It has no music for me now; nor will have till I die. You have made me of less than no account, and I blot you like an evil dream from my memory."

As she spoke she struck the door-post with such force that the blood trickled from the bruised and wounded hand, but, without heeding it, she went on:

"The sight of you burns and scerches me. What was love is in me as is raging fire. If I could have coined my heart for you, to give you joy, I would have done it; and you have made of my love only the plaything of an idle hour, to be cast aside for the first light fancy that crossed it. And now go your own way. Go with my—no, I will not curse you! but go without my blessing, and never look upon my face again."

"Wait a minute, Amelia," said the slow sonorous voice of old Penny, who had stood silent, with bowed head, during this fierce outburst. His head was erect now, and 'Gus, as he looked at him, could but think he had never seen his father so much a man before.

"Penny, how dare you!" exclaimed his wife, almost breathless with amazement. It was unprecedented for him to address her by her christian-name.

"We dare do much," said the old man, "as we niver thought we could ha' done till the time for it come. I know, Amelia, you have allus tuk me for a quiet, good-natured fool; and so I am most ways, most ways; but I ain't sich a fool as not

to know that this house, and this farm, and all the rest of it, is mine. Yes, mine; every rood and every shillin' of it. You didn' have no settlements when we married, an' it all became mine. I didn' want it, and I didn' care about it; and I shouldn' never ha' said nuthin' about it 's long as all had gone quiet. But I won't see the boy wronged. The house is mine, and 's long as it's mine he's welcome to it, and all that's in it; hearty, yes, hearty."

It was another of Mrs. Penny's little mistakes. In her scornful repudiation of any interference in her affairs she had married without consulting any friends, and without taking any precautions to secure to herself the control of her property; and so quiet and submissive had her husband been, that no suspicion of her position had flashed upon her till now, when indeed she realised it in its full force. She stood as one thunderstruck, but taking in everything with such helpless acquiescence as that with which we regard the wonders of a dream.

The old man approached his son, shook him by the hand warmly, and kissed his niece, whose eyes, dry till now, answered his kindness with responsive dew.

"Your mother," said he, "is tossicated" (perplexed) "like with disappointment and the vexation of it. Thee'd better not worry her now. It 'ud be better, mayhap, if you'd go away for a week; then you come back, and all 'ull be right; her'll have time to turn round. Go round to the kitchen, and I'll come and talk to you in a mimit."

"Now, Amelia, come," he went on, when he had led her into the parlour. "We both on us loves the boy, and you'd be bitter sorry if he was to take you at your word and go away. Aye, an' he loves us too, though he has chosen a wife for himself, as a man should do. And she's a right good gell, never you doubt that; she'll make him a good wife, and he'll be a happier man and a better man than if you and I had had the shapin' o' his life for 'un. He's all we'n got, and we mus'n let 'un go."

We are strange creatures, and our lives and characters are full of contradictions. The quiet tone of authority, which any time during the previous quarter of a century she would have resented strenuously, was now grateful to her feelings, and she allowed herself to rest, with a sense of comfort and security, on the practical common sense and right feeling of the

husband she had systematically underrated. "Leave me alone, Penny," she said, "for half an hour. My head is in a whirl now, and I want to be alone. Tell Jane to bring me a cup of tea, and come back in half an hour. Don't let the boy go till you've seen me again."

When the allotted time had expired Penny went back again, and found her looking ten years younger, her hair brushed and smoothed, an old-fashioned but exquisitely beautiful lace cap on her head, and a box of trinkets and whim-whams by her side.

"Penny," she said at once, "I have been an old fool, and blind to more things than one. I don't say that if what has been done could be undone I wouldn't undo it; but I can't, and I will make the best of it. Tell the boy he needn't go away for a week. I am not tossicated now. And tell him, too, that if I never give him occasion to remember that mad scene outside—as, so help me Heaven, I never will!—I hope that he will never recall it. See here," she added with a laugh, emptying the box of trinkets on the table, "I have never worn these things since I was a girl, but Alice will look gay in them."

Two years and a half later, the old folks sat by a blazing winter fire, and a chubby boy was fondling a shaggy dog on the hearthrug at their feet. The old lady stooped down and smoothed the flaxen ringlets of the child.

"James," she said, "do you mind my telling you once that if I could I would undo what 'Gus had done? I do not wish it undone now."

IN THE SUNNY RHINELAND.

X

WE have been over this ground before, this pretty wooded valley leading down from cool breezy Schlangenbad to the broad sunny Rhine, but somehow it seems different going the other way. For one thing, that quiet little village, Neudorf, where we saw the tinker, going up, is now in the throes of preparation for its annual fair. Every nook and corner is choked up with vans. We draw up close to one of these vehicles, with horses' heads in wood peering out of the windows, so natural that one of our passengers conjectures it to be a circus.

The children are running about and shouting in high glee, and what with the

hammering of booths and the clatter of unloading the vans, and the cries of the vendors of sweetstuff, who have already set up their stalls, there is a pretty hubbub and noise in the village.

Out of the hurlyburly springs a tall gaunt pastor, who introduces to the quiet company in the diligence some of the noise and confusion of outside. For he has forgotten half-a-dozen things, and shouts and gesticulates, while half-a-dozen small boys are scampering after the missing articles—his spectacles, a hymn-book, his snuff-box, and other unconsidered trifles. Is he a pastor, after all, or a priest? the everyday dress of the two is much the same. But the hat decides the question in favour of Martin Luther. It is a shocking bad hat, and weathered to a sort of olive green, and numerous contusions in all parts suggest the crowded hat-rail of the parsonage, whence the children knock off their hats and caps with sticks, and, as often as not, bring down the pastoral beaver at the same time. Now your Romish priest always has a decent hat; it may be old, but it is well preserved.

Something out of line must be going on in the ecclesiastical world, for when we arrive at Eltville, and draw up at the station, there is quite a knot of pastors who come up to greet their confrère. They are very merry, it must be said, cackling and often screaming with laughter as they stand on the platform waiting for the train. They are very jocose too with a priest, who returns their badinage, and who is much quieter and more restrained. And then the train comes lumbering up.

About these German railways, although they don't pen you up like the French, nor levy backsheesh on your baggage as the English, yet there is a general indifference as to the fate of passengers. You may scramble up into their great high-stepping carriages as you please, only if you happen, as is most likely, to get hold of a carriage occupied by some top-sawyer among the pickelhaubes, who shows his fat expressionless face at the window—expressionless except of astonishment at your presumption—then there is a rush of officials if you like, to show you where you are not to go. Well, we are abundantly satisfied to avoid the Herr General, and fall, or rather climb, into the same carriage as the priest, who has given, by-the-way, a wide berth to the pastors. He speaks excellent French, and so we are all at our ease, and, of course, he is very polite to Madame

Reimer, whom he soon discovers to be of the right faith.

It is quite charming, after all, to be alongside the Rhine once more, to see it brightly shining among the trees, or broadly spread out in a long reach before us, dotted with sails, and with the busy ubiquitous steamers—even the "Bo-o-o" of one of our Netherland friends has a pleasant familiar sound—in the distance. But we soon leave the river, and plunge into a pleasant fertile country, with stations planted among vineyards, and level crossings where a horn hangs upon the gate, as if that any wandering knight who dares may blow that horn, and challenge the locomotive to a tussle.

The priest is very chatty, expatiates upon the crops, upon the prospects of the vintage, and, incidentally, in that connection, upon the comet. Yes, he saw the comet last night, but with a tail very much shorn of its fair proportions; not longer than that—marking off the extreme end of his umbrella—whereas the last time—oh! it was quite as long as this—exhibiting the full extent of his parapluia.

And then we stop at Biebrich, a station quite overgrown with foliage, and where the story of the sleeping beauty ceases to appear extravagant; for not only is there the disposition to sleep—this is aimed at Mrs. John, who really looks very drowsy in her corner—but an equally strong disposition on the part of the vegetable world to overpower the world of self-conscious existence, to embrace within its green folds, to cover everything with a luxurious vegetation. The priest smiles at this.

"Oh! had you come here in the old times, you would have been reminded of the palaces of enchantment. Yonder is the schloss of the old dukes of Nassau, their summer palace, once quite a fairyland of beauty, but now neglected all and running to decay, while the duke is now a wanderer and a stranger in the land of his fathers. This, of course," adds the priest with a twinkle of the eye, "has happened since we all became Prussians."

Madame Reimer eyes him with a glance almost of affection.

"Ah, mon père," she cried, laying her hand tenderly on his arm, "my heart tells me that you never could become a Prussian."

Mon père does not seem offended, but he says not a word. A gesture intimates that his lips are sealed.

Before long we rumbled into the terminus

at Wiesbaden, and John's wife, rubbing her eyes, looked out.

"Another cathedral!" she cried, seeing a cluster of tall elegant spires. "How quite too lovely!"

"Nonsense," cried John angrily, "who ever heard of a cathedral at Wiesbaden? Why that is some modern thing in polished brick!"

Modern or not, the poor young woman is quite right in admiring it—one of the most charming Protestant churches of the age, and, with its five elegant towers, an example of what can be done in red brick.

There is something of a crowd at the station, and a good many greetings and recognitions in English. There is the travelling curate with the wandering dove his sister; there are young men in homespun suits, with something of a university drawl; withal a leisurely easy-going crowd, that looks upon trains and luggage-vans, and the machinery of life in general, as so many more or less successful devices for killing time. Looking at the embarras de richesses in the way of hotels, we determine to leave our baggage, and look out for ourselves some comfortable hostelry, neither too Yewropean in its extent and charges, nor yet dingy and seedy-looking. But we soon found that at Wiesbaden everybody lives en prince, and it does not seem to cost more that way than any other. This in a parenthesis, for we have not yet left the station, where we lunch heartily at the buffet, intending to avoid any elaborate tables-d'hôte. When we do leave the station we are struck, first of all, by the tawny spotted appearance of things, due to the double avenue of sycamores all up the Rheinstrasse, trees made level at the top, as if the authorities contemplated making a green boulevard up in the air, and with trunks whose bark is so curiously marked and spotted as to suggest leopards, tigers, snakes, and other zoological curiosities. But this effect is lost sight of as we pass into the charming Wilhelmstrasse, surely one of the prettiest streets in Europe.

The vista of handsome buildings gleaming white in the sunshine, the trees in the full luxuriance of foliage, and the soft lines of wooded hills that close the horizon, the clean broad street neither bustling nor dull, but with the air of cheerful leisure that is characteristic of the place—all this fills us with admiration. Why can't we have cities like this at home? we ask. We might have had, perhaps, under other

political conditions. Suppose, for instance, that with us the Heptarchy had lasted till just now—and that was something like the state of affairs in Germany—and that the other six kings had been finally snuffed out and disposed of by the iron-willed Prince Gladstone, with the astute Field-Marshal Wolseley his instrument; and the Imperial Crown placed upon the head of the monarch of Middlesex; just fancy what charming parks and gardens we should come in for in all the royal cities! Exeter would be a scene of joy and York a vision of delight, while stately palaces would be reflected in the waters of the Dee and the Severn. But instead of following up such speculations, which are too fatiguing for the time of year, let us rather follow up the Wilhelmstrasse, and, preferably, in a tramcar. I should be perfectly happy had they but outside seats to their tramcars. I should follow the example of the errant buttons in Copperfield. I should spend all the rest of my money in rolling along in the tram up the Wilhelmstrasse, which is Pall Mall and Kensington Gardens all mixed up together, and past the palatial Kurhaus, with its grand fountains and charming lawns, and right away to Nerothal, where all the snowy linen of the fair dames of Wiesbaden is lying bleaching on the grass, and where the tall strong young women who "take it in" are busy watering it with garden watering-pots, as if they were afraid of its getting scorched in the hot sunshine. But then the cars haven't seats outside; that would be too democratic for Wiesbaden. Fancy seeing enterprising female tourists swarming up to the outside seats, and energetically pointing out objects of interest with their sunshades! No; all that would be too exciting for Wiesbaden, and would fail to correspond with the scenery.

At this particular hour, the inside of the tramcar is almost filled with governesses. You may here study the development of the German governess. The fresh, pleasant-looking girl, just a little sharpened in expression by intellectual exercises; the slightly faded but still attractive young woman, and then the various stages of adaptation to the somewhat narrow conditions of existence, the nose pinches up, the face shrivels, the eyes cease to possess lurking possibilities of soft responsive glances, and begin to glitter with the cold brilliance of Minerva; the result, the typical governess we know so well, a slightly pragmatic but eminently trust-

worthy person, who even gushes in a modulated way, for the improvement of her pupils and the advancement of her employers' interests, but withal devoted to her work, and with an enthusiasm that invests its dry details with a certain interest. The governesses drop off one by one at imposing-looking villas by the wayside. When the last is gone we resume our freedom of discourse.

Mrs. John owns that she still retains a certain awe of a German governess, she can't get over the impressions of childhood, and feels an irresistible impulse to fold her hands and reply respectfully when addressed in the remembered accents of latent power. And now she asks cheerfully where are we going, does anybody know, and what are we going to do? It is suggested that there is a beer-garden at the end of the tramway route; a certain Beausite, probably with a fine view of the neighbourhood, and, no doubt, cool and shaded. Amy receives the suggestion with enthusiasm, but John decidedly objects. Wiesbaden has, so to say, fetched Master John. There is money in the air, a kind of refined millionairism. The place might not suit a millionaire in pounds sterling—he would have no outlet for his importance—but it is just adapted for the millionaire in francs, we will say; a decorous republic of easy competence.

"Now it is all very well," says John, "to slight decorum at places where you are unknown, and never likely to be known, but we, you and I, Amy, might make some stay at Wiesbaden—take a house and so on."

The announcement casts a kind of damper on the party. John has suddenly reassumed his later manner, which he had dropped on crossing the Channel—the manner he adopted after marrying Amy's money and inheriting the fortune of a rich old hunk of an uncle; a mixture of buckram and benevolence, a manner eminently distasteful to his old friends. But the wife, after a moment's thoughtfulness, is evidently pleased at the notion of living for a time at Wiesbaden. The place will suit her exactly.

Well, we turn out of the tramcar with as quiet an air as the eldest governess among the *fräuleins*, and actually, so infectious is manner, we begin to crane about looking for houses to let. Nobody suggested a beer-garden a few minutes ago, surely? But the villas are certainly very pretty, and there is an idyllic simplicity and repose that is refreshing. Among the

flowers and shrubs sits a very pretty woman reposefully in a garden-chair, a much embroidered cradle by her side, in which a baby slumbers soundly, lulled by the rustling leaves. Pigeons coo gently about, and in one of the grassy forecourts a curly white lamb, washed and brushed to perfection, munches in a contented manner. There is sentiment, look you, about babes and doves, and about a lamb, too. One can fancy the affection lavished upon that white lamb by the happy united family, and how the worthy herr and worthy frau will defer, as long as possible, the inevitable moment when the butcher must cut short its span; and sadly discuss whether it shall be eaten with raspberry jam or preserved cherries.

Presently somebody blows a horn—it is the conductor of the tramcar that is going to start. He is the driver as well, this man, for this is one of your self-conducted tramcars—the imperfections of human nature replaced by impeccable machinery. A touch of the grotesque seems inseparably to hang to the arrangements of tramcars. Witness the pistol-like machines that are levelled at one's head on board the London cars, and that go off with a harmless but ridiculous "ping." Well, here we have the funniest machine in the world; the driver grins as he explains its action, as much of it as he understands. The passenger puts his fare into a kind of letter-box, and after sundry gasps and creaks, bang! the coin appears upon a brass plate. You can see that much through a little glazed opening, and after everybody has had a good look at it, the driver pulls a cord, and presto! the coin vanishes, while a bell rings to signify that all is over. "It only wants," declares Mrs. John, "a little white mouse to run about and peep out of the windows." The driver demands to have this explained, when he looks grave. It is all very well for the driver to smile over the machine, but to have a passenger making light of official arrangements is rather too much.

But there is nothing else that is funny in Wiesbaden. To lounge about in a light coat and purple trousers, and perfume yourself with *millefleurs*, seems to be the chief occupation of the financial and mercantile people, while the English cultivate their moustaches, read the newspapers, and play billiards assiduously. There has grown up too, in this as in many other continental cities where English people congregate, a mixed race, scarcely retaining

any vestige of nationality—descendants of the original settlers, people without mother tongue or fatherland, who decline to accept the responsibilities of citizens in the country they live in, and who are only of use to the country whose nationality they claim, as relieving it of a little of that plethora of wealth from which it is supposed to suffer. But if not a very useful class, they are generally lively and amusing. The conductors of a system of international gossip and canards, they are invaluable to new settlers, whom they initiate into all the free pleasantness, to say nothing of the wickedness, of the place. We meet with one or two of this class in the smoking-room of the hotel, with whom John soon strikes up an acquaintance.

But, for my own part, I think a day is quite long enough to spend at Wiesbaden. John is busy enough making arrangements with house-agents and bankers; the rascal, I hear nothing more about his pretended shortness of cash. He is replete with rouleaux of gold coin, and scatters twenty-mark pieces everywhere about him, never forgetting, however, to pick them up again. And so I shall go on to Frankfort by myself.

Madame Reimer confides to me that she feels herself in a slight difficulty. Mrs. John wishes her to stay with them, but she hardly likes to do this; she will remain a few days, however, and then, fate will decide.

In the meantime, as she had sent her next address to a friend at Frankfort, will I kindly go to the post-office there on my arrival and ask for a letter for her? Willingly, but probably the post-office people won't give it up to me. In that case, as it is important to know whether a letter is there or not, will I telegraph to her, and she will get John to bring her over to Frankfort if there should be a letter there?

All the more willingly I reply that it will give me a chance of seeing her again.

"Ah, monsieur," says Madame Reimer with a half-reproachful glance, "remember it is you who are running away."

"Why don't you marry that little Frenchwoman?" said John, as we walked down to the station together along the shady Wilhelmstrasse. "You seem to have taken a fancy to her, and I think she likes you well enough. There's the point about the missing husband, but it's a hundred to one he is dead, and I don't think the matter would trouble you as it would a good many. If he turned up, you

would chuck him into a well or something, and be quite comfortable afterwards."

Thanking John for his good opinion of me, I rejoined that, whatever my own feelings might be, I was certain that Madame Reimer would never consent to marry anybody till that point were decided.

"Give her a chance," said John, shaking his head sagely.

But I hadn't come to a stage when action of any kind seemed desirable. People often suffer from incipient attachments that circumstances stifle before they have actually come to life, and my attachment to Madame Reimer, if I felt any, was of that description.

There would be no letter for her at Frankfort; I should send no telegram to bring her over; we should probably never meet again.

But, certainly, when I had said good-bye to John, and, after wandering about the rambling station, where the traveller takes his chance of hitting or missing a train, had ensconced myself in the well-padded but rather stuffy carriage, I felt a very lonely, lost kind of a person. The charm of travel was gone; I should cease to enjoy anything thoroughly; and this depressing feeling lasted till the train was fairly out in the country.

It is a drowsy summer afternoon, and the air full of the hum of insects, and we are actually at Biebrich again, where somnolent influences are so powerful. But presently sleepiness is banished as we thunder over bridges and run the gauntlet of loopholed walls. As we stop at Castel, which is the over-water part of Mayence, a lively feeling comes over one that the grim fortifications that bristle everywhere about regard railway trains and their passengers with considerable mistrust. About a hundred loopholes, I feel convinced, are concentrating their fire upon my insignificant person, to say nothing of embrasures, with artillery monsters lurking behind, capable of knocking us all into matches of the very smallest calibre. One breathes more freely as the train leaves the fortified zone, and whisks us presently among the vineyards, no longer perched among rocks and nestling about stern castles, but in level fields upon the wide river plain. We are at Hockheim, which has given its name as a generic one to the white wines of the district. The river we catch glimpses of here and there is the Main, reminding one of the Dee above

Chester, and by-and-by we cross a tributary and trouty-looking stream, the Nidda, about which, we are told, stern battles have been fought, but which does not look to be worth fighting about, except from a piscatory point of view, and then across a flat sleepy plain. Surely those are the Yawny Mountains in the distance, and we are in the province of Singyling—a great fertile plain of varied cultivation! No hedges, distant mountains—surely we are in China! No, it is the land of Nod, and nothing awakes me till the train stops with a general rush and bustle, and I realise that we are actually at Frankfort.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY.

CHAPTER XXX. A PRIVATE VIEW.

THE end of September was at hand; the beautiful autumn was in its glory amid the woods of Horndean, and the more extensive ones of Chesney Manor. The weather had been very fine during the whole month, and the fresh sharpness in the breeze, telling of the coming of "chill October," was but a charm the more to people who were young and strong, who had not come to a regretful counting of their autumns, and who might still take pleasure in "a nipping and an eager air." Horndean and its surroundings were beautiful at all seasons, in a grave, rich, well-cared-for way, and in the autumn especially pleasant, because of the great variety of trees, whose foliage had to fall so splendidly, with gradations of fine colour. Even Mrs. Townley Gore, who was not enthusiastic about Nature, and usually suspected every place out of doors, except a fashionable promenade, of damp and spiders, was constrained to admit that the woods were lovely, and the sunsets extraordinarily fine that year. "Our sunsets" she called those evening pageants, proprietorially. September had been a success "all round" at Horndean, and everyone was in high good humour—Mr. Townley Gore, because he had capital shooting, rooms in the aspect that suited him best, and no gout; his wife, because things were going smoothly in the grooves which she approved, and the allegorical crumpled rose-leaf had not made itself felt; Mr. Horndean of Horndean, for certain reasons that will presently

appear; and Miss Chevenix, because she had, of all, the most solid grounds for satisfaction. The other guests, who came and went during the month, had been judiciously selected. Of the women, there was not one who could rival her, or who felt inclined to attempt to do so. Of the men, there was not one who did not admire her, or who admired her too ardently.

Mr. Horndean did not know or care a great deal about these people; he had been so much away, he explained to Miss Chevenix, that he had lost the thread of society, so to speak.

"People die," he said, "or go under in one way or another, except quite the very big people of the world, who are kept perpetually in sight, and all their doings registered. I consider this my brother-in-law's year, and that I am in training."

He was taking his training very well, Beatrix thought, and she wondered what had been the history of that wild time when Mrs. Townley Gore was afflicted with a "troublesome" brother. He was an unusually amenable one now, at all events, and except that he had occasional fits of depression—which did not proceed from annui, Beatrix felt sure, and which she therefore imputed to importunate recollections—there was nothing to indicate that he had passed through a "stormy" youth.

Frank Lisle was still at Horndean when September was nearing its end. He was going to Florence for the winter, and he had, for a while, cherished the hope that his friend might be induced to accompany him.

Settling down was all very well, of course, in Mr. Lisle's opinion, if one did not carry it too far; but to settle down to an English winter, even under the exceptional advantages which would attend that operation when performed at Horndean, would be to carry it very much too far.

In vain did Mr. Horndean represent to him that he ought not to confound an "English" with a London winter in a general and sweeping condemnation. Frank Lisle would not listen to any fair but futile distinctions. He could not get through a winter without sunshine. He did not mind the cold winds or the absence of "comforts" abroad. He had never had many, and though he knew them when he saw them, he did not miss them when he did not see them. There was no sunshine

in England at that season, and no colour, so he must be off.

He speedily relinquished the hope of inducing Mr. Horndean to go to Florence with him; for in his jolly, light-hearted way, Mr. Lisle was a sensible person, and never thought of contending against a woman's influence. Mr. Horndean, he knew, was in love with Miss Chevenix, and, unless by a freak of fortune, which he felt would be too good for him to deserve, she was to take it into her head that the city of flowers would be pleasanter than the city of fogs, there would be no chance of getting his friend to go there.

This melancholy consideration somewhat dashed the spirits of Mr. Lisle, and as he did not come round from his first impression respecting Beatrix, but still disliked almost as much as he admired her, he had no very bright anticipations for the future.

Horndean, with Beatrix for its mistress, would not be a tempting place of sojourn to him, and he roamed about the gardens and the woods during those last days, sometimes extending his rambles to Chesney Manor, while the other men were shooting—an occupation which Mr. Lisle held in aversion—or he shut himself up in his painting-room and worked vigorously.

On Mr. Lisle's working days he did not appear at breakfast, and then Mr. Horndean would invade him before he set about the business or the pleasure of the day, and they would have a pleasant talk together. There was no external symptom of a slackening of their friendship, such as Mr. Lisle ruefully foreboded from what he called "the wiles of the red-headed witch," but it was not without significance that they had left off discussing Miss Chevenix. Mr. Horndean was frankly communicative on every other subject; not even excepting his sister. He would say to Mr. Lisle in the easiest way, that it amused him very much to observe how his altered position had, to use the expressive Irish phrase, made "a white-headed boy" of him in the sight of Mrs. Townley Gore; and he would dwell with a grim humour upon sundry past episodes in the joint experience of himself and his friend, when it would have been useful and consoling to have had a stock of sisterly sympathy to draw upon, such as he might confidently resort to at present.

"And I don't think I'm a better fellow," he added, after one of these retrospects.

"Perhaps not, but you're ever so much better off," answered Mr. Lisle with simple seriousness, pausing in his work and draw-

ing his head well back to get a good view of the object he was painting. "You were a considerable nuisance in those old times, which, upon my word, I often suspect you of regretting; and it is not like you, you know. I should always have hated this sort of thing, to own it, I mean, and have the what-do-you-call-'ems of property as well as the thingumies; but you never could do without money, and a lot of it too; and that's why I don't understand your being so dismal sometimes. There! The organ comes in beautifully. I flatter myself I've got the right old leathertone and greasiness about the strap. Now, if I could only get a monkey to sit for his portrait!"

"Had the man a monkey?" asked Mr. Horndean, who was well used to his friend's discursiveness, and never minded his ending a dialogue a thousand miles from its starting-point.

"No, he hadn't; but he ought to have had. Why, an organ is nothing without a monkey in a blue frock and a flat red cap. I think the waltzing marionettes are a great improvement also, but I can't draw on my imagination for that fact in this instance, as my 'grinder' is in 'an attitude of repose,' that is, fast asleep."

"Haven't you idealised him, Frank?"

"Not a bit of it; he was a very good-looking fellow, but a foul-mouthed rascal. I have only idealised his clothes; they were too clean and too British—regular slops—so I have given him a touch of the Savoyard dirt and finery. There you are! Now I'm ready for the private view. The ladies are coming at three o'clock to look at 'Notley Green at Noontide.' Sweet name, isn't it? so we must clear up here, Fred."

At three o'clock, Mrs. Townley Gore being detained by visitors, Mr. Horndean persuaded Miss Chevenix to go with him to the private view.

"Lisle is such an impatient fellow," he said, libelling the absent artist without scruple; "he can't bear to be kept waiting."

In spite of this assertion, Miss Chevenix was not very much surprised to find that Mr. Lisle was not in his painting-room.

The picture, with a sheet thrown over it, was placed on an easel in the proper light, and two old tapestry chairs, which Mr. Horndean's housekeeper had rightly considered quite good enough for such a scene of "muddle" as Mr. Lisle's sanctum, had been dusted after a rudimentary fashion, and placed in front of the canvas.

To crowd everything that could be got out of the way into one corner, and barricade the heap with a big table, was Mr. Lisle's notion of "clearing up," and he had carried it out.

Beatrix looked around her with amused, slightly contemptuous curiosity, and having seated herself in one of the old chairs, said to Mr. Horndean :

"Take that thing off, and let us see the picture."

"No, no," objected Mr. Horndean ; "Frank would never forgive me. He will be here presently. I daresay he has only gone for flowers, or to fetch his cat—to look at a queen. We must wait for him."

He spoke rather hurriedly ; he was in high spirits. She was smiling, composed, and looking remarkably handsome. A subtle change had passed of late over the beauty of Beatrix Chevenix ; there was a softer lustre in the diamond-bright eyes, and the smile that had formerly failed to touch the keen lines about the finely-curved red lips had a flickering sweetness quite new to any expression of her face. When she was alone, now, she had many troubled thoughts, and there was one in particular that filled her with perplexity, and would stick to her with a pertinacity almost bewildering, in spite of her firm will and resolute habit of looking facts in the face, but, nevertheless, she had a source of happiness within herself. The dreariness of her godless and self-centred life was changed for a vital interest, and for a hope, in which, although there were restless and threatening elements, there was undreamed-of sweetness. This hope was at its full tide within her breast as she met the gaze that accompanied the words of the young man who was looking at her as if her fair face were a vision of heaven, and knew what his next words would be. Why they were spoken then and there, Mr. Horndean could not have told—there was no lack of opportunity in the social life at Horndean, nor would he have been slow to make it if there had been—but now, for the first time, he silenced a scruple that had hitherto withheld him, he gave every doubt, every consideration to the winds of chance, and answered the smile, queenly, not coquettish, with which Beatrix received his compliment, by an ardent declaration of his love.

"You knew it, my lady and queen," he said, as he knelt before her unrebuked, and taking her unresisting hands kissed them passionately. "From the moment I first

saw you, my love, my life have been yours. Will you take them ? Tell me, Beatrix !"

She did not answer him in words, but he was satisfied ; the hands he held tightly returned the pressure of his, her head drooped, her breast heaved, a deep blush suffused her face. That moment of strong and true emotion had renewed the girlhood of the beautiful worldling, who had had no chance of better things. This was the only man she had ever loved, and he was at her feet. Another moment, and she was in his arms, and there was no past and no future, only that ineffable now ; and in all the wide world, for those two, only themselves.

The wonder of it ! The triumph of it ! With the beauty and the brilliancy of Beatrix there had always been something that had kept Mr. Horndean at a distance, even in his thoughts ; a certain stateliness and finish of manner—for to him, as he did not ruffle her irritable temper, she had never been rude, abrupt, or disdainful—and the air of a woman perfectly versed in the ways of a world with which his own acquaintance was fitful and not profound. And now, that queenly head lay upon his breast with a strange meekness, and the thick up-curved lashes that hid the bright eyes, with a new and beautiful softness in them, were wet with such tears as Beatrix Chevenix had never before shed ; happy, shy, girlish tears of love, avowal, and surrender. The superficial nature of the man who had wasted and made havoc of such power of feeling deeply and nobly as he had ever possessed, was also touched by something far below the surface. A keen, extraordinary pang of remembrance and remorse wrung his heart, as it beat high under the cheek, smooth and pure as a blush-rose leaf, resting upon it ; amid the tumult of his feelings the still small voice protested, and was heard ; and he made to it a soundless answer, in vicarious penitence.

"I will be true to this woman who loves me ; she shall be happy ; so help me Heaven !"

Frank Lisle did not come in ; Mrs. Townley Gore's visitors still detained her ; the lovers had the painting-room to themselves for a whole hour—a precious hour, a blessed hour, Mr. Horndean called it ; and that was time enough in which to settle their plans for the immediate future. Standing by the half-shaded window of the painting-room, supported by her lover's encircling arm, Beatrix looked out upon

the fair domain that stretched before her, and felt an exultant conviction that she had risen superior to her own design. She had, indeed, intended to marry Mr. Horndean before she had even thought whether she could love him. Love had no place in her calculations, in that time which now seemed to have rolled back to an incalculable distance, and to be of no account at all. She might forgive herself for that, she might forget it to herself, for she loved him—loved him so well, that she could allow herself the full luxury of knowing that there was no thought of anything but him, no sense of triumph in a successful scheme, nothing but the one pure joy of womanhood's highest privilege in her heart. For that brief hour, at least, the blind had a yearning for sight and the deaf for hearing. If Beatrix Chevenix could have got at the notion of God, she would have thanked Him.

They were talking of her approaching departure from Horndean.

"I wish I knew Sir Edward Vane," said Mr. Horndean, "I might manage to get myself asked to Temple Vane; but I know very few of the county people. I never cared about it until now. When your visit there is over, you will come here again? My own love, say you will, and that I may tell my sister before then."

The first shadow fell upon Beatrix. The remembrance of her compact with Mrs. Maberley crossed her mind for the first time since she had stepped over the boundary of the common world, hand in hand with her lover, and into the enchanted land. What must she say to him? How must she tell him that her actions were not free, and yet not tell him how, or why? In a moment she was brought back from the enchanted land to the common world, and to the fetters which she had been so incredibly foolish and short-sighted as to impose upon herself. Beatrix was very clear-headed, but it would have been unnatural had she been able to look at the position "all round," and to remember, just then, that it was the expedient by which Mrs. Townley Gore and people in general were deceived, that had procured her present happiness and future prospects for her. It was more than a shadow that fell upon her; a cold thrill of vague and shapeless fear passed over her, and her lover looked at her anxiously.

Waiting for her reply, she forced herself to answer him in her usual tone:

"I am not sure what I shall be able to

do, after Temple Vane, and your sister will not be here."

"I am sure she will remain to oblige me, especially when she knows. It would be so delightful, and so much nicer than town, unless you were at Kaiser Crescent. Your Mrs. Maberley might not like to be troubled with me, and I really could not promise not to be troublesome."

Beatrix smiled, not very readily or brightly.

"But you must not be troublesome, and Mrs. Townley Gore must not know for the present."

"My sister must not know! Why?"

For one second Beatrix hesitated. Should she answer this question with the imperious manner that Mr. Horndean knew so well—though she did not direct it against himself—and make him understand that such was her will, and he had merely to conform to it? This, standing on such slippery ground as she did, might be a wise initiative; or should she take a more womanly, more winning attitude? She decided quick as thought, and, turning her magical eyes upon him, she said:

"Because my Mrs. Maberley, as you call her, has a prior claim to know; because I owe her much, and especially consideration for her little foibles; because jealousy is one of them. I suppose you know nothing of such a weakness; but she would be deeply hurt and offended if anyone were to know until after she had been told. Remember, Frederick, she is the only person in the world who even imitates relationship to me; I am quite alone. I owe her all affectionate observance."

That Mr. Horndean should assure her, in the words that every lover uses, that she was an angel, was a matter of course. He went on to dwell with appropriate rapture upon the termination of her state of isolation, telling her in fervent words and with all the earnestness of the very strongest of his "fits," as Mr. Lisle called his love-affairs, that he valued the position and the fortune that had come to him solely because they were not wholly unworthy of being offered to her, to whom, however, all the wealth and honours of the world could lend no beauty, no power that was not her own already. He would implicitly obey her; not until she gave him permission would he tell his sister that he had won the prize of his life; their engagement should be a dear, delightful, precious secret for the present, but would not

Beatrice promise to let Mrs. Maberley know soon? To this Beatrice replied that he must leave that to her. Mrs. Maberley, for all her quiet insignificance, was an oddity, and oddities, even when by chance they were amiable, were notoriously hard to manage. They would still have a few days of each other's society before Beatrice would have to go to Vane Court.

"And now," said Beatrice, with a smile to which all the radiance had returned, for she was relieved and reassured by the ease with which her lover had accepted her sentimental explanation, "do you not think we had better give Mr. Lisle up and retire from this very unusual private view? Mrs. Townley Gore has forgotten all about the picture, evidently. I think I must go to her now."

"I suppose so," he said reluctantly; and they were turning from the window, when they perceived Frank Lisle coming across an open space of smoothly-rolled lawn in the shrubbery, on which the painting-room looked, at a tremendous pace, and with his soft hat in his hand.

He caught sight of them, waved his hat, darted round the end of the house, and in two minutes was in the room. He found Beatrice seated in one of the tapestry chairs in her usual attitude of graceful composure and unconcern, and Mr. Horndean turning over some sketches with attentiveness that was perhaps a little overdone.

"I beg your pardon a thousand times, Miss Chevenix," said Frank Lisle. "I am so distressed at having kept you waiting, and so much obliged to you for waiting so long. Mrs. Townley Gore could not wait, of course."

He was busy with the easel, and the conscious pair exchanged meaning looks. Neither explained, both accepted the situation. Was there ever a pair of lovers who would not have done precisely the same thing?

"But what on earth detained you, Frank?" enquired Mr. Horndean.

"Quite an adventure. I thought I should like to put in a monkey; you know we talked of it this morning—you'll see why presently, Miss Chevenix—and I remembered that Dr. Osborne's boys have one, and thought I would go and have

a look at him. So I went; but when I got to the rectory I found the monkey was dead, and I was coming back quite desolate, but in good time for the private view, when I witnessed a very sad accident. It was near the post-office in the village; a very pretty little white dog ran across the road just as Bracken's cart—Bracken is the butcher, Miss Chevenix, and his boy is a demon—came tearing down the hill. In an instant the little dog was under the wheels, and I saw at once that it was terribly hurt. The demon pulled up at sight of me, I picked up the dog, and two little girls ran towards me, screaming. The dog was theirs, and the children were quite frantic with grief. I am a little bit of a surgeon, as you know, Fred, and I saw the poor thing's leg was broken, but I thought I could manage it, so I adjourned with my patient, the children, and their governess, who was nearly as much upset as they were, to the post-office, where we were hospitably received. I set the little dog's leg, consoled the children and their governess, got a basket, put the invalid into it, chartered a boy to carry the basket, under severe pains and penalties, to the abode of my young friends—and—here I am. Now for the private view."

"Wait a minute, Frank. Where do the children and the dog live?"

"Upon my word I never asked. They went up the road from the village. That is all I know."

He uncovered the picture:

"That, Miss Chevenix, is 'Notley Green at Noontide.'"

A village green, with a group of noble elms; on a bench beneath the great branches, a man, sleeping, his uncovered head resting against the trunk of one of the trees. On the ground at his feet a barrel-organ. A very good picture, good drawing, good colours, light and shade admirably expressive, very telling. Miss Chevenix admires it much, but she is almost startled by it too, for the sleeping organ-grinder presents a striking resemblance to Mr. James Ramsden.

"Where did you get your model, Mr. Lisle?" she asked.

"Just where you see him, Miss Chevenix, asleep under the elms on Notley Green."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCESILLON.

PART II. PHEBE'S FATHERS.

CHAPTER VIII. FROM BOHEMIAN TO BARONET.

It will have been gathered, far more clearly than had been guessed by the archdeacon, that a very great change had happened in the life of him who had once upon a time been that best of good fellows, Charley Bassett, of Gray's Inn, and was now Sir Charles Bassett, of Cautleigh Hall, in Lincolnshire, for, in truth, the two men were one and the same. I say the two men on purpose, because for a man who counts his income by a few hundreds to be identical with one who reckons it by many thousands a year is clearly a social impossibility. He had no more dreamt of succeeding to his cousin's estates and title than he had of working for a living. Sir Mordaunt Bassett, whom he scarcely knew by sight, and was a little Bohemianly proud of not knowing, was unmarried, it is true. But he was of that period of middle life when marriage is more likely than in youth or even than in old age, and it was exceedingly unlikely that, were Charley so much as his heir presumptive, he would keep single for the purpose of letting his title go to an unknown and not too respectable cousin. And, if the title had to go, he was not bound to refrain from making a will in order that the estates and the title might not be parted, while Charley was not his heir-presumptive at all.

But Sir Mordaunt, though of an age when marriage is as likely and death as unlikely as such things can ever be, did not marry and did die. Not only so, but, by

one of those chains of chance that so constantly link unlikely people with unexpected inheritances—and of which family histories are fuller than fiction, who is a timid creature, dares to be—baronetcy, land, and everything else worth mentioning, came to Charley. Genealogies, except to heirs themselves, are notoriously disagreeable and uninteresting things, nor had his own been particularly interesting to Charley hitherto. It had been for his friends, not for himself, to remember that he was first cousin to Sir Mordaunt Bassett of Cautleigh Hall. But now he found cause to be exceedingly interested in Sir Mordaunt's brother, the rector of Cautleigh, who caught cold at the funeral, and died after a baronetcy of three weeks, without leaving behind him so much as a widow. His solicitors—naturally his old landlords, Messrs. Mark and Simple, of Gray's Inn Square—still further interested him by the story of how yet a third brother, of whom he had known still less, had died at sea a very short time before, and how an uncle, whose issue had senior claims to the branch which Charley represented, had forgotten to put his children into their proper position by marrying their mother. The family history of the Bassetts, when it came to be turned over, appeared a little peculiar in many ways, and complex enough to require some expensive and rather troublesome looking into. But the end was simple enough. Neither will, nor settlement, nor claim, nor question stood between Charley Bassett and one of the best things in England.

The event caused a good deal of stir in the late Sir Mordaunt's part of Lincolnshire. But it was nothing to the excitement in Charley's corner of Bohemia.

Would he remain there still? Would he take a new house, and keep it open for the benefit of his old friends? Would five-pound notes be flying about as freely as half-crowns? Before he was two days older, he received as many visits from men who were nobody's enemies but their own, as if he had just been made Prime Minister. He was at home to them all, and more genial than ever. But he answered the general question in his own way. He said nothing about what he was going to do with his good luck, but pinned a piece of paper on his door with this legend, "Mr. Bassett will be back in a quarter of an hour." And there it remained, to the huge enjoyment of all the clerks of Messrs. Mark and Simple, till the quarters had grown into hours and the hours into days and the days into weeks. That quarter of an hour never expired. Sir Charles Bassett was travelling abroad; and neither into Gray's Inn Square nor into Bohemia did Charley Bassett ever return. And in nine days the generation which had known him forgot him, except when it needed some unattainable half-crown. He left behind him neither an enemy nor a friend.

A fellow like Doyle might wonder at the easy way in which so easy-going a man should forget so easy an obligation as that which he had undertaken towards Marion Eve Psyche Zenobia Dulcibella Jane Burden. But people of ordinary sense and knowledge will see how unfair it would be towards Sir Charles Bassett to expect him, in the midst of new and all-absorbing business, to remember every little jocular folly of which he might have been guilty when he had only some three or four hundred a year. He forgot a great many more important things. He forgot to finish a picture and a comedy. He forgot, and was not at much pains to avoid forgetting, Jack Doyle, who was essentially the sort of man for a country gentleman not to know, and, naturally enough, did not think it needful to solder with gold the trifling link that bound them together. Lawyers, land-stewards, and all sorts of respectable people took up a good deal of his time while he was abroad; and, when he came at last to his new home in Lincolnshire, he never quite realised that he was the man who had once luxuriously starved for the whole year on what was now not a single month's income. After all, it was because he liked being first, rather than for anything else, that he had lived

in a country where a very few hundred a year would make him first without trouble. He simply rose to the occasion, and felt that his title and its accompaniments would be wasted in keeping the first place in Gray's Inn Square, when it might make him a Triton among Tritons instead of among minnows. As constantly happens in Bohemia, and elsewhere, the men who thought they knew Charley Bassett, that prince of easy-going, good-natured fellows, knew him no more than they knew themselves. And, when it took wind in his solicitors' office that Sir Charles Bassett was going to be married to his neighbour in the country, Miss Florence Lanyon, Mr. Lanyon of Hawlby's second daughter, the office wag changed the notice on the door, so as to make it read, "Gone to be haltered. Friends will please to accept this intimation." It was the only intimation of his change of life that any of his old friends ever received. He asked to the wedding, as his best man, neither Urquhart, nor Esdaile, nor Ronaine, nor Doyle. He did not think it needful to explain to his bride's family that he had a sixth share in the fatherhood of a little girl. Harmless as such jokes may be, they make people in counties whisper unkind things.

He had sown his wild oats, and, as landlord, master, magistrate, husband, and father, left nothing to be desired. If you want to make a Philistine of the Philistines, give a Bohemian a great many thousands a year. He will become a ruler in Gath and a prince in Ascalon. Indeed, by the time he was five-and-thirty, Sir Charles began to show signs of economy which, though not amounting to more than laudable thrift, would have been much more natural in the days when he used to spend every penny of his income every year. It is upon somebody else's horse, not his own, that a mounted beggar rides to the devil; and, for that matter, Sir Charles had never been really a beggar, though he had always taken a Bohemian pride in calling himself one, and now really thought so. His steward, his bankers, and his stockbrokers knew that he was a richer man every year, in the safest and most real ways. Nobody could accuse him of being a whit fonder of music, painting, or poetry, than his neighbours. If he had only taken to any form of killing birds or beasts, or of any other form of bodily exercise, he would have been absolutely the most respectable baronet in that part

of England. But, by the time he was forty, even this bodily indolence ceased to be remarkable. He was already getting stout, and a little grey and bald; and his son and heir had arrived at an age supremely interesting to the mothers of many daughters.

Ralph Bassett was always said to be very like his father. And so he was, with a likeness that increased every year, but also with a difference that increased likewise. For one thing, he had always known from his cradle that he was heir to a splendid estate and a title, and had never, till he went to Oxford, known what it means to be one's own master. If ever there was a father who wished to save a son from his own youthful fancies and follies, Sir Charles Bassett was that man. Ralph was a good fellow enough, with lively spirits, amiable manners, a superb temper, and quite enough abilities to serve a rich and unambitious man; he would have been regarded as a swan by nine fathers out of ten. And yet he managed to keep on disappointing his father at every turn. He was liked about the place, and at school, and at Oxford, and, in spite of his popularity, never fell into any scrape worth mentioning; but it seemed to Sir Charles that he would never grow into a man—that he would always remain a boy. From his father's increasingly severe point of view, Oxford had been a failure, and so, to keep him from idling about Cautleigh with guns or girls, or travelling all over England with bat and ball, or playing at soldiers, he decided upon making a barrister of him, as a preparation for the heavy legal responsibilities he would sooner or later have to incur as a justice of the peace for Lincolnshire—perhaps as a legislator for the British Empire.

Now, it so happened that, making enquiries of Mr. Simple with that view, he was told of Mr. Urquhart as a gentleman eminently qualified to teach the whole art and mystery of legal practice during such stray minutes of leisure as he could find in about six months of the year. Of course Sir Charles Bassett recognised the name, and he remembered all the peculiarities of the experimental philosopher. A long, dormant sentiment warmed his heart to a friend of his youth, who had succeeded in life, and with whom friendship might, without the least inconvenience, be renewed.

When Sir Charles Bassett, of Cautleigh Hall, and Robert Urquhart, of the home

circuit, grasped hands, they were really glad to meet again. When they dined together at Sir Charles's club they talked over a hundred old recollections, and even wondered what had become of that poor devil, Jack Doyle. He had drunk himself to death, they supposed, and voted him an epitaph the reverse of complimentary. But about Marion Eva Psyche Zenobia Dulcibella Jane Burden neither spoke a word. After all, she had been but the slightest of episodes. As Urquhart, for domestic reasons, did not touch upon a topic that had been an unpleasant one, Sir Charles took for granted that his friend had practically forgotten the sixfold bond as completely as he; and, in any case, what good or pleasure could come of asking: "I wonder what has become of that godchild of ours? Has our forgetfulness brought her to the workhouse, or the streets, or where? Or am I the only one who has forgotten, except you, who would surely mention the matter if you had not kept me in countenance by forgetting too? Or have we been throwing the whole burden on old friends who, ten to one, have not become rich baronets or eminent barristers?" Such a question would be too suggestive for any man who respected himself to put to anybody in a like position; so mutual courtesy and consideration forbade its being made. The baronet knew too much; the barrister preferred not to know anything at all.

Urquhart cordially accepted the usual fee for giving his old friend's son the run of his chambers and of his papers, and asked Sir Charles to dine with him at home, to be introduced to Mrs. Urquhart, who received her guest with all the cordiality due to her husband's oldest and dearest friend. She had often heard him speak of Sir Charles Bassett, of Cautleigh Hall, and, to tell the truth, had incredulously wondered in her heart at the story of an intimacy between so great a personage and anybody in the position in which she knew her husband to have been as a young man. It was a sort of husband's victory to prove his position by actually bringing his lion home. Nor afterwards, when her hospitality was extended to Ralph on his arrival in town, had he any reason to complain of the coldness which had, even in his anger, so much impressed Doyle. Nor did he complain; but, nevertheless, when he was next asked to dinner in Fonthill Gardens he arranged for a previous engagement, which obliged him to refuse. At any rate he was like

his father in one thing—he always managed, and always with grace, to avoid doing anything that was not exactly the very pleasantest to him at the time. He liked ladies, and it struck him that Mrs. Urquhart was not a lady. He also liked a great many women who did not pretend to be ladies; but then Mrs. Urquhart did pretend. Nor could he manage to make out how his father and Urquhart, the husband, could ever at any time have been real friends. But that often strikes outsiders as queer in the case of middle-aged gentlemen who, once upon a time, were young. The time might yet come when the story of an ancient friendship between Ralph and Lawrence, commonplace as it was, might make their descendants stare. Why are moralists so hard on those who drift apart from their old friends, and are always making new? Would they make friendship hinder growth, which must needs mean change? Orestes and Pylades, David and Jonathan, all died young. Urquhart and Bassett had passed their forty years.

So Ralph Bassett, without the least intention of becoming Lord Chancellor, or even of prosecuting a thief at his county sessions, lived very much in the manner he had told his friend Lawrence, troubling Urquhart exceedingly little and himself not at all.

Like his father before him he had a great many acquaintances, and the circle kept on growing. He found a great many of his Oxford set in town, and he did not find those of them who had their homes in London shy of introducing him to their people, including their sisters.

Like most of the Oxford men of his time, he had the fancy for making himself out to be a great deal worse in every way than he was in reality, to make a show of faults that belonged in reality to other people, and to hide his better qualities as if they were sins; a form of hypocrisy which is for some reason or other considered graceful. It led him into some small and unimportant follies for the sake of keeping up his reputation.

But on the whole it seemed likely that he would drift along very safely as well as very pleasantly until nature should make him a baronet, and that he would then drift along in the same manner until nature should pass on the title to his own son, without doing any particular harm to himself and none to the world.

He did not act upon Lawrence's sugges-

tion, and think seriously about that story of the girl with six fathers which he had heard in the railway train. And yet it had struck him more than a little disagreeably. It had seemed odd that his father, seeing what he was now, should ever have been mixed up with underbred people like the Urquharts; but that there should ever have been any connection between Sir Charles Bassett and a man of the archdeacon's reputation seemed contrary to the nature of things. The untold story, whatever it might turn out to be, appeared to have about it a flavour of something wrong; and then Urquhart's name also had been dragged into it, a matter that seemed even more strange. Of course Lawrence's suspicions were absurd. What hold could any creature have upon Sir Charles Bassett, of Cautleigh Hall? But still, on thinking of the matter when it came into his head next morning, during the half hour between waking and rising, he considered whether it might not be as well to write a letter to his father about things in general in order to introduce his slight adventure with the archdeacon. But the second thoughts which came after breakfast led him to a different conclusion. Such a letter, being troublesome to write to-day, would keep perfectly well till to-morrow, and the idea of pumping his father, or of seeming to imagine that he could possibly need a warning, was more unpleasant than even writing a letter. So he did what he was very nearly as little in the habit of doing as he had told Lawrence. He actually went to chambers about lunch-time, and amused himself with a novel until about five o'clock, when Urquhart came back from Westminster, or wherever his day's work may have lain.

"What — Bassett!" said Urquhart, shaking his head with an air of humorous rebuke. "Now, it's a strange thing, but I was thinking of you only the other day—I suppose by a sort of association of ideas. I'm off to-morrow, for the arbitration in Green and Gray, ye know—or I'm sadly afraid ye don't know. I don't expect I'll be back for some time. But I'll leave ye a case to look up, that came in only to-day—"

"Thank you," said Ralph, closing his novel. "I happened to be passing, so I thought I'd look in to see how things are going on. I've just come back from Switzerland."

"From Switzerland!" Urquhart, of all Phoebe's fathers, had, next to the admiral,

changed the least of all. Whatever he might be at home, in the hands of Mrs. Urquhart, he retained in the citadel of his own chambers, as well as in court, all that aquiline look and dogmatic manner which, with a little formal logic and a shilling or two, had represented the whole of his stock when he first opened accounts with the world. "From Switzerland! Then ye've not even seen the papers in Gray and Green. It's a pity. Ye can see Switzerland any day; but Gray and Green——"

"I don't know," said Ralph. "It seems to me as if Gray and Green came into existence before the Jungfrau, and will outlast the Matterhorn. Mrs. Urquhart is well, I hope. By-the-way, I happened to meet, coming up, a man who used to know you——"

"Ah! Who was he?"

"A man named Doyle. And a queer sort of customer he seemed."

"Doyle? Doyle?" asked Urquhart, passing his fingers through his hair, as if trying to remember the name. "I never knew but one Doyle; and your father, Sir Charles, knew him too. But it isn't likely to be he."

"He did say he knew my father too," said Ralph, "when they were young men. He said he had been in India——"

Ralph could see that Urquhart began to look annoyed.

"That fellow turned up again!" he exclaimed. "I hope, Bassett, ye didn't tell him where I live! He just was a poor fellow Sir Charles and I used to know, and who, we thought, had drunk himself out of the world long and long ago. Did he ask ye, as your father's son, to lend him half-a-crown, for the sake of auld lang syne?"

"On the contrary, he looked to me like a man much more likely to lend half-crowns; and from what Lawrence—a man who was with me, and knew him in India—told me, lending seems to be very much in his line. Then ye think my father won't say 'thank you' if I re-introduce him to an old friend?"

"Well, since you ask me, I don't think he will. Anyhow, Bassett, I'll be obliged if ye won't re-introduce him to me. He's not the man, ye understand, that I'd like Mrs. Urquhart to know."

"What did he mean by the story of a child with six fathers?"

"Eh! A child with six fathers? Ye'll excuse me, Bassett, but I must get home

early to-day, and I'm off for the North to-morrow. Whatever that fellow told ye is safe to be a pack of lies. There's no liar like a man that drinks—none."

Urquhart, from the depths of his domestic terrors, spoke so feelingly that Ralph left the chambers convinced that there was something wrong.

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

IN MEMORY OF A FRIEND.

THREE days ago I returned to my cottage, after nearly twelve months' absence in Eastern Europe. It is quaint and sunny—and damp—as always; the memorials of distant travel whereof you have heard so much welcome me home; the roses in my conservatory are as thick and as fragrant as ever. Time has flown lightly and pleasantly with home and owner, but in the big heap of letters on my table there is notice of change more than enough. I have reached the age when death becomes familiar, a visitant who sweeps round closer and closer, in a beat ever narrowing—striking here and there more rapidly and more nearly until oneself is struck. Four intimate friends have joined the majority since I left home; one, an old schoolfellow, who had never, I believe, visited more distant parts than France or Italy; the second, a French journalist, whose facile success proved his ruin; the third, an officer of Rajah Brooke's, who died in the Red Sea on his way home; the fourth, a South African farmer, wine-grower, digger, veterinary surgeon—the best and the happiest of men. He, his wife, and one of their children perished of fever within forty-eight hours. His executor writes to me of some business settled years ago; but my friend was never careful of his papers.

We called him Swelly Dave upon "the Fields," where I first made his acquaintance. His real name matters to no one; let us suppose it Davies. Everyone liked and admired when they knew him, but in that rough place he had an up-hill road to popularity, for Dave was consumed by an instinct and a genius for dress. At all times he could display a white shirt and a stiff collar. This neatness was not an hereditary attribute, I imagine. He confessed that his father had been a country vet., and that he himself had been educated for that modest profession. He had learned something of the business evidently, when his parents' death gave him a very

little fortune. This he spent quite quietly and respectably, satisfied with the present and the future of humanity when his trousers fitted, and their pockets held a shilling for a flower. It was not the dear old fellow's nature to run into debt. He reckoned up his waning cash with jealous integrity, and when it had ebbed to a certain point, he paid his tailor, packed his wardrobe, and sailed for the Cape. There he practised as a vet. until the discovery of diamonds attracted him to Dutoitspan. He was lucky from the outset, and as he neither drank nor gambled beyond moderation, Dave was soon enabled to indulge his one extravagance. I found him established at Benning and Martin's "Hotel" on my arrival, a tall young fellow with sleepy brown eyes, fair hair and moustache. We did not grow intimate for a long while, since his character was all that is least gushing. I have met only one European in the world who could sit still and keep silence as he could. On a shady bench outside the hotel door he would gaze dreamily at nothing from dinner-time till dusk. His pleasant smile was ready for an acquaintance, and his few words shrewd and purposeful enough, but he felt no need of a companion. At first the rude diggers resented alike the collars and the quiet, but when they found that this spick-and-span lounge was ready with his fists in a challenge—though he nearly always got the worst of an encounter—they respected him.

The incident which brought me into closer relationship with Dave took place after I had left Benning and Martin's to live on Bultfontein Hill. Let it be confessed at once that I have made a coherent story out of facts which could be, and were, summarised in two or three paragraphs of *The Diamond Fields News*; but the facts are perfectly true and notorious. If I transcribed those paragraphs you would cry out for detail and explanation; you would want to know more of the human beings concerned. Until this sad news reached me I could not have satisfied you without an unpardonable breach of friendship. But all are gone now who were interested in those strange events, and when memory stirs my imagination there is no need to resist.

It was in the latter end of 1872. One morning I descended Bultfontein Hill to inspect the market. Half-a-dozen waggons just arrived stood round the square; heavy boers and ragged followers of the camp

were transferring the contents to market-ables, ranged in a hollow parallelogram. The porters of the municipality, working inside this barrier, sorted and arranged the various "lots"—fruit, tobacco, vegetables, biltongue, and other products of the Free State and the Transvaal. The market-master, note-book in hand, strode to and fro upon the tables, entering, cataloguing, swearing, and stamping. At a distance stood a crowd of diggers, waiting to buy their stock of necessities before descending to the claims. Few of them had washed; water was threepence a bucket—salt at that, and "fetch it yourself." A grimy throng they were, therefore, in patched clothes from which the colour had departed, white with dust, scarred with old wounds and boils, red-eyed and blinking, and disfigured by huge blue spectacles of the roughest make. They leaned on spades, and picks, and "sorting-boards," smoking rank tobacco and shouting rough jests.

Crossing the open space I met Swelly Dave, absorbed in contemplation of a sack of oranges. "Have you been on the scoop?" I cried, taking his arm. "Your necktie is crooked, and your collar broken." "Don't, old fellow," he answered. "Louey has had a bad night, and they say there is no hope."

His eyes were brimming, his voice hoarse.

I had heard of this poor girl, who was the beauty of Dutoitspan in days before my arrival. For two months past she had been wasting with fever, caused rather by foul smells, heat, worry of flies, and bad food, than by disease. It was no secret that Dave loved her, but the girl was young and wilful, too giddy, and too much courted to heed his rather shy devotion.

"She is dying of thirst," continued Dave, "and the brackish water makes her sick. Every day for a week I have come to find oranges, but none arrived. The child shall have as many as I can carry to-day, if I pay a pound apiece for them."

I do not remember what they cost, but it was a price to startle the most reckless spendthrift; for other sick there were upon the Fields, and other devoted friends. We filled the sack which Dave had brought, and at his request I accompanied him to the wretched dwelling where Louey Parsons lay, with her father and sister. It stood in the worst part of the camp, where the irresponsible Kaffir ignored the Sanitary Commission. The air was sickly with a smell of garbage rotting in open

holes. Frowy diggers, waking from a drunken spree, blinked at the sunshine, and coughed till they choked at the door of foul canteens. Shouting black men went by in gangs, some to work, others, their term of service ended, trooping towards the veldt. Two in three of them carried a gun, the product of their wages, and all had a bundle of miscellaneous loot. They bade farewell to distant comrades in a cry very musical, but very melancholy, and peculiarly distressing, as we knew, to invalids.

"This is a bad quarter for a sick person," I said.

"You should visit it at night," Dave answered bitterly. "I tell you, Parsons has killed my girl in sheer pride and obstinacy. Heaven knows how they have lived for the last few weeks! Parsons' claim is no good, and he'll not take help. And so little Loo is dying!"

Before a small frame house, stained and patched, sat a grey old man smoking. His face did not prepossess me, but so white it was with yesterday's dust that we could scarcely trace the features. His shirt-sleeves, rolled to the shoulder, displayed only skin and muscle. He watched us approach with dry and swollen eyes.

"I've found some oranges to-day," said Dave. "Can I see Miss Clara?"

"Louey's awake," was the short reply; and the old man rose from his seat of mud, shouldered his pick and shovel, and strode off.

Dave called softly at the ragged door:

"Miss Clara, shall I come in?"

"Come in, Dave! Come in, you silly old man!" cried a thin but cheerful voice.

He turned to me with hope shining in his eyes.

"That's Louey!" he whispered.

After a moment, Dave called me, and I entered. There is no occasion to describe my visit. The child had no notion of her doom. She sat up in the miserable bed, supported tenderly by her sister, and ate the oranges with eagerness. The colour sprang to her wasted face, and her big eyes sparkled, as she laughed with Dave. But in two or three minutes the light faded suddenly, and Clara dismissed us. A very few days afterwards Louey died. Half the camp attended her funeral—everyone who had known the bright and laughter-loving little maid.

Dave's grief was altogether silent and restrained. True to his instinct, no outward sign showed the despair within. But, after

some two or three months, he quietly began to realise his fortune, and to talk of returning home, not for a permanency, but for a long visit. Meanwhile, the funeral had utterly exhausted Parsons' resources. But the man's hardness of nature forbade him to ask help, until he and his surviving daughter actually starved. Then he accepted a proposal carefully framed in a manner to spare his pride.

For five hundred pounds Dave sold to him one half of the best claims he had, the money to be paid out of profits. The other half Parsons was to work in their joint interest, taking a moiety of the yield after paying expenses. Dave's house also he took at a low value. The transfer duly registered, our friend left for home. I accompanied him on the voyage, and in England our intimacy grew. I loved the dear old fellow.

With the utmost composure he watched his second fortune vanish in follies more expensive than dress, and at the end of two years he bade me farewell. I never saw him afterwards, for he did not return to England. The events that follow were told me by a friend, who regarded Dave almost as warmly as I myself did. I put his narrative into the first person for convenience.

Parsons had extraordinary luck at last. In less than three months he had remitted the full amount due for house and half-claim. But he turned out to be one of the most objectionable diggers in camp, always foremost in making grievances against authority. That was an agitated time. Nothing had been settled as yet, beyond the transfer of Griqualand to the British Empire. The Commissioners might, perhaps, be bullied or persuaded to any action, and "diggers' meetings" assembled almost nightly for the purpose of trying it on. Parsons became a leading orator at these gatherings, spouting seditious nonsense from the market-table.

Nor did the surviving daughter much impress me, said my informant. Beauty she had beyond doubt, of a higher class, I should fancy, than those young charms which fascinated poor Swelly Dave. Her features were delicate and high-bred, her eyes full of life, but, I thought, hard. One could not mistake her neat upright little figure at any distance. I recognised it in the Main Street one day, as I drove from New Rush home.

Miss Parsons had been shopping, and I

overtook her at Michaelis' store. Many a stalwart young digger, trudging dirty from the claims with his spade upon his shoulder, gave me a jealous glance as he dived out of sight between the huts.

"So Dave is coming back?" I said as we strolled along.

"I didn't know," she answered coolly. "He makes a mistake. The diggings are not what they were."

"Perhaps Dave is not what he was."

"Oh, Mr. Dave will never change. He lives in a bandbox, and nothing can affect him."

"You think that he did not feel your sister's death much? I can assure you that is a grave mistake."

Miss Parsons' face changed.

"He suffered what he could, no doubt. A few tears leaked through the box. You are Mr. Dave's great friend, are you not?"

"No. He is very dear to me, but there are others in the camp who have known him longer and tried him more."

"Why," she cried, her clear eyes shining with anger, "you speak of this—this Mr. Dave as one would speak of a hero! It is ridiculous!"

"And how does your father speak of him, Miss Parsons?" I asked, stopping at her door.

She looked at me like a little fury, and went in.

In due time Dave arrived, hot and dusty, but otherwise the same. His friends had arranged a dinner to welcome him, and "the proceedings terminated," as the time-honoured formula runs, at a very late hour indeed.

Next day he called on Mr. Parsons, frankly told his situation, and asked for the accounts of his quarter share. That wretch pretended not to understand, produced the transfer, and accused Dave of an attempt to swindle.

The poor fellow did not answer much, and did nothing to obtain his rights. Louey's father was sacred. He told me the story with his usual calmness.

"It doesn't make much difference," he said; "I shall have to begin afresh. Perhaps someone will put me into a claim."

But of his old friends, some had retired on their fortune; others, disheartened, had gone farther north, to the gold diggings; others had withdrawn to different pursuits. Those remaining nearly all owned good claims, but their arrangements were permanently settled. People on whom Dave

had not such strong hold were disinclined to tempt their luck by employing a man once successful. For there is a superstition in the Fields, confirmed by a dozen cases in my own experience, that the digger has only one chance. If he trifle with it, or let it go, Fate takes revenge.

There were many claims "jumpable" on Dutoitspan and Bultfontein, and one of these Dave worked, cheerful and quiet; but his finds were absolutely nothing. He lived in my tent on Bultfontein Hill. At his request, I did not speak of Parsons' conduct.

The daughter I noticed only by a ceremonious bow when I chanced to meet her. But we came face to face one afternoon, and I could do no less in public than grasp the offered hand.

"Did I not say," she began, "that Mr. Dave had better not have returned?"

"You spoke with more knowledge of the facts than I had."

"I? How?"

The girl's impudence vexed me.

"You have proved yourself a wise child, Miss Parsons," I answered, "if there's truth in the proverb."

She coloured angrily, and stared, but I left her.

This incident I told to Dave, of course, as we sat at night.

"I should be sorry to suspect Clara," he said, "of any part in her father's conduct. We were never friends, but I used to think her as honest as high-spirited. How she loved little Loo! Her dislike for me arose from jealousy of the child's friendship, though, Heaven knows, Loo never pretended to care for me. Old fellow, I'm tired of this place! Will Palmer has asked me to join him, prospecting beyond the Hoek, and I've accepted. We start to-morrow."

"It's hard on two of our oldest voortrekkers to be inspanning again!"

"Read up your history of Christopher Columbus," he answered, laughing. "That voortrekker was ill-treated if you like."

Two days after, the pair started amidst some excitement; for a "prospecting expedition" had not left the Fields these many months past, and both men were popular.

I saw Miss Parsons at her door as the noisy little crowd went by. She knew by experience what that procession signified—the pony laden with tent and tools and cooking things, the men with rifle, revolver, and pannikin. Dave was

neat as usual, and excellently dressed, though not in Pall Mall fashion. The wife of an official had just presented him with a superb white ostrich feather, which he had curled round his broad-brimmed hat. As he raised it in passing, the girl coloured.

Our first news of the explorers came from the storekeeper at the Hoek. He wrote that they had crossed the river, against urgent warning. The chief Jantje and his Batlapins had lately become more offensive than usual, and my friend the storekeeper expected mischief. After this, nothing more was heard of Dave for nearly two months.

We vaguely knew at the Fields that Jantje had broken out, and was doing much injury to his neighbours. But there are no white people in his territory, and the Orange River is very broad. Half a troop of the Frontier Police marched to the Hoek, for what purpose nobody knew. The friends of the "prospectors" grew anxious.

Meanwhile another attack of their periodical fever had broken out among the diggers. New Rush discovered, all over again, that it was robbed by black labourers and white receivers. For the hundredth time it vowed in public and private that this sort of thing must be stopped with fire and blood.

So the diggers assembled in their thousands, burnt half-a-dozen canteens, and badly treated their owners. Then they caught some blacks, flogged them, and marched them about with ropes round their necks, looking for a tree.

In fact, the usual symptoms displayed themselves, and the usual result arrived. Our steady, hard-working camp took the disease in milder form; for we, who habitually looked after our own claims, had not so much to fear from theft.

Parsons made himself foremost in denouncing buyers of stolen gems. He raved upon the market-table nightly, to such effect that our peaceful diggers suddenly rose, without concert apparently, and burnt a sutler's house.

No evidence was brought against the accused, at least in public, but it was well he did not fall into the avengers' hands. Be it observed, however, that his guilt was probable enough.

Whilst I stood in the excited crowd, which disputed who should next be punished, a familiar voice hailed me above the din.

I looked round, and saw Dave and Palmer on horseback, with three armed and mounted blacks. The white men's clothes were rags, their faces thin and travel-worn, but they looked pictures of health.

"Come along," cried Dave gaily; "I must lodge a man in the tronc, and then we'll have such a palaver! Who is he? My prisoner, bless him! The trophy of my bow and spear. It's the same old game here; burning canteens, I suppose? Egad, I come at an opportune moment!"

The prisoner was a huge Batlapin, who, as he walked hidden by the mounted men, whined hymns. He was deposited at the tronc, upon explanation with the sergeant, and the others came with us home.

"Glorious chaps, these!" laughed Dave. "Two are Griquas and the other a Basuto. I say, Palmer, which of us is which?"

"You're a Basuto, and I'm a Griqua."

"What a memory you have! I shall never recollect until they allot me my wives. Do you understand, old fellow? We're chiefs, Will and I, promoted on the field of honour, when we smote Jantje hip and thigh, whilst you were groping for pebbles in a lime-kiln."

Certainly Dave was changed at last. The bath of excitement and action agreed with his constitution. Bright he had always been when roused for a moment, but languid and dreamy in general. Now he busied himself to make the negroes comfortable, and they regarded him with a smile of admiring affection.

When horses and men had been disposed for the night, and our rough supper finished, the pair told me their adventures, which I must summarise briefly.

After crossing the Orange, they found themselves environed by rumours and dire alarms.

There is a small colony of Basuto Kaffirs opposite the Hoek, rich and prosperous by the sale of diamonds honestly obtained.* These good fellows urged them not to proceed, for the Batlapins were on the war-path.

But Dave and his comrade would not be scared. That Jantje would dare ill-use white men seemed ridiculous, and they expected much more amusement than danger in witnessing the campaign. The good Basuto chief gave them horses and a

* This is the clan of John Katlands, of whom I discoursed in another "Traveller's Tale." See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 27, p. 28, "Some Skins."

half-dozen of picked warriors to guard them and report.

Thus reinforced, and secure of food, they abandoned the project of halting at Campbell Grounds, where, in truth, they had nothing to do.

Pushing straight on over the veldt, they beheld signs of trouble before reaching the first halt. The Griquas had sent away their old men, women, and children, with such household gear and cattle as could be rescued. A train of waggons streamed towards the Orange River.

The fugitives named a place where the men capable of bearing arms had appointed their rendezvous, but the Basutos did not know the spot, nor could they understand how to find it.

On the third march from the river, they saw burnt homesteads, dead cattle, and the signs of barbarous war. Now and then a small body of negroes would be discovered upon the naked veldt, but so far away that to pursue them was hopeless.

Next day, however, they met a plundering party of the enemy, who stood; and for the first time Dave heard the singing of a bullet. Two Batlapins were killed and one taken, who saved his life by guiding them to the Griqua rendezvous.

A distressing scene of confusion was that laager. The Griquas, brave enough, had lived for years in a peace profound. They had no war-chiefs, and not a man among them knew what ought to be done. The strangers were received with unspeakable delight, and they found apt pupils. Hottentot blood is scarcely less capable of training for war of its own style than is the perfervidum ingenium of the Kaffir.

Within a few days a successful foray was conducted into Jantje's country, and both parties discovered that Batlapin kraals are as easy to burn as Griqua farmsteads.

Thus a guerilla war began, whilst Jantje collected his power, and strove to drag Monkoroane, chief of the Corannas, into the dangerous game. Weeks passed by, the Griquas gaining confidence in themselves and their leaders. At length Jantje moved with all his followers. Scouts and prisoners gave timely notice, and the white generals secured a formidable contingent of Basutos, led by the old chief himself. After a desultory fight, which lasted half the day, Dave charged at the head of his cavalry. The Batlapins ran, and Jantje took refuge

among the Corannas, where he remained until late events tempted him to renew his senseless schemes (1879-80). No prisoners were taken, of course, excepting the man just lodged in the tronc, who saved his life by offering handfuls of coin.

Such was Dave's story. The gratitude and admiration of the negroes were not satisfied with conferring on their generals the barren honour of chieftainship. A subscription was organised, which took the form of cattle. Upon the hint that diamonds would be a kind of wealth more portable, two handfuls of fine stones, worth over fifteen hundred pounds, were substituted. And with this booty and their Batlapin captive the pair returned to Dutoitspan.

Next day the prisoner was examined privately at the tronc. In answer to the magistrate, he repeated his confession that he had stolen many gems and sold them. He named his master, whose claim lay at New Rush, and that gentleman, when summoned, recognised him at a glance. It remained only to identify the buyer, a process needing the extreme caution. At nightfall we went out with twelve constables in plain clothes, who strolled along in groups, disguised in an air of unconcern. Dave's black warriors marched arm-in-arm with the prisoner. He led us through the dirtiest and lowest quarters of the camp, and stopped at a distance from Parsons' old frame house, which you remember. Parsons had left it long ago, and it was now a canteen. Through the open doorway we saw a rude bar covered with the filthiest glasses and bottles. A small cask of pontak, another of Cape smoke, and a basket of gingerbeer stood on a shelf—the usual array of poisons. One tallow candle lit the dreary den, and shone dimly through the walls of canvas. Behind the bar stood a pale, unwholesome-looking man, and two examples of the lowest class of digger lounged on rough settles, smoking.

In two minutes the "surround" was complete, and the constables closing in almost touched each other in their circle. Then the sergeant stepped into the brighter ray of light thrown by the open doorway, exclaiming, "No resistance, Corny! You're my prisoner!" His pistol was drawn as he spoke. I have not seen fear so suddenly and awfully expressed as in that fellow's face. His jaw dropped, his eyebrows rose, cold sweat streamed down and glistened in the candlelight. He did not say a word

nor move, but the guests made row enough. They crushed back to defend themselves, shouting to their "brother-diggers." I saw a quick gleam in the barman's glassy eye; the candlestick rattled on the ground, and all was dark. Before the sergeant could flash his lantern, a cheery voice cried outside: "All right, sir! We've got Corny, a creepin' among the tent-pegs, he was!"

The barkeeper and his friends were led through a gathering crowd, which fought for the privilege of murdering them, so soon as the charge was known. We did our duty in protecting the frightened wretches, and then turned homewards. I saw that the suspicion in my own mind was agitating Dave, and we threaded our way silently through the labyrinth of claims. Arrived at home, seated with grog and pipe before the door, Dave rose suddenly, exclaiming: "I should have stayed. You won't sit up for me, old man?"

"I'll go back with you. There may be a row."

After a few yards, Dave said: "It's no use making mysteries. What do you suspect?"

"That Parsons was running that canteen, and that there's no time to lose, if you wish to warn him. But why protect the scoundrel, and risk your own life? He's one of the most finished blackguards on the Fields, and a mean hypocrite besides."

"I can't help that! Let us run!"

We reached the house breathless. The night was very dark, the street quiet, and we stole towards the door. Dave had raised his hand to tap, when it was seized. "None of that!" whispered the sergeant; and he led us quietly beyond earshot of those within. "I somehow guessed that your little game might be, Dave. Now, Parsons is bound to be took, but we don't want a row with the girl."

"What is the charge?" I asked.

"None yet. I'm waiting for the warrant."

"Then why should we not enter?"

"Because those are my orders. There may be documents and things. Ah, here comes the man I'm looking for! Now, mind, we're in the thick of the camp here, and if you make a row the old chap's life's not worth a chip of holt."

This was evident, and we drew aside. A neatly-dressed black, carrying a lantern, exchanged a word with the sergeant, tapped at the door, and handed in a note.

A moment afterwards, Clara appeared, and walked away with him.

"Mrs. G. has sent for her," muttered the policeman. "That's a signal that the warrant's issued."

There was nothing to be done but watch. Presently arrived G. himself, the magistrate. He knocked at the door, the sergeant and I behind him, for "I have not the courage," whispered Dave. Parsons opened it, and we walked in. This living room was just as Dave left it; the pictures, books, tablecloth, lamp, all familiar. Beside the stove stood Parsons, silent, looking keenly at G.

"I have an unpleasant duty," said the latter, in consecrated form, "Corny van Riet is charged with buying stolen diamonds, and I see sufficient cause for issuing a warrant against you."

Parsons was quite cool.

"Who accuses me?" he asked in a firm voice.

"No one. But to-morrow, or to-night, you will have five thousand accusers; and you know them."

"I have a right to ask why you suspect me?"

"Because I have reason to believe that Corny van Riet's canteen is yours. I may tell you that the police have been watching that place some time."

"Does Corny van Riet incriminate me?"

"Not yet. I take the responsibility of arresting you as much for your own safety as for any other reason. Give me your keys, and go quietly."

The old man steadily walked out with the sergeant, asking no questions about Clara. G. told us that his wife had undertaken to break the matter to the girl, and to keep her all night.

Then he sat down with his clerk to examine papers. I rejoined Dave, and we went home.

Next morning, very early, a note from G. was delivered, begging us to attend on him. We found huge excitement at the Pan—Parsons had strangled himself in the night. G. received us gravely, and produced a letter found on the prisoner's table addressed to Dave. It acknowledged his dishonesty in the matter of the claim, and declared that the vengeance of heaven, so strangely and secretly pursuing his crime, had driven him to suicide. Had he not cheated Dave, this course of events would not have followed. A note of hand for the exact sum due was enclosed, and, as

compensation, he left the whole claim to the man he had wronged. In a very brief farewell to his daughter, she was commanded to honour this last wish.

Whilst we talked, Clara came in. Her very lips were pale, but her eyes glowed. G. whispered hastily :

"She does not know the end !"

Advancing straight to Dave, the girl stood before him, rigid with deep passion.

"Why do you persecute my father ?" she said. "If you had loved Louey, you would have been kind to us for her sake. He has done you no harm. Is it because you hate me, that you try to ruin him ? I did not do you an ill-turn with Louey. If I had wished, she loved me better than you, and she would never have seen you again. Is it because my father has kept the money which you would have spent like a fool——"

"Miss Parsons," said G., interfering, "you are under a mistake. Mr. Davies does not persecute your father. He could not know to whom the prisoner who fell into his hands by chance would point as the receiver of stolen diamonds. And it would be more merciful at once to say that your father has confessed, not only the crime charged against him, but another also, committed to the great injury of Mr. Davies himself, which Mr. Davies had nobly concealed."

The girl looked from one to the other in amaze.

"Confessed ? Is this true, Mr. Dave ?"

"Yes, it is true."

After a pause she bowed and said :

"I humbly beg your pardon, sir," and went out.

I had heard nothing of these events, when, nearly two years afterwards, I received a pair of wedding-cards—they are old-fashioned at the Cape.

The dear friend whom we called "Swelly Dave" announced his marriage with Miss Clara Parsons. And within four years more both are gone.

IN THE SUNNY RHINELAND.

XI.

THERE is something in the aspect of this once free city of Frankfort at once free and imperial—a city that, with its civic rule, seemed at one time almost to share the throne of the Kaiser—there is something in its appearance and in its atmosphere, both moral and physical, that

is bracing and refreshing, after the modish stateliness of Wiesbaden. The animation in the streets, the lines of handsome buildings, fresh from the hands of architects and builders, with the evidences everywhere of prosperity and increasing wealth, of a transformation from brick, to say nothing of lath and plaster, to marble, bring one, with something of a shock, into the active bustling life of the present.

I am driving in a flaming yellow fly—hardly of the present, this—in shape like a miniature mail-coach. They have handsome, respectable vehicles on hire in Frankfort, but these are kept expressly for railway passengers. They put you in quarantine, as it were, and hoist the yellow flag over you as a stranger ; or one might be a prophet arriving in a fiery chariot. But, anyhow, I am driving in a yellow fly to the post-office, first through a belt of public gardens, and then through wide and handsome streets to the somewhat gloomy building of which I am in search. There is plenty of bustle here, too, and a throng passing in and out not composed of the tourist and flâneur, but of active young clerks, and business people generally. I get my own despatches, and then enquire for Madame Reimer's, but am met with a distinct negative. Unless I am furnished with legal authority to act for her, not even the question can be answered whether there is a letter for her or not. The official is quite right, of course, but his inflexible correctness is annoying for the moment. And then it strikes me that the incident is not an unhealthy one, after all, and I send a telegram to Madame Reimer, telling her of the contretemps, and begging her to come over to Frankfort herself. She will be delighted with the place, and someone else will be delighted to be her guide ; and, this business transacted, I drive to an hotel to get rid of my portmanteau and of my fiery chariot. It is an old-fashioned hotel, very quiet, but very comfortable.

Of course, there is but one thing to do when you come to Frankfort—one almost sacred duty that you feel it would be almost impiety to postpone. You would never think of eating your chicken and drinking your sherry at Stratford-on-Avon while you left the house where Shakespeare was born to wait your convenience ; neither could you rest and refresh yourself at Frankfort without first visiting the father-house of Goethe. It is a good word, that father-house, and, even if ambiguous,

is perhaps wisely so. To reach Goethe's house you leave behind the new and bustling part of the city, and come among quiet streets, with quaint gabled houses, transformed, perhaps, into shops and warehouses, but bearing upon them the stamp of antique civic dignity. The Goethe house itself is a handsome bourgeois mansion of more modern type, but still not of to-day, evidently—one of those pleasant-looking houses, red brick, of a tone warm and soft, slightly florid in sentiment, such as one would in England attribute to the days of the Stuarts, or, at latest, to those of Queen Anne. One feels a kind of nervous tremor in ringing the bell at the door, as if about to leave the living world altogether, and hold communion with the mighty dead; and when the wicket within is once passed, and the necessary mark disbursed, there is nothing rudely to disturb the illusion. A cool resonant house, with the sunshine playing upon the marble pavement of the wide landing-place, and flickering with refracted light upon the broad oaken staircase. There is a little courtyard below, cool and shaded, with an ancient pump, where the child Goethe must have played and splashed about as a youngster; and a tree leaning over from a neighbouring garden; everything still and silent, but with strange suggestions of the past, as if some door might open at any moment, and give passage to one of the poet's family—the young mother, smiling, but trembling a little; the stern father, misunderstanding and misunderstood, whom we might expect to order us out of the house without further ceremony; the sister, of whom we don't remember much, except that her brother loved her; and the boy himself, arrogant, but winning, his boyish petulance mixed with the airs of a young philosopher. Here opens the best parlour, with its folding doors, with a charming inner room, which seems to have been the library, all with the grave, serious, and simple feeling of long ago. But to mount the staircase, and come to the more private rooms of the house, brings on a feeling almost of awe. One treads reverently towards the room where the poet was born. I don't know why I should have this feeling myself. I have to take Goethe very much on trust, seeing him reflected, perhaps, in Lewes or Carlyle, and yet the face thus reflected, and distorted, perhaps, strikes as grand and godlike. And thus it is as a shrine, as one of the holy places of the world,

that one approaches the very birth-room of this shining spirit. Here is the outer room—the father's study and sitting-room, no doubt, and a bedroom within—the best in the house, the father's room, redolent of patriarchal dignity, and beyond that a humble little room, where the young wife endures the sorrow of her travail. It is something to feel, to realise all this, even if next moment scepticism interferes with startling doubts: "My friend, this is all nonsense. These may be, and no doubt are, the nuptial chambers of the respectable High Councillor Goethe and the Frau High Councillor; but as for this being the room where the poet was born—why, we know that the house was pulled down and rebuilt in Goethe's childhood, the poetkin himself assisting at the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone, dressed in the costume of a bricklayer; and in that case, what becomes of the tradition, strengthened by the solemn asseverations of the custodian, that this is the veritable room where the poet was born?"

Well, I am glad these doubts suggested themselves afterwards. For the moment I am under the glamour of faith and imagination, and am ready to accept with fervour the relics which the enthusiasm and patience of devotees have brought together: the toys and playthings of the child, his early frocks—relics rather these, perhaps, of the tender careful mother, who thus treasured them. Of the mother, too, is the spinet, with its faded melancholy tones, the very ghosts of musical chords; though doubtless the boy himself often hammered impatiently at the keys, seeking some outlet for the music in his soul, which would not be thus expressed. With the thoughts full of the boy Goethe it is rather startling to come upon his portrait at fourscore, the eyes still vehement, and retaining much of the arrogance and petulance of the child. The rooms are indeed full of relics, almost bewildering in their variety. Here are undoubted drawings by Goethe, very much of a botch indeed, and showing to the most casual observer that not that way either was there any outlet for the imprisoned spirit; there, photographs of all kinds, and of every degree of unpleasant literal faithfulness; and busts and portraits scattered here and there haphazard. The best parlour, or salon, itself is occupied by a quasi-learned society, whose chairs are arranged in long rows before the presidential table, itself covered with publications that testify to the almost

universal nature of the society's proceedings. Busts of the father, portraits of the mother, sketches of persons known to Goethe, and mentioned in his autobiography; there is here a very praiseworthy attempt to bring together whatever may illustrate the progress of his life, from the day he first drew breath here, to the moment of his death. But one feels that what most concerns us here are the records of his youth and its surroundings, and most precious of all are the mother's spinet, and the table at which she worked, as she told fanciful stories to the passionate child.

But, after all, I am glad when it is over, when I turn my back upon Goethe's father-house and am in the living world again, making my way to the hotel by quaint and quiet bye-streets. At first I thought that I was the only guest at the hotel, but this is not the case. A young priest has been dining here and is sitting over his flask of wine, blinking solemnly as he sips slowly, taking in the flavour of it, inhaling the delicate aroma. He is silent and demure, but surely his thoughts are not in his breviary. That amber liquid does not dispose to thoughts of fasts and mortifications. These German priests have a kind of instinct for good wine, and hence I feel sanguine as to the quality of that I order for dinner; nor am I disappointed. The waiter brings it up in a melancholy way, as if it were the last bottle of wine in the cellar. It is Rauenthaler, old and mellow; a liquid of pure gold, that seems to diffuse sunshine through the whole frame. I was tired before, but the dinner and wine have refreshed me and I feel anxious to make the acquaintance of the Main river, hitherto only seen at a distance; and so through public gardens which surround the city on all sides, taking the place of the mediæval walls and towers commemorated by Goethe, I reach the Main quay. A railway down the middle of the quay rather spoils it as a promenade, but the stream is a pleasant one, running past islands and floating baths, with many boats skimming its surface; mostly outrigged boats light and frail, with business-like crews in flannels, quite English-looking. The frequent bridges, too, are a feature in the scene, and, chief of all, the old Main bridge built in the fourteenth century, with a statue of Charlemagne in the centre. This, too, is one of the numerous bridges in which the devil had a hand. The work of construction being too much for the builder, who found him-

self foiled by the rapid stream, he appealed to the father of builders—of jerry builders at least—who, as usual, was quite ready to help his suppliant out of his difficulty, on the usual terms; no commission or percentage, but a bonus of the first living soul that should cross the bridge after its completion—a contract that, as far as the builder was concerned, a lawyer might cavil at as rather *ultra vires*. Anyhow, the devil got nothing out of it but a cock which had been induced to cross the bridge—not being a bird given to such direct progression in a general way, but induced, perhaps, by a cunning arrangement of grain along the roadway; with the result of being speedily converted into devilled chicken by the outwitted fiend. And the memory of the cock is preserved in a figure of the bird perched upon a crucifix on the bridge; a figure which probably suggested the legend. But the prevalence of such legends indicates perhaps a reminiscence of the ancient practice of immolating a victim at the foundation of any important building to ensure its strength and continuance; a human victim at one stage of civilisation, a slave or a prisoner; afterwards, as feelings of humanity developed, commuted for some domestic animal.

Here is a good place to rest awhile and watch the varying stream of foot-passengers. Somehow, the whole place seems to be filled with associations of its great man, not in statues and squares so much as in general aspect and spirit. The children who roam about in joyous bands, free and unembarrassed; the pretty girls, neither prudish nor forward—we wonder whether their great-grandmothers, perhaps, lived in the city in their day, and captivated the susceptible heart of young Goethe—and this river, too, flowing towards the red sunset, and just tinged with the pervading glow, he must have sat and watched it many a time on just such an evening as this, when he first saw Nature's beauty in the light of dawning passion. And thus, when he was already great and famous, and he sat down with self-conscious purpose to write the great poem of his life, there came to him as a heroine none of the figures familiar to him in his refined and cultivated life, no courtly dame or princely blue-stocking, but, instead, the pretty milliner's girl of Frankfort, the remembrance of whose innocent caresses had power to thrill the man even at four-score!

And we remember that the harmless summer passion came to a climax while princes and potentates were meeting and processioning in all the bravery of that age of wigs and swords, while the city was in the throes of its grand imperial election; and how the fire of it all went out, and imperial kaiser and grand electors smouldered away unheeded, when parental authority and respectable burgomagisterial instincts drove poor Gretchen—a scape-goat for the sins of others—away into the wilderness.

And that brings to mind how mixed up with the early days of Goethe are the later days of the grotesque, but respectable, Romanesque empire. Always more or less grotesque, the bluff and ruddy Teuton posing as Roman emperor recalls the memory of a Fijian in a cocked hat, but growing more grotesque and less respectable as the day of doom approached. And there is this striking analogy between the respective environments of our Shakespeare and of the German Goethe, that each of them grew up surrounded by the forms and ideas of a world that was fast passing away. And in their works, although the harbingers and prophets of the coming time, they seem neither fully conscious of the greatness of the change, nor, indeed, to relish it—what they see of it—over-much.

There is a loss of picturesqueness certainly. These pleasant gardens and trim gravelled walks hardly reconcile for the loss of the grim walls and frowning towers of old Frankfort: those walls of which Goethe recalls his annual circuit, when he got such strange peeps into the inner economy of citizen life, and all the secrets of the back-yards were revealed to him.

Neither can the broad cheerful streets altogether atone for the loss of the alleys, dark and dim, damp always, and wretchedly cold in winter, but replete with grand effects of light and shade, and rich with buried architectural treasures.

And the Jews' quarter! Yes, it would be pleasant to see the Jews all locked up at night within their own quarter. Jewish disabilities were, perhaps, not an unmixed evil, when, as Goethe tells us, the pretty Jewesses of his day esteemed it a privilege to walk about with a young Christian. How we have changed all that!

But this again puts us in mind of another thing to be remembered at Frankfort. Here is the cradle of the Rothschilds. Close by, in the Judengasse, is the house

where their fortunes first began to sprout. A momentous fact; but one that does not kindle enthusiasm. I should feel more interest in them, perhaps, if I had a substantial letter of credit to their address. Then I should visit with joy their offices in the Fahrgasse—they have not moved far from the old Jews' quarter—and perhaps devote half a page of manuscript to the early annals of the family. But as they have no money for me, what do I care how rich they may be?

Still, the visitor to Frankfort may fairly divide his subject under three heads, in which it will be good for him to come well primed to the grand old city. There is Goethe's Frankfort, full of interest and charm, and partly embracing the other two, to which the poet's autobiography will be the best guide; and there is imperial Frankfort, redolent of memories of the old kaisers, from Frederick Barbarossa down to the last unlucky Hapsburg, and not mere barren associations, such as may cling to a particular spot when all about is changed and out of keeping, but memories of events where the buildings themselves where they occurred, and all their surroundings, remain practically unaltered; a scene that only requires the figures of the actors—and these imagination can well supply—to impress itself upon the mind as vividly as if one had been the Wandering Jew and had seen it all.

And that brings me to the third head—to the settled Jews, that is, who have for centuries made Frankfort their headquarters, and thriven in the crowded Judengasse. As for that locking up business, clearly there must have been a good deal of farce in it, as also in the regulation that the Jews must not come forth on Sundays or holidays. If a man had a mortgage on the kaiser's palace, the royal jewels in pawn, an overdue bond endorsed by the head burgomaster, such a one was not likely to be kept under lock-and-key by some insignificant Teutonic beadle.

However, as I said before, not having any pecuniary interest in the Jews of Frankfort, I shall leave this part of the subject. But to-morrow I intend to devote to imperial Frankfort in a leisurely kind of way. At the present moment I am thirsty, from the fatigue of a long hot day, and I plunge into a neighbouring beer-cellar to refresh myself with the cool and sparkling lager.

There is a considerable sloop of beer in

this cellar, which seems to be a kind of underground depôt for post-office officials. They take their meals here, I fancy, highly-seasoned sausage in which the garlic has not been forgotten; they spend their leisure moments here; very likely they sleep here. Everything is on a footing of brotherly and sisterly equality. Brotherly as regards the post-office officials, sisterly in respect of Charlotte, the barmaid. She is a trifle dishevelled; she heightens the prevalent impression of garlic, especially when she leans affectionately over her guest in placing his jug of beer before him; but she is charmingly sympathetic; she sits down beside you to adjust the reckoning. I don't think she would object to an arm placed about her waist; but all in good faith. Nobody is jealous of any little attentions she may show or receive, and everybody is disposed to add to the general content by offering her obtrusive caresses that excite continuous laughter; Charlotte leading the chorus. And here I get a big glass mug of beer for something less than a penny; a beer that excites no unpleasant afterthoughts as to the prudence of taking so much malt liquor; a beer that if it could be retailed of the same price and quality in English beer-saloons would put the temperance lecturer out of court, and make an end of wife-beating altogether. We are none of us inclined to beat our Charlotte; if our continued potations have any effect it is to make us more affectionate and good-tempered. I should gladly sit here and drink many glasses of beer, but, alas! the atmosphere momentarily becomes more oppressive; more post-office men are coming down the steps; more garlic is in course of maceration; more beer is slopped over; more cigars are lighted—there must be twenty or thirty already going in this not extensive cellar. Yes, my Charlotte, I would gladly drink more beer if only to make the reckoning more respectable, but it seems strange to put down a penny and get change out of it. Will she be offended if I offer her the odd pfenning as a slight tribute of brotherly affection? Well, not exactly offended, but she laughs as if she thought me a strange man.

It is now that I feel the pinch of my solitary state. I am too tired to walk about any more, and yet too restless to go to bed at once. The solitary priest has retired for the night; the gas is turned down, except one flaring jet where the depressed-looking waiter is poring over the hotel day-book,

as if seeking food for melancholy in the retrospect of unpaid bills.

There is nothing for it then except to smoke a cigar at my bedroom window, and watch the lights glow and change as some belated train creeps softly into the railway terminus. Then there is a slight bustle as passengers come out and disperse, while sundry yellow flies, resplendent even by lamplight, drive away in different directions. Then there comes a knock at the door. It is a telegram from John, which has been in the house several hours it seems; just a message to say that they will all be over at Frankfort by the train arriving about noon. So I make up my mind to see all I can of the city before they come; for after that everything will be in a whirl.

A FRENCH KNIGHT OF THE ROAD.

DURING the Regency of Philip Duke of Orleans and the early part of the reign of Louis the Fifteenth, organised bands of highwaymen, headed by leaders whose audacious ingenuity for several years completely baffled the vigilance of the police, not only infested the remote provinces of France, but even the immediate neighbourhood of Paris, and not unobtrusively the capital itself. The most redoubtable chiefs of these marauders were Cartouche (whose exploits, besides having furnished the theme of a contemporary poem by the actor Grandval, and of a comedy by Legrand, form the subject of one of Thackeray's most graphic sketches) and his scarcely less notorious rival Poulailleur, a few passages in whose adventurous career are, from their characteristic singularity, worth recording.

According to all accounts, he was of a very different stamp from the majority of his associates, having received a fair education, and being naturally endowed with a more than average share of intelligence. His personal appearance, moreover, was sufficiently attractive to enable him to sustain without disadvantage whatever character the exigencies of his "profession" might compel him to assume. What first led him to the "road" is not stated, nor is anything known of his parentage except that it was "respectable"—an epithet scarcely applicable to his own mode of life. It is, however, certain that at a comparatively early age he had already planned and accomplished several daring robberies, one of which, in particular, chiefly owing

to the social position of the victim, became for some days the talk of the town. Among the audience at the opera on a gala-night was a lady of high rank, whose splendid display of jewels attracted general notice; two diamond bracelets, especially, of the finest water, exciting the envy of the surrounding fair ones, one of whom, a princess of the blood royal, was so struck with their brilliancy that she had eyes for nothing else, and extolled their magnificence in a voice sufficiently loud to be overheard by the occupants of the pit, where Poulailier, disguised for the nonce as an irreproachably-attired gallant of the period, was standing. While most of his neighbours were discreetly smiling at the august lady's enthusiasm, the idea occurred to him that he might possibly profit by it; and quietly leaving his place, he made his way to the box where the queen of diamonds sat enthroned, and, after apologising for the intrusion, informed her that the princess, whose admiration of the bracelets had not been unobserved by their wearer, had charged him to request her to entrust one of them to her for a few minutes, in order that she might examine it more closely. Highly flattered, Madame de B—— immediately unclasped the ornament and handed it to her visitor, who, with many assurances that the greatest care should be taken of it, withdrew, and naturally made off with his booty. Half an hour elapsed without any sign of his reappearance, and at length Madame de B——, growing impatient, summoned an attendant and despatched him with a respectful message to her royal highness, soliciting the return of the bracelet, as the conclusion of the performance was approaching. The princess, in reply, sent word that she never had it, nor should, under any circumstances, have taken the liberty of asking for it; and the unfortunate owner, convinced that she had been the dupe of an ingenious thief, was fain to console herself by reflecting that it might have been worse, as she had still one bracelet left. Some days later, an individual in the orthodox garb of a police official presented himself at her hotel, bringing the welcome intelligence that the missing jewel had been recovered, and would be restored to her by the magistrate in whose charge it had been deposited, as soon as the latter had satisfied himself, by comparing it with the second bracelet, that it was really the one she had lost. Madame de B——, overjoyed at the news, and not entertaining the least suspicion of her

visitor's good faith, at once delivered the precious object into the hands of the supposed "exempt," and, it is needless to add, never saw him or either of her bracelets again.

Although, in the early part of his career, Poulailier usually conducted his operations single-handed, he nevertheless occasionally availed himself of the aid of an accomplice, as in the following instance. Strolling into a theatre one evening, he remarked among the spectators a well-known marquis, evidently more bent on displaying his airs and graces than on listening to the actors, and every now and then indulging in a pinch of snuff from a magnificent gold box set round with brilliants. The opportunity was too tempting to be withstood, and Poulailier, who had already recognised a confederate standing at one of the side entrances of the pit, contrived to exchange a few words with him, after which he quietly edged his way through the crowd and placed himself immediately behind the marquis. Presently, addressing the latter in a low tone, he enquired if he might take the liberty of requesting him to turn his face a little to the right.

"Why so?" asked the astonished beau.

"I ought not to betray secrets, monsieur," was the reply; "but you will not perhaps be offended if I tell you that a friend of mine—one of our most talented painters—who is standing near the pit door on our left, has been commissioned by a certain lady of the court to sketch your portrait; and has just made a sign to me, signifying the attitude most favourable for the purpose."

The marquis looked in the direction indicated, and, perceiving an individual with a pencil and note-book in his hand, whose eyes were intently fixed on him, never for an instant doubted the truth of the story; but, charmed with the homage thus paid to his fascinating exterior, negligently pocketed his snuff-box, and assumed what he considered to be an irresistible pose.

"Will that do?" he said.

"Admirably," replied his neighbour. "Keep as you are for a few moments longer, and the likeness will be perfect."

Five minutes elapsed, and the marquis, growing rather weary of his constrained position, intimated as much in a whisper to his new acquaintance, but received no answer; and, on turning round, discovered that he, as well as the painter, had vanished as if by enchantment; and, what was more

serious, that his own watch, purse, and snuff-box had disappeared with them.

Trifles like these, however, were soon abandoned by Poulailler for higher game; and, with the exception of an occasional visit to Paris, his operations were henceforth chiefly confined to the provinces, where, as the acknowledged leader of a numerous and well-armed band, he set at defiance the combined resources of the police and "maréchaussée." So skilfully were his expeditions planned, as completely to baffle the keenest and most experienced of Vidocq's predecessors; while, owing to the rapidity of his movements, and the constant reports of his sudden appearance, when least expected, first in one part of the country and then in another, the popular belief in his ubiquity was universal.

Travelling, never very safe in those days, became almost impracticable without a strong escort, and even then was rarely undertaken except in cases of absolute necessity. The lumbering diligences of the period, however, still continued to ply between the larger towns, but at uncertain intervals and scarcely ever with a full complement of passengers; and it was in a vehicle of this description, bound from Cambrai to Brussels, that Poulailler, starting on a "professional" tour through Flanders, and so artistically disguised as to defy recognition, took his place one morning, and listening for want of more profitable occupation to the conversation of his two fellow passengers in the interior, discovered to his great amusement that they were discussing his own enormities and those of his band. One of them, a portly individual in a clerical dress, was particularly energetic on the subject, and animadverted severely on the conduct of the authorities, owing to whose culpable negligence such crimes were allowed to go unpunished; adding that if he were in the place of M. Hérault (the then lieutenant of police) he would soon have the malefactors brought to justice. When he at length paused for breath, Poulailler quietly asked him if he had ever been personally attacked by the gang, to which the other replied in the negative; but declared, nevertheless, his firm intention on his next visit to Paris of seeing M. Hérault and impressing on him the necessity of more active measures. Having ascertained by a few skilful questions that his implacable enemy was a canon of Brussels, named De Potter, and that he proposed setting out for the French capital in the course of the ensuing month, and taking

up his quarters at a hotel in the Rue Tournon, the robber laid his plans accordingly; and in three weeks from that date the lieutenant of police received the following letter:

"MONSIEUR,—I confess to my shame that I am one of Poulailler's associates, and if I venture to address you, it is in the hope of obtaining pardon for my past offences in return for the secret I am about to reveal to you. Poulailler, who lately robbed and assassinated M. de Potter, a canon of Brussels, is on the point of arriving in Paris, wearing the dress and carrying on his person the passport of his victim."

After perusing this unsigned epistle, M. Hérault instantly commanded a strict watch to be kept at the different entrances to the city; and a few days later the exempts posted at the Barrière St. Martin arrested an individual answering exactly to the description given, and, in spite of his cries and indignant remonstrances, conveyed him to the official residence of their chief. Fortunately for the prisoner, the lieutenant was at that moment giving audience to two inhabitants of Brussels, who immediately recognised the new comer, and positively affirmed that he was no other than M. de Potter himself. Greatly incensed at the trick that had been played on him, M. Hérault, with a very bad grace, ordered the supposed highwayman to be set at liberty and conducted to his hotel, which he no sooner reached than he found awaiting his arrival a letter, in precisely the same handwriting as the one addressed to the lieutenant. It ran thus:

"This will be a lesson to you in future, my dear canon, not to wish ill to those who have done you no harm. You can scarcely have forgotten certain remarks made by you between Cambrai and Brussels a few weeks ago. One of your fellow travellers,

"POULAILLER."

As might naturally be expected, M. Hérault's indignation at having been so cruelly mystified knew no bounds, and he decided forthwith on offering a reward of a hundred crowns, in addition to a post worth two thousand livres, to whichever of his agents should succeed in capturing the audacious highwayman. Shortly after, while he was engaged one morning in the duties of his office, the visit of Count de Villeneuve was announced; and an individual perfectly unknown to the lieutenant having been ushered into the latter's sanctum, requested a private interview.

In reply to M. Hérault's enquiry as to

the motive of his coming: "A mere trifle, monsieur," he said, "but, before entering into details, allow me to secure myself against any possible interruption." In another moment he had bolted the door, and drawn from his pocket a dagger. "You see this, monsieur," he continued; "it is poisoned, and the slightest scratch produces instant death; you wish to see Poulailier, and I am here. Remain quiet, and you have nothing to fear; a single cry, and you are a dead man." With these words, he proceeded with a cord he had brought for the purpose to attach the terrified magistrate so tightly to the chair in which he was sitting that he could neither move hand nor foot, gagged him, and then, forcing open a chest standing in a corner of the room, extracted from thence three or four bags of money amounting to several thousand crowns, which he rapidly concealed about his person, and, with an ironically respectful bow to the despoiled lieutenant, unbolted the door, and was far beyond the reach of pursuit before the casual entrance of an attendant had spread the alarm, and delivered M. Hérault from his bondage.

If there was one thing that Poulailier prided himself on more than another, it was his gallantry towards the fair sex; even when circumstances compelled him to recruit his finances at their expense, the operation was effected so courteously and with such an irresistible fascination of manner as almost to reconcile them to their loss. Nay, one lady, it is said, went so far as to assert that, notwithstanding the first shock of mortification experienced by her on seeing her jewel-box rifled, and her diamonds transferred from their cases to the marauder's pockets, he had thanked her so gracefully for what he was pleased to term a charming souvenir, that she could not for the life of her be angry with him. This avowal, backed up by others equally enthusiastic, and magnified according to the fancy of the narrators, naturally tended to invest Poulailier with a certain romantic prestige which an adventure—one of the latest and most talked about in his career—contributed not a little to augment.

One of his spies having informed him that a large sum of money, the produce of five hundred shares in Law's bank, had been temporarily deposited in the Hôtel de Brienne, he determined on appropriating it to his own use; and, after several ineffectual attempts, contrived to enter the house unobserved, and concealed himself

for three days and nights in a garret, his only nourishment during that time being a small supply of chocolate he had brought with him. His patience was at length rewarded by the departure of Madame de Brienne to a grand ball at the Hôtel de Marsan, followed by the adjournment of the major part of her retinue to a neighbouring wine-shop. Profiting by their absence he penetrated into the state apartments, forced the lock of an iron safe in madame's own chamber, and took from it two thousand louis in gold, and a pocket-book, the contents of which he imagined to be of considerable value. Finding, however, on leaving the hôtel, that the supposed treasure was merely a collection of unimportant papers, he returned them to their owner two days later, with a note couched in the politest terms and signed with his name, requesting Madame de Brienne to pardon him for inadvertently depriving her of them, and adding that if the loss of the two thousand louis was likely to occasion her the slightest inconvenience, he would at once restore them with two thousand more from his own private resources. This epistle, widely circulated at Versailles, greatly amused the court, and for at least a week nothing was talked about but the gallantry of the "Chevalier de" Poulailier.

So courteous a robber merited, it may be thought, some indulgence; but lieutenants of police in those days were not apt to be sentimental, and Poulailier, betrayed a few months later by one of his accomplices, was, after a summary trial, condemned and executed. On appearing before his judges, he boldly maintained that, whatever might have been his offences against the law, he was guiltless of two charges falsely imputed to him; declaring that he had never stained his hands with the blood of a fellow-creature, nor failed in the respect which every man of honour owes to woman!

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOWY.

CHAPTER XXXI. TEMPLE VANE.

MISS CHEVENIX thankfully availed herself of the hour of solitude in her own room before dinner, which the comfortable custom of Horndean secured to her; she wanted to think, after so much mere feeling.

A small, bright, wood fire was burning

on the hearth, the polished brass dogs were winking in the cheery, crackling flame ; the autumnal evening chill was excluded by the thick damask curtains ; the large and lofty room, with its carved oak panels and ancient tapestry, its high mantelpiece in oak, surmounted by the escutcheon of the Charlecotes, its great carved and plumed bedstead, large enough to fill a modern room, and on which lay a satin coverlet of cunning needlework which would have rejoiced the soul of South Kensington, had a look of perfect comfort and repose. Beatrix lighted the candles on her dressing-table, and seated herself, with a slight shiver, by the fire.

There was a strange trouble in her thoughts, mixing itself up with her happiness and her love ; a trouble that was not the great one besetting her. She would, however, put it aside, until she had thoroughly considered the position of her own affairs.

She was happy ; it was necessary to settle that with herself beyond all doubt. She had secured that which she held to be essential to happiness, and she loved the man who was to bestow it all upon her—loved him with a passionate fullness of love that might almost have moved her to self-sacrifice, had it been called for, and had she known what it meant. She allowed the conviction, the deep enjoyment of this sentiment to fill all her heart and mind for a while ; it was the first time she had ever been happy in a feeling given to another ; and then she turned her thoughts to the love she had won. Could she trust it ? Was it as true and firm as it was passionate ? Supposing she were to tell the truth ; supposing she broke with Mrs. Mabberley, defied her ; acknowledged to Mr. Horndean that her present life was a sham, and that she had entered upon the deception with a view to a "good" marriage, what then ? Would he believe that she really loved him, or would he see in himself only the dupe that she had, before she knew him, intended him to be ? Was her power over him, the spell of her rare and splendid beauty, potent enough to induce him to accept all the truth, to put it behind him for ever, and to trust her in that future for which, in her blind, untaught way, she formed resolutions not without some nobleness. She loved him ; she would make him happy ; they would enjoy life together. Yes, she thought, as the hurried, eager, passionate words he had spoken recurred delightfully to her, and the new softness once more diffused

itself over her face ; she might tell him the truth, and be done for ever with this horrid sham, in which there was something that inspired her with an indefinable fear, that no reasoning with herself could dispel, and that had grown upon her strangely this very day.

She rose and paced the room, checking off the points of her position, and every instant gaining in resolution, when she remembered, with a sudden shock, Mrs. Townley Gore ! To tell Mr. Horndean the truth, to trust to his clemency, was quite another thing from allowing the facts to become known to his sister. She knew her too well to trust her in circumstances that would call for the exercise of generosity ; their mutual regard was a mere matter of social convenience, and she had been the most carefully deceived of Beatrix's friends, because she was the only one from deceiving whom she had derived downright amusement. What would Mrs. Townley Gore do ? And how far would Mr. Horndean be influenced by his sister ? Beatrix had the rare faculty of looking at things, when she was in earnest, with the eyes of her judgment, unobscured by her personal wishes, and she was constrained to answer these two questions very much to her own disadvantage. Mrs. Townley Gore knew more of her mind than anyone, for Beatrix had never concealed her cynicism from her ; and she would scoff at the idea of there being any reality in her love for Frederick, if she knew that she was a penniless adventuress. As for her influence with Frederick, it was evidently great ; and backed by the arguments which she could adduce to prove to him that he was only a dupe, it might outweigh the charms that had caught his volatile fancy.

Beatrix remembered well that in Frederick's troublesome days Mrs. Townley Gore had dwelt upon his inconstancy and utter want of principle where women were concerned.

"Want of principle," was one of those phrases that Beatrix regarded as "jargon," but she took the thing it meant into consideration when it concerned herself. A storm of doubt and difficulty arose in her mind, and might have been traced upon her face.

No ; she must not place herself at the mercy of Mrs. Townley Gore. She must at all events temporise ; making use in the meantime of all the power which her secret understanding with Frederick would

give her to win him completely to herself, and so secure her empire over him that she should have nothing to fear. The present would be too soon. This conclusion brought her relief, and she was able to think of the happiness of the moment. To meet Frederick as his affianced wife, in the presence of others, the precious secret being all their own, had a charm for Beatrix's naturally secretive disposition. She was glad that the dinner-party was to be a rather large one; she would take additional pains with her dress; he should think her more than ever beautiful. She looked around her at her room and all its handsome contents, with a new and pleasant sense of proprietorship; it would be delightful to go down presently and take her place among the guests, where she was ere long to be hostess, and to know that her lover would be thinking just the same thoughts.

Beatrix rang for her maid, and put herself into her hands at once. She rarely spoke after she had given her directions briefly; it was a new experience for her attendant to find her changing her mind about her gown, and dissatisfied with the arrangement of her hair. And as Benson's successor was by no means a machine, and for reasons of her own felt more than ordinary curiosity about her mistress, she permitted herself to wonder what it was that Miss Chevenix's thoughts were so intent upon, afterwards, as she sat before the mirror, while her new maid's quick fingers braided the bright tresses, and formed them into a diadem upon her head, looking at her own image as though she saw it not. It was something that caused her to frown almost as darkly as Mrs. Townley Gore herself could frown; it was something that sent an angry flush up into her red hair, and over her white neck; it was the sudden suggestion of her common sense that under any circumstances she must have had a similar difficulty to encounter, on succeeding in securing the "good" marriage that was the avowed object of the compact between Mrs. Maberley and herself, and Mrs. Maberley must have known that! Her own short-sightedness now seemed to her wonderful. In short-sightedness on Mrs. Maberley's part she did not believe. Whatever was to be the result, or the termination, of the bargain between them, she was quite sure Mrs. Maberley had foreseen and calculated it. She remembered the exact words of the offer made to her:

"I propose that you should come and live in my house, where everything shall be made agreeable for you, that you consult me with regard to your movements, cultivate the people whom I recommend, accept the invitations that I select; and undertake, if you get a good offer of marriage, to fix the time for your marriage at my dictation."

She remembered as distinctly the advantages she was to gain by acceding to these terms. It seemed to her that she could now hear the even low tones of Mrs. Maberley's voice as she set them forth:

"I will hold over my own claims on your father's estate; and I will make an arrangement with the other creditors that will free you from any annoyance. If you agree to my terms I will enable you to maintain, until you shall have made a suitable marriage, precisely the same appearance as before, so that all the world may take you for the inheritor of your father's fortune, to whom his death has made no external difference."

The dilemma of the present was, then, prepared for her from the first, and she had not seen that. The day of reckoning had not entered into her calculations. But the woman who had made her this perfidious offer, the woman who held her in chains of slavery, none the less real because she could neither grasp nor define them; what was her meaning? She could not tell; she had not the slightest clue to it. A cold and sickly feeling of dread crept into the heart of Beatrix, and from thence to her nerves. She shivered under her maid's dexterous hands, and that observant woman knew as well as she did that the shiver was from within, not from without. Mademoiselle was cold, no doubt, and tired, she said, but there, it was done. Had mademoiselle ever seen her own head looking better, more distinguished, more entirely in the style that became her? Beatrix threw off her pre-occupation with a resolute effort. Of these things and all that attached to them, she would think to-night; for the present she would put them from her, and look beautiful with all her might. Her face was her fortune; it remained to be seen whether she was solvent. This was a strange mood in which to meet her newly-affianced lover, in their solitude à deux in the midst of a crowd, but Beatrix brought her strong will to bear upon it, and when she entered the great gallery, richly dressed, and with her accustomed air of self-possession and dignity, it was no wonder that Mr. Horndean's

heart swelled with triumph as he looked at her, and said to himself, "She is the fairest woman in the world, and she is mine."

That evening was one continuous triumph for Beatrix. She had not over-estimated in her fancy the pleasure which the secret understanding between Frederick and herself would give her; every word, every look was fraught with a subtle delight. Never had she seen him so agreeable, so handsome, so entirely free from ennui, so attentive to everybody, so desirous to please. Once or twice she fancied Mrs. Townley Gore was very observant of her brother, and wondered whether she was tracing to their true source the pride and happiness that were legible on his face, and audible in his voice; but, if it were so, his sister was not displeased. The lovers had not much time for talking together during the evening, for the general eagerness to hear Beatrix sing was not to be resisted by her in her high good-humour, and so fine was her singing that night, so full of expression and true melody, that Frank Lisle, always impressionable, quarrelled with himself about her, and protested to himself that he was a churl to dislike her as he had hitherto done. "Fred is safe to marry her," so ran his thoughts, "and with such colouring, and such a voice, there must be good in her."

When Beatrix was alone in her room the elation of the evening quickly passed away, and she returned to her vexed thoughts. Should she write to Mrs. Maberley then and there, and tell her that the compact between them must be explained or broken? She knew in her heart this would be the wisest course, but she had not the courage to adopt it. Love, in whose lordliness she had never believed, had taken full possession of her; an extraordinary timidity had also come to her. The worst would be so infinitely bad to face that she must at least delay about facing it. For the first time in her life Beatrix Chevenix submitted to the vague and unknown, rather than confront the thing she feared.

Early on the next day but one, Beatrix left Horndean on a visit to Sir Edward and Lady Vane. The carriage in which she was to be conveyed to the railway-station, accompanied by Mr Horndean and his sister, was at the door, and Mr. Townley Gore and Frank Lisle were exchanging farewells with the departing guest, when Miss Chevenix's maid, handing a dressing-bag to the footman, said to him :

"Tell me, then; I have understood ill; which of these gentlemen is Mr. Horndean?"

"Why that one, coming down with Miss Chevenix, of course, mademoiselle."

"And the other?"

"The other is Mr. Lisle."

"Your master, then, is not a painter?"

"Certainly not. What can you be thinking of, mademoiselle?"

"Nothing. Never mind. I don't know."

In his daily letters to Beatrix, Mr. Horndean urged her to arrange with Mrs. Maberley for her return to Horndean, and assured her that his sister would be glad to meet his wishes with respect to her plans for the winter. This constituted the one drawback to the pleasure with which she received his letters; for she remained unable to make up her mind about her course of proceeding towards Mrs. Maberley. The country house at which she was now staying was a much more lively one than Horndean. Sir Edward and Lady Vane were fond of company, and never happy in the country unless their house was as full as it could be, without inconveniencing their guests, and they were indefatigable in providing amusement for their successive parties. Stiff people, whose own houses were deadly dull, and their own solemn grandeur indisputable, were given to talk of the "mixture" that was to be encountered at Temple Vane, but they were very glad to be invited to meet the mixture, and Sir Edward and his wife laughed at them. Young people were delighted to go to Temple Vane, for there was always something pleasant to do, and generally some one interesting to see. Vane was capitally situated, in a good and populous neighbourhood, and the dances, private theatricals, garden-parties, and picnics, which Lady Vane was never tired of organising, according to the season and the weather, were always certain to be successful entertainments. Beatrix was a favourite with Sir Edward and Lady Vane, and, under ordinary circumstances, she liked a visit to Temple Vane well enough. She was considered a great acquisition there, because, as Lady Vane was in the habit of saying, Miss Chevenix could do anything, act, play, sing, dance, recite, and promote the general amusement better than anybody else, and then she could be so charming when she chose. The latter faculty is always

a strong card to play in society, providing, of course, one is a person of some importance—the monotony of uniform amiability has not a chance in competition with it. The easy joyous atmosphere of the place pleased her; and she enjoyed the sense of her superiority to the “mixture.” There was nothing changed in the state of things at Temple Vane this time, and yet the place and the people bored her, and Lady Vane’s programme seemed to her simple weariness. All but one item. Lady Vane had issued cards for a fancy ball, to come off on the morrow of some races that were to take place in the neighbourhood, and the eve of her own departure from Temple Vane for London, en route to the Continent. It had been agreed with Mrs. Maberley that Beatrix should return to London on that occasion from Temple Vane, and it was this arrangement that Mr. Horndean had so urgently entreated her to set aside in his own, and his sister’s favour.

When Lady Vane told her of the projected ball, and also mentioned that she should be very much overdone with women, Beatrix saw her way to gratifying her lover’s wish, and very quickly elicited a request from Lady Vane that she would write in her name to ask Mr. Horndean and Mr. Lisle to the ball. Would they mind the distance? Lady Vane asked, but Miss Chevenix assured her on that point. Mr. Horndean gladly accepted the invitation for himself and his friend, who was in London, preparing for his foreign tour, but would come down for the occasion, and he besought Beatrix to return under their escort to Horndean. At this point Beatrix could no longer procrastinate; she was forced to come to a resolution. She wrote to Mrs. Maberley in the following terms:

“Mr. Horndean has proposed to me. I have accepted him. The object with which I agreed to the arrangement between you and myself is gained. What your motive was I know now no more than I knew it at first; but I suppose, as you looked forward to this, that it too will be satisfied. I do not know how my real position is to be explained, although I have never made any positive statements as to whether my father did or did not leave me an independence, and this creates a great difficulty for me, one which I think I have a right to ask you to solve; for you must have always foreseen it. It did not occur to my mind until the circumstances arose.

I bear in mind the terms of our compact; I fix no time for my marriage until I know your pleasure. Will you let me know it with as little delay as possible? Mr. Horndean wishes me to return to Horndean, where his sister, still in ignorance of our engagement, will remain, to receive me. I have not answered him; in this matter also I await your directions.”

Mrs. Maberley did not keep Beatrix very long in suspense. Her answer was received by return of post.

It was this:

“It is impossible for me to discuss the subject of your letter in writing. I wish you to adhere to the arrangements already made.”

Beatrix was obliged to acquiesce, but her pride revolted against the thraldom in which she was held, and her eager fancy leaped at the prospect of release by the hand of the man whom she loved.

The night fixed for Lady Vane’s fancy ball arrived, a mild, starlit night in October. The preparations were on a splendid scale, for Temple Vane was a fine old house, and the hospitality of Sir Edward and Lady Vane was of the profuse order.

Among the earliest of the arrivals were Mr. Horndean and Frank Lisle. The former had eyes for Beatrix only; the latter was full of interest in and admiration of a scene very novel to him.

Beatrix looked superbly handsome as a *Reine blanche* of old French history, in the spotless white of royal mourning, one of Madame Morrison’s most tasteful productions, and wearing the beautiful necklace and bracelets of pearls with clasps of fine diamonds, which had been her mother’s, and now formed her only wealth. Her magnificent hair was partly concealed by the coil, and this lent a strangeness to her appearance that captivated Mr. Horndean anew.

“I have never seen you so beautiful,” he whispered, as he claimed her for their first dance, and Beatrix, to whom admiration in every form of expression was as familiar as the air she breathed, heard the words with the fresh and trembling pleasure of the merest girl.

It was late before Frank Lisle’s turn to claim a dance from the undisputed belle of the ball arrived, and he had much to say, and was very amusing.

After a while, however, he paused, and seemed to forget what he had been talking about, and Beatrix, observing the direction of his intent gaze, followed it with her own.

Mr. Lisle was looking at a tall man in the dress of a Spanish grandee, whom

Beatrix recognised, with equal surprise and displeasure.

"It seems impossible," said Frank Lisle, "and yet, Miss Chevenix, can you tell me who that is there, in the short cloak, with the black velvet hose, and a rapier?"

"Yes, I know him slightly; that is, I have seen him once before. His name is Ramsden; he is the son of Colonel Ramsden."

"Is he? Well, it's very odd; but if he is not also the original of my picture—you remember the private view—I'm a Dutchman! Not that I should mind being a Dutchman, if my name were Cuypp, or Teniers. He is coming this way to speak to you."

"Let us go on," said Beatrix, and she stepped into the whirl again; "I don't want to speak to Mr. Ramsden if I can avoid it."

She could not avoid it, though, for when she made her way to Lady Vane, she found Mr. Ramsden by her side, and he spoke to her with an easy assumption of acquaintanceship; and asked her for a dance. This she refused in so cold and ungracious a manner that there was no mistaking her intention.

He gave her one look, in which she might have read a menace she would do well to avert, fell back, and allowed her to pass on.

"How came that man here?" she said to herself. "By whom is he introduced? I don't believe Lady Vane knows him. And why does the sight of him frighten me? Has he the evil eye, as the duchess says, and has he thrown me a 'sort?' What nonsense! He is merely an underbred person with an unpleasant way of looking at one, and objectionable to me because he is a pet of Mrs. Maberley's."

Mr. Horndean joined her, and she soon forgot Mr. Ramsden, who did not recall himself to her remembrance. Neither did Frank Lisle see him again. He had pointed him out to Mr. Horndean, and he remarked that he did not seem quite easy under their scrutiny.

"I don't wonder at it, Frank," said Mr. Horndean, "for your artist's eye is certainly a piercer."

"Very soon, dearest, you promise me?" said Frederick to Beatrix, in a whisper, as he bade her farewell, and she repeated "Very soon" with a glance and a smile that might have sent a more exacting lover away content. Mr. Horndean and Mr. Lisle stayed that night at the inn in the little town, and, by a remarkable coincidence, they found

themselves at the railway-station on the following day just as the party from Temple Vane arrived. They had ten minutes to spare before the starting of the "up" train, and Mr. Horndean made the most of them. Sir Edward was a traveller of the fussy order, and wanted to speak to everybody about the place. Mr. Horndean ventured to whisper to Frank, "Talk to Lady Vane, like a good fellow," and Beatrix talked apart with him. A quantity of luggage was piled up on the platform, and a couple of men-servants waited to superintend its transfer to the luggage-van. There was a good deal of movement in the station, and the train was tolerably full when it started. It was a pleasant and easy run up to London, and, at the terminus, Mrs. Maberley's brougham was waiting for Beatrix. No journey could have been more uneventful, and yet the travellers would never forget it; for that night Lady Vane and Beatrix respectively made a distressing discovery. Each lady had among her luggage a dressing-case, with a leather cover and strap, and each had seen the box in question put into the railway carriage; but when the leather covers were removed, only "dummies" were found within them. A daring robbery had been most dexterously accomplished, and, no doubt, the police held, by substitution at the railway station from whence the travellers had started. This, however, the servants, upon whom Sir Edward would not hear of a suspicion being thrown, stoutly denied. The boxes had not been out of their sight for a moment, until they placed them under the feet of their respective owners, after they were seated in the carriage; the substitution must have been effected when Sir Edward and Lady Vane, and Miss Chevenix, got out, at a rather long stop at a junction, and lingered about a bookstall. It was "beautifully done," the detectives said, and, of course, the police would be active and intelligent in the matter; but poor Beatrix remembered the foreboding of the Duchess of Derwent—which had been realised, the Derwent diamonds never being heard of again—and grieved without hope for the loss of her pearls. Lady Vane's jewels were of great value; she had worn several of the finest at the ball, and it had been her intention to deposit them, as usual, at Sir Edward's bank before going abroad.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART II. PHOEBE'S FATHERS.

CHAPTER IX. AT THE PLAY.

"BUT I do think you ought just to mention the matter to Sir Charles, all the same," said Lawrence, over an after-breakfast cigar in Ralph's rooms. "I've knocked about the world a good bit, and I've got my suspicions. Suspicions are as often wrong as right, of course; but they're—well, I've found mine quite as often right as wrong. There's been something up, somewhere or other, between your governor, and Urquhart, and my archdeacon. And so—"

"You mean to suspect," exclaimed Ralph, "that my father— By Jupiter Ammon, Lawrence, if anybody else had put things in that way—had talked of suspecting my father of anything you can name—I think he'd have had to know how hot coffee feels outside. What the deuce do you mean?"

"Come, old fellow, don't be volcanic—it's bad form. Of course I wouldn't talk of suspecting Sir Charles Bassett, or any people of yours, of anything a gentleman wouldn't do, or that would put him in the dock, or that sort of thing. But there isn't a man going that some rascal mayn't think he's got some sort of a hold over. Mind, I don't say has got a hold, but thinks he's got a hold; and the way to treat him is to tell him to go to the deuce at once, and tell his story there. But you can't tell him to go anywhere unless you know he's somewhere, and has got a story to tell. I know the world, and I've been in scrapes myself, and I hope to be in a good

many more. If I came across a black sheep who said he'd got an old story about you, I should let you know. I don't see why you should treat a fellow badly, because he happens to be your governor. Just let him know you've tumbled over a party of the name of Doyle, and then, depend upon it, he'll know what to do."

"Well, I suppose you're right. Not to do it would look like—something or other—like seeming as if one was afraid of one's father's being afraid of somebody or something. But how about the child with all the fathers? Ought I to mention that, or let it alone?"

"Not knowing how far you and he are on chaffing terms, I don't know. My father does not understand chaff, but yours may."

"I'll write, then, to-morrow—no, to-day, while I'm in the mood. I'll do it now. I'll ask for a cheque, or else he'll think it queer."

"Lucky fellow that you are! By the way, do you mind being bothered with a girl?"

"I? That depends on the nature of the bother and the niceness of the girl. Come, don't interrupt an author in the thick of inspiration. I meant to ask for fifty pounds, and you've made me write five hundred."

"Moral—you see what nothings may turn out to be. Never mind; if you don't know what to do with the difference, I'm your man. I'm bothered with a girl. I've got a sister Fanny up in town, and I've got to take her to the play. That's what they call it in the country—'to the play.' Come, too. Doing disagreeable things is good for the soul, but it isn't good for the soul to do them all alone. Besides, I don't

know where to take a respectable young woman, and you do."

"Of course I do. 'Your affectionate son, Ralph.' I don't object to respectable young women at all. I know several sisters who are really quite nice, and no trouble at all. I rather like being chaperon. Let me see. I can't to-morrow, nor Tuesday, nor Wednesday. Thursday—yes, 'Olga,' on Thursday. Feed here with me, and we'll fetch Miss Fanny and go."

"'Olga'! Is that the piece where your bayadère does the double-shuffle, or the pas de pois seché, or whatever her style of Natch is called in London? Ah! the sacrifice won't be so vast, after all."

Ralph, for all his professions of advanced manliness, coloured.

"Double-shuffles be hanged. Nelly's one thing, and Miss Lawrence is another," he said, as awkwardly as if he were the rawest of schoolboys. "One doesn't mix things. I know some men do, but it's awfully bad form. "No; Nelly's not in 'Olga.' You needn't be afraid."

Lawrence had not been in the least afraid, and he first stared, then smiled a little from some superior height, at such old-fashioned scruples in a man who was no older in mere years than he. But he said nothing. He liked the future Sir Ralph Bassett so much, that he would sooner have him for a brother-in-law than any man he knew.

The letter was written; and, in due course, that is to say on Thursday, Ralph received this answer from Sir Charles:

"MY DEAR BOY,—You have certainly learned one thing in Urquhart's chambers: the art of coming to the point, and making other people come to it also. You will find enclosed my cheque for the sum you say you want—namely, fifty pounds; and, as you don't tell me what you want it for, I won't ask you. I was sorry you put off coming back from Switzerland so long that you had to go straight to London instead of going there *viâ* home, and I can't quite agree with you (I wish I could) that Urquhart could not, without your immediate personal assistance, have dealt with the difficulties of Gray and Green.

"Please to remember that it is a century at least since the heavy father in the country made a point of believing everything that he heard from his son in town. You don't tell me much (to say the least of it) of your Swiss tour; but I can quite believe there was nothing to tell. It takes a clever fellow to say anything new about

the genus Cockney, which is, I believe, the principal production now to be found in that country of patriotic publicans, who find their native land so dear, that they can't rest till they have made foreigners find it still dearer. But you have a sign of grace—you don't retail guide-book gush, and you don't think it interesting to set down how high you have carried an unbroken neck above the level of the sea. Only if you didn't carry these common objects with you, why go at all? For I don't suppose you carried any particular object of your own, unless to give Blackstone a holiday; which I'm afraid was the carrying of coal to Newcastle. I wish I could think you were using your time. I was no idler in London, I can tell you, in my time. By the way, you say you have come across a man by the name of Doyle, who claims acquaintance with me. I did have some knowledge of a literary ragamuffin named Doyle, who I thought had gone to the dogs, and died there, long ago. And, apropos of Doyle and cheques (if this Doyle be that Doyle), if he tries to scrape up an acquaintance with you, on the strength of having now and then drunk at my expense, don't let him. He's not a man to know. He's the kind of man who does not vanish when you've lent him half-a-crown. It's the half-crown that vanishes—not he. So he told you that story about the child in Gray's Inn. It was really rather a curious one. I'll tell it you some day. I'd forgotten it myself, till your letter brought it back to me. Just as a matter of curiosity, ask Simple if he ever gives work now to a sort of an odd job clerk of the name of Nelson; and ask Nelson if he happens to know what has become of a girl named Marion Burden. From what I remember of Doyle, I don't like the notion of his turning up at this time of day, and taking so warm an interest in men who he thinks may be worth looking after. A man like that always ends in one of two ways—he either drinks himself to death, or else he drinks himself into an unscrupulous scoundrel. Nelson was a sort of an idiot, not likely to improve by keeping; so you see it might possibly be prudent to hear what the idiot has to say before the black-guard gets hold of him; a girl, for whose bringing up I once paid (till I was firm enough to refuse to be bled any more), might be a card in the hands of an idiot and a knave. Of course they could do nothing really, and I need not tell you that the story you will hear from me and

(if he tells the truth) from Nelson might be published from the housetops for anything I care. But, as it might be twisted, I should like to know what Nelson has to say of his own motion.—God bless you. Your affectionate

FATHER."

It could not possibly strike Ralph, knowing nothing of the circumstances, that it was in the least strange for Sir Charles Bassett, after carelessly ignoring every sort of connection with his old life for a whole generation, to suddenly show an interest in what, not being serious, must needs be the merest of trifles. Nor did he suppose it to be more than a trifle. But he was naturally struck by the coincidence between Lawrence's piece of guess-work and character-reading and his father's views of things. This Doyle was evidently a dangerous man, to be kept at arm's length. Nobody—and the best of men least—can afford to laugh at a lie. So that very morning he asked after Mr. Nelson at Mark and Simple's. As it happened, however, Mr. Nelson was out on some errand, and would not be back for at least an hour; and it also happened that, on that particular Thursday, hours were to Ralph precious things. He had to dine earlier than usual to go with Lawrence and his sister to the theatre, and he had to dress before dinner, and he had to take a ride before dressing, and before that he had to see a man about a dog for a lady, and to order some cigars, and several equally important matters to attend to; and neither the next day nor the next would he be able to be near Gray's Inn at all. So, struck by a happy thought, he left this note to be given to the clerk on his return from his errand:

"Sir Charles Bassett wishes to make enquiries after Marion Burden. Will Mr. Nelson kindly call to-morrow (Friday) evening at the above address, and give what information he can? Any time between five and seven."

Being in a hurry, and being nothing of a detective, the message was neither so judiciously nor so clearly worded as it might have been, and rather mixed up its actual writer with the writer's father. But of course it did well enough, saved a great deal of bother, and enabled Ralph to send word to his father sooner than, owing to urgent private engagements, would have been otherwise possible. He was equally successful, or at least, equally satisfied with himself, in the matter of the dog, and of the cigars. Then he rode,

dressed, met Lawrence at the club, dined, and then went to take up Miss Lawrence at the relations with whom she was staying, but who, as they never went out anywhere, were of no manner of use to a country cousin.

Fanny Lawrence proved to be a lively and commonly pretty girl of that too quickly fleeting age when a girl, not to be pretty enough, must be very plain indeed, and Ralph took a fancy to her at first sight, as was his usual way with women whose beauty was not so great as to give them the right to make themselves disagreeable. For that matter, that was the last right she was in a mood to claim, for she was simple enough to look upon a play as a treat, and upon her brother as a truly great as well as admirable young man; and yet not so simple as to look down upon a brother's friend, who would be some day Sir Ralph, and was, meanwhile, as handsome and nice as if he were only a younger son and captain in the Guards.

Whether she was interested in "Olga" or not I cannot tell, for she was by no means one of those uncomfortable ingénues of fiction who so sadly bore their companions by having no eyes or ears for anybody or anything but the stage. From first taking her seat, and after as well as before the curtain rose, she had eyes for everybody and everywhere, down to the very sticks that had rattled on the big drum; and she could hear and smile at Ralph's very smallest joke in the middle of the most thrilling scene. She did not even refrain from making original remarks on her own account, without any of that painful shyness which makes some people suspect that their companions may possibly prefer the words of the play, at least for the time, to theirs, however witty or profound. She did not wait till the end to criticise, and her criticism took a free and wide range.

"Look at that man playing the very big fiddle!" whispered she, while slow music was accompanying some climax of action. "Why doesn't he cut his hair? And why does he wear that long piece of black plaister nearly down to his nose?"

"The eccentricities of genius, I suppose," said Ralph.

"I wonder what it feels like," said Fanny. "Don't you?"

"What feels like? You don't mean about having long hair, because I suppose you know that very well. Like having a plaister down your nose?"

"How absurd you are! Like being a genius, I mean. A genius for playing on a really large fiddle, or for painting, or poetry, or things that people have genius for. But look at those people up in that box. Do you call her pretty? I dare say she is, but——"

"Up there?" asked Ralph, obediently looking vaguely upwards. "Well—no—if it comes to that, I can't say I do. She strikes me as being a little too fat and red, and a great deal too old for perfect beauty. Still, there may be some men who admire that style——"

"Fat—red—old? You must be looking wrong. Oh, I see who you mean. Look, Frank—look at what Mr. Bassett says some people call pretty!" The curtain had fallen now upon the last act but one, so that conversation might flow more freely. "I mean up there—that rather fair girl in white with that man with a large beard."

"And, by Jove!" said her brother, "if Bassett says some people call that girl pretty, I'm one of them. She's the only girl I've seen worth looking at since I've been home. Why, she must have come straight from India——"

"Oh, Frank! What—with that complexion and that light sort of hair? Why, you must be looking wrong too."

"Nonsense, Fanny. I don't mean the niggers. I mean the English girls. They're always prettier out in India than they are before they go out, or when they come home——"

"Yes; if only six blackberries came in a season, how people would rave about them, to be sure! Last year, when we had more peaches than we could eat, we turned up our noses at them. That girl must have been eating too many peaches, I'm afraid. Mr. Bassett, which way do you like a nose to turn?"

Ralph glanced at Fanny's nose, and said, "If anything, just a trifle down," and was rewarded with a bright smile.

"I don't pick beauty to bits," said Lawrence. "She is just lovely—nose and all. Greeks and Romans always bring back the bad side of my school days, and Jews—but talking of Jews—by Jove! Bassett, look at the man with her! Don't you see?"

Fanny, of course, looked up the quickest, and saw the big man with the big beard lean forward, so that his face could be seen clearly. But she was much more interested in examining the points of a girl who came up so completely to her

brother's fastidious taste in beauty. And just then the girl also leaned forward; and, as she did so, Fanny, through her opera-glass, saw her start, and then half draw back, and then colour hotly all over. Was it a recognition? Had her brother any special reason for declaring her to be absolutely lovely, even to the point of her nose? But, following in her lightning-like way the invisible chain that is forged of starts and glances, she saw, not her brother, but the plastered fiddler staring up at the box with all his eyes, and that the straightest of invisible lines ran from his to the girl's, and back again. A man would have seen nothing of all this. But Fanny knew by instinct that she was being favoured with an extra scene by way of interlude to "Olga." And she had made it all out before Ralph had time to exclaim:

"The archdeacon, by Jove!"

"I told you he was a dark sort of customer. Fancy him going about with a creature like that—that won't do. Money's money, worse luck; but I'm not going to stand that sort of thing. As sure as my name's Frank Lawrence, I won't go home to-night without knowing that girl's name."

Fanny was beginning to feel curious, and Ralph to think that this kind of talk before one's sister was hardly up to his friend's usual good form. But the last act compelled the fiddler back to his bow, and obliged the three to be decently silent—so that for the present nothing more could come of the adventure, if such Lawrence intended it to be. The girl sat rather more back in her box, looked steadfastly on the stage, and used her fan a great deal. But as soon as the play was over, Lawrence managed to hurry his party out, and, without seeming to have any purpose, to bring them to a stand in the passage until the boxes were cleared. They had not been there more than a minute when the man with the beard, the girl on his arm, passed by.

"Ah!" he said, affecting a slight start of genial surprise. "We fellow Indians seem destined to tumble over one another in trains, and theatres, and everywhere. Do you remember giving me a very seasonable lecture the other day? And you remember your friend Sir Charles Bassett's son? If Mrs. Doyle is new to England," he said, covering the impudence of his self-introduction with the politest and most deferential of bows, "she must have found the inside of a London theatre worth seeing." Not that his impudence was very great in his own opinion, for he looked

upon the archdeacon as the fairest of all possible game, and upon the girl as both easier as well as fairer. "Can I see after your carriage? Or——"

"My daughter, Miss Phœbe Doyle," said the archdeacon, correcting the error in the shortest and quietest way he could, and passed on without another word.

"His daughter!" said Lawrence thoughtfully. "Miss Phœbe Doyle. I'll remember that name. The archdeacon may be an uncomfortable creditor to one's friends, poor devils! but for that very reason he ought to make a first-rate father-in-law."

"Yes, Lawrence," said Ralph, "you're about right. She is a lovely girl." For which speech Miss Fanny did not reward him with a smile.

"And her nose does turn up," said she.

When Ralph returned home he found a letter upon his table, which ran as follows :

"39, Gray's Inn Square.

"SIR,—I have the honour to regret that it will be useless for me to honour myself by paying my respects to you. In answer to your enquiries, I have to inform Sir Charles Bassett of the late lamented death—many years ago—through a fatal illness, of Miss Marion Eve Psyche Zenobia Dulcibella Jane Burden. I have the honour to remain, Sir Charles, yours obediently (without prejudice to principle),

"HORATIO COLLINGWOOD NELSON,
"G.P.U.R."

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

THE poet Rowe has usually been held responsible for the well-known story that Shakespeare wrote his *Merry Wives of Windsor* at the bidding or the suggestion of Queen Elizabeth, who had been so well pleased with the character of Falstaff in the two parts of King Henry the Fourth, that she desired the fat knight's adventures to be continued, and to see him in love. Rowe has certainly recorded this tradition in his *Life of Shakespeare*, published in 1709; but an earlier mention of it may be found in the long dedicatory epistle which prefaces John Dennis's *Comedy of the Comical Gallant*, an adaptation of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, produced at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1702.

Dennis does not give, as Rowe does, the reason why the queen commanded that the comedy should be written; Dennis, however, refers, as Rowe does not, to the completion of the work in fourteen days.

Gildon, who wrote a year after Rowe; combines the stories of Rowe and Dennis, and states that the queen "had obliged" the poet "to write a play of Sir John Falstaff in love, and which, I am very well assured, he performed in a fortnight."

This anecdote has been generally accepted as authentic, more or less, by the commentators and students of Shakespeare, who have yet found it difficult to regard *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as an absolute continuation of the adventures of Falstaff as they are exhibited in the First and Second Parts of King Henry the Fourth. Sir John at the Boar's Head is not altogether the same character as the Sir John who lounges at the Garter Inn; both are absurdly fat, and both jest at their monstrous proportions; but the earlier Falstaff had not the personal vanity nor the foolish credulity which leads the later Falstaff astray, and renders him the butt of *The Merry Wives*. And want of harmony exists in regard to the facts and incidents of the play. Mrs. Quickly, for instance, in the First Part of Henry the Fourth, is the spouse of the host of the Boar's Head; in the Second Part she is a poor widow of Eastcheap, with hopes of becoming the wife of Falstaff; while in Henry the Fifth—but in this play, of course, occurs the death of Falstaff—we find her married to Pistol, after having been "troth plight" to Nym. Yet in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* she is unmarried, the nurse, or cook, or laundress of Dr. Caius, and a stranger to Falstaff. It might be conjectured that Shakespeare, being commanded to represent Falstaff in love, planned that his comedy should be viewed as a sort of prologue to his historical plays, and exhibited Falstaff at an earlier period of his career, when he had more youth on his side, and was more likely to fall a prey to the tender passion and to become the dupe of his own susceptibilities and frailties. But Falstaff is not really younger in the comedy than in the plays, and the offences he is charged with in the way of beating Shallow's men, killing his deer, and breaking open his lodge, must assuredly have been committed after Falstaff's visit to Shallow in Gloucestershire, represented in the Second Part of Henry the Fourth.

Mr. Charles Knight, conjecturing that the *Merry Wives* may really have preceded the two parts of Henry the Fourth, has counselled, with a view to the right appreciation of the comedy, that it should be

disassociated from the historical plays. And it is possible, of course, that the inventions of the poet were not designed to be completely concordant; that he did not intend to be bound by his own prescriptions, or to reconcile the details and what may be called the facts of his fictions. Certainly the discrepancies in these accounts of Falstaff and his adventures have not been any source of embarrassment to theatrical audiences. These have been content to enjoy the fat knight upon his author's own terms: to welcome him, let him come as and when he would.

The first edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the quarto of 1602, is supposed to have been a piratical publication. The title-page was amply descriptive of the work: "A most pleasant and excellent conceited comedie of Sir John Falstaffe and The Merrie Wives of Windsor. Entermixed with sundry variable and pleasing memors of Syr Hugh, the Welsh knight, Justice Shallow, and his wise cousin, M. Slender. With the swaggering vaine of auncient Pistoll and Corporall Nym. By William Shakespeare. As it hath bene divers times acted by the Right Honorable My Lord Chamberlaine's servanta. Both before her Majestie and elsewhere. London: printed by T. C., for Arthur Johnson, and are to be sold at his shop in Powles Churchyard at the signe of the Flower de Louse and the Crowne—1602." In the opinion of Mr. Halliwell, the close of 1592, Shakespeare being then in his twenty-ninth year, should not be considered too early a date for the composition of so meagre a sketch as the play appears in this its earliest edition. Shakespeare could easily have produced such a work in fourteen days. It has been conjectured, moreover, that the comedy was first represented at Windsor Castle in January, 1593, when Queen Elizabeth is known to have held tournaments and given entertainments of a dramatic character. A later date, however, has been usually assigned to the composition of the sketch of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a second edition of which, differing little from the publication of 1602, was issued in 1619. The amended or completed play, which is the original work amplified and re-written, was first published in the folio of 1623.

Shakespeare is supposed to have found certain of the materials of his fable in the Italian stories of Filenio Sisterna, of Buccinolo and Pietro Paolo, of Lucius and Camillus, of Nerino of Portugal,

of *The Two Lovers of Pisa*, and in the old English Tale of the Fishwife of Brentford, which last, Malone thinks, "probably led Shakespeare to lay the scene of Falstaff's love adventures at Windsor;" although there is reason to think that the play was published some time before the tale.

These are all stories of gallantry in which wives are fair and frail, husbands are duped, and lovers trick and prosper; time out of mind poets and romancists have been prolific producers of such narratives. There are certain resemblances, as in the employment of a buck-basket for a lover's hiding-place, the constituting a husband the confidant of his wife's lover, and the interchange of advices between two ladies addressed by the same gallant, with the use of corresponding forms of expression which tend to prove Shakespeare's acquaintance with the stories in question. But he was not much indebted to them, and whereas they always sided with the lover and rejoiced in his successes, Shakespeare was careful to show the lover discomfited and ridiculous. Moreover, Falstaff was his own absolute creation. No trace of the fat knight is to be discovered in any preceding play or novel. He is thoroughly English born, Shakespeare's own child, and, as Hazlitt has described him, "the most substantial comic character that ever was invented."

"The original performer of Falstaff," writes Davies in his *Dramatic Miscellanies*, "was doubtless that excellent comedian, W. Lowin; the praise and boast of his time for variety of comic parts."

In the answer to Pope, published by Roberts, a player, in 1729, Lowin was also stated to be the first representative of the characters of Henry the Eighth and Hamlet. But these allegations are not to be implicitly accepted. Mr. J. P. Collier holds it to be certain that *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the last play in which Falstaff figures, "was written, acted, and printed before Lowin belonged to the company by which it was produced." In Wright's *Historia Histrionica*, 1699, Old Trueman, in his colloquy with Lovewit touching the early state of the stage, is supposed to say: "In my time before the wars, Lowin used to act with mighty applause Falstaff, Morose, Volpone, Mammon in *The Alchemist*, and Melantius in *The Maid's Tragedy*." Mr. Collier notes, however, that Lowin could not have been the original Morose, Epicene having been produced by

a rival company; that he could only have played Melantius after the death of Burbadge, and Falstaff "after the character had been relinquished by Hemminge or some older performer." No evidence is forthcoming as to Hemminge's performance of Falstaff; but his prominent position as an actor in the Lord Chamberlain's company would certainly have entitled him to the part. Lowin lived through the Civil War, which reduced him to a very necessitous condition, but he is said to have died landlord of the Three Pigeons' Inn, Brentford. Another authority records his interment at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, in 1669, when he must have been ninety-three.

That Falstaff soon won for himself the applause and the admiration of the public cannot be questioned. The closing of the theatres could not demolish or subvert him; he still thrived, if furtively, in the detached scenes or drolls which Cox, the comedian, was carrying about the country, and representing at wakes and fairs, with the connivance or in defiance of the authorities. Clearly, however, from the title of the droll, *The Robber Knight*; or, *the Robbers Robbed*, it was Sir John's adventures, not with *The Merry Wives*, but with the Prince and Poinc, that Cox was wont to exhibit. The character was, no doubt, sustained by Cox himself, and at this time, it appears, the spectators were content that Falstaff should be "no extravaganza of obesity;" he was not required to be "stuffed" after the prodigious manner of later Falstaffs.

The theatres having reopened, it was not long before *The Merry Wives of Windsor* reappeared upon the boards. Mr. Pepys recounts, under date the 6th December, 1660, his visit to the New Theatre (Killigrew's) in the tennis-court, Vere Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, "the finest playhouse, I believe, that ever was in England," where he saw a performance of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, "the humours of the country gentleman and of the French doctor very well done, but the rest but very poorly, and Sir J. Falstaff as bad as any." He reports, too, that the play was "ill done" when he saw it again on the 25th September in the following year. On the 15th August, 1667, he records: "Sir W. Penn and I to the Duke's House, where a new play. The king and the court there; the house full and an act begun, and so went to the King's [Killigrew's], and there saw *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which did not please me at all. in no part of

it." The character of Falstaff, in Pepys's time, was probably supported by William Cartwright, an old actor formerly attached to the private theatre in Salisbury Court, who had once been a bookseller. At any rate, it is clear, from Downes's *Roscius Anglicanus*, that Cartwright was accustomed to represent the Falstaff of King Henry the Fourth, Part the First, and Pepys writes on the 2nd November, 1667: "To the King's playhouse, and there saw Henry the Fourth; and, contrary to expectation, was pleased in nothing more than in Cartwright's speaking of Falstaff's speech about 'What is honour?'" Langbaine, whose *Account of the English Dramatic Poets* was published in 1691, writes of the Falstaff of Henry the Fourth, Part the First, that the character "used to be played by Mr. Lacy, and never failed of universal applause;" so that Lacy and Cartwright must have shared the part between them. Lacy died in 1681; Cartwright survived him. By his will, dated 1686, Cartwright bequeathed his books, pictures, and writings to Dulwich College, where his portrait is still preserved.

When Dennis, in 1702, produced at Drury Lane his adaptation, *The Comical Gallant*; or, *the Amours of Sir John Falstaff*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* had probably undergone many years of neglect. In the dedicatory epistle to the published play, Dennis mentions that he was prepared for the opposition alike of those who deemed the original so admirable "that nothing should be added to it, and of those who fancied it to be so despicable that any one's time would be lost upon it." However, he did not himself think it despicable, for he knew very well that it had pleased "one of the greatest queens that ever was in the world;" and that in Charles the Second's time, "when people had an admirable taste in comedy, all those men of extraordinary parts, who were the ornaments of that court, as the late Duke of Buckingham, my Lord Normanby, my Lord Dorset, my late Lord Rochester, Sir Charles Sedley, Dr. Fraser, Mr. Savil, Mr. Buckley, were in love with the beauties of this comedy." Moreover, Mr. Dennis thought he might depend in some measure upon his own judgment, considering his long acquaintance with the best comic poets; and he believed he found in the play "three or four extraordinary characters that were exactly drawn and truly comical," with "some as happy touches as ever were in comedv."

Mr. Dennis's adaptation was unsuccessful, and assuredly it did not merit success. He re-wrote one-half the dialogue, rearranged the incidents, and introduced a new character, the Host of the Bull, the brother of Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Quickly he converted into Doll Tearsheet; the characters of Anne Page and Fenton, who is supposed to be Mrs. Ford's nephew, he rendered more important, while reducing Dr. Caius and Sir Hugh almost to insignificance. In order to increase the alarms of Falstaff, Mrs. Page assumes a disguise, calling herself Captain Dingboy, and affecting to be the lover of Mrs. Ford. In this character she frightens Falstaff by discharging a pistol at him, and subsequently she attacks Ford, when her peruke falls off and she is recognised. Falstaff's second adventure, when he escapes as Mother Prat of Brentford, is wholly omitted. In the last act, when Falstaff appears as Herne the Hunter, a terrible symphony being heard, he secretes himself in a tuft of trees and escapes unhurt, the pretended fairies attacking Ford in his stead; Ford having, for some reason, assumed the dress and aspect of Falstaff. Apparently Dennis thought it more admirable to punish the husband for his jealousy than the lover for his gallantry. Slender and Caius both assume women's dress and masks, while Fenton and Anne Page appear undisguised. The Host of the Garter, dressed as a parson, has married Caius to Slender, and a combat between them ensues. Genest notes: "This is a very bad alteration of Shakespeare."

The names of the actors engaged in the representation of *The Comical Gallant* have not been recorded. Genest thinks that George Powell, an actor of good repute both in tragedy and comedy, whose intemperate habits, however, ruined his professional prospects, may have been the Falstaff, and Davies notes that Powell during the life of Betterton acted Falstaff "in his particular manner," even to mimicking him "in those acute pains of the gout which sometimes surprised him in the time of action." But Powell did not become a member of the Drury Lane company until two seasons after the production of *The Comical Gallant*. Dennis's Falstaff may have been Mills, a leading actor at that time; or the comedian Pinkethman, perhaps, essayed the part. According to the adaptor, Falstaff "was by no means acted to the satisfaction of the audience;" but Dennis may have ascribed to the players the failure really due to the play. He adds

that when *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was revived in Charles the Second's time, "no character pleased to a height except Slender as acted by Wintershal," a veteran player, who shone both in comedy and tragedy.

Downes records that between Candlemas, 1704, and April, 1706, four plays, supported by the companies of the two playhouses, were represented by command before the Court at St. James's. One of these plays was *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, performed on the 23rd April, the Queen's coronation-day. The performance, in which the best actors of the time took part, is said to have given great satisfaction. The great Mr. Betterton personated Falstaff, to the Ford of Powell, the Sir Hugh Evans of Dogget, the Dr. Caius of Pinkethman, the Mr. Ford and Mrs. Page of Mrs. Braecgirdle and Mrs. Barry. The comedy was repeated on the 16th May at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, "as it was performed before her Majesty at St. James's." The playbills were headed "not acted for sixteen years," however, when *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was again represented upon the same stage. Mr. Quin was now the Falstaff; Ryan was Ford; Griffin, Sir Hugh Evans; C. Bullock, Slender, etc. The comedy was acted eighteen times during the season, and altogether enjoyed a success which must, as Genest observes, have been mortifying to Dennis, who was able to compare the triumph of the original text with the failure of his adapted version. At this time, it may be observed, the actors adhered to the folio edition of the comedy in which Ford assumes the name of Broome instead of Brook, as in the quartos, although the context clearly requires the name to be Brook that Falstaff's puns may not fail of effect. Dennis was, perhaps, only acquainted with the folio; he was careful to suppress the jests which have indeed no intelligibility so long as Ford calls himself not Brook but Broome. Dr. Johnson relates, in his *Life of Elijah Fenton*, how, in company with his friend, William Broome—they had both helped Pope materially in his translation of the *Odyssey*—and the dissolute clergyman Ford, Fenton visited the theatre one night to see *The Merry Wives of Windsor* represented. As a dramatic poet, Fenton claimed free admission for himself and his friends, and attended at the stage-door with that object. The doorkeeper enquired their names. Fenton replied that they

were three persons absolutely necessary to the performance, for their names were Broome, Ford, and Fenton. Pope, in his edition of the play, restored the name to Brook. The editors of the Cambridge Shakespeare have suggested that Broome was hastily substituted for Brook at the time of the publication of the first folio, in order to gratify some real person named Brook, and possibly living at Windsor, who objected to the free use of his patronymic upon a public stage.

Davies relates that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was the first play "which fixed the attention of the public" at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, then engaged in brisk rivalry with the old-established comedians of Drury Lane. Rich, the Lincoln's Inn manager, had engaged certain players of distinction, with recruits from the provinces and deserters from the elder theatre. He had supplied his house with new scenery and decorations; his stage was more extended than the Drury Lane stage, and was adorned on both sides with large looking-glasses, which Quin described as "traps to catch actresses who cared more for their persons than for their profession." But when the attractions of Rich's theatre had lost the gloss of novelty, "the audiences," as Davies tells us, "forsook the new company for their old friends at Drury Lane." For a time, however, the success of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was very great. "The comedy was so perfectly played in all its parts that the critics in acting universally celebrated the merit of the performers. For all this success, however, the comedy was soon laid upon the shelf, and for a considerable time. It was so far forgotten, indeed, that the play-bill boldly declared it had not been acted for thirty years when, in December, 1734, it was revived at Drury Lane and acted five times successively. Quin was still Sir John; Ford was played by Milward; Sir Hugh Evans by Griffin; Caius by Harper. It is strange to find Slender personated by Theophilus Cibber, who was subsequently so famous a representative of Pistol that the name was generally bestowed upon him, "at first as a mark of merit, but finally as a term of ridicule." The comedy was played again at Drury Lane in 1743, when Delane was Sir John; Yates, Sir Hugh Evans; and Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Ford; and again in 1758, when Shuter essayed the character of Falstaff. What Davies says of his performance of the superior Falstaff of Henry the Fourth, Part

the First, is probably applicable enough to his effort in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: "What Ned wanted in judgment he supplied by archness and drollery. He enjoyed the effects of his roguery with a chuckle of his own compounding, and rolled his full eye when detected with a most laughable effect." Other representatives of Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* were Hulett, at Goodman's Fields, in 1732 (Hulett was famous for the loudness of his voice, and, as in the cast of Stephen Kemble, he did not need to be "stuffed" for the part—a biographer describes him as a mountain of flesh); Stephens, at Covent Garden, in 1740; Dunstall, at Covent Garden, in 1754; and Love, at Drury Lane, in 1764, of whom Churchill wrote in the *Rosciad* :

Old Falstaff, played by Love, shall please once
more,
And honour set the audience in a roar.

The year 1777 saw the first appearance in London, at the Haymarket Theatre, of the distinguished actor John Henderson, a very famous Falstaff. He brought great profit to the Haymarket during a very hot summer. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was played for the benefit of Foote's faithful treasurer, Jewell, when the house might have filled three times over, and crowds departed, unable to obtain admission. Henderson was supported by the Ford of Palmer and the Sir Hugh Evans of Parsons. He had desired to appear in London five years before, but on the advice of Garrick, who avowed that his voice had neither strength nor modulation sufficient for a London theatre, he accepted an engagement at Bath. At the close of his second season at Bath he again presented himself to the London authorities, Garrick, Foote, Harris, and Leake, and rehearsed before them. "His fate," writes his biographer, "was to find all of them 'damn with faint applause.'" But when Colman gave him an opportunity at the Haymarket, his success with the audience was most unequivocal. He played, during his first season, Shylock, Richard, Hamlet, and Falstaff, establishing himself as one of the leading actors of the time.

Henderson's success at the Haymarket promptly led to his engagement, by Sheridan, at Drury Lane for the ensuing season at a salary of ten pounds per week, then thought to be a considerable price to pay for an actor's services. It became necessary, also, for Sheridan to compensate the manager of the Bath Theatre for the

abrupt termination of Henderson's agreement with him for a term of years. In lieu of the stipulated forfeit of three hundred pounds, Sheridan permitted the representation of *The School for Scandal* at Bath, and it was understood that Henderson should be free to act there for some few nights during the season. After playing *Hamlet*, *Richard*, *Shylock*, *Falstaff* in the First and Second Parts of *Henry the Fourth*, *King John*, *Don John* in *The Chances*, *Bayes*, *Boabdil*, *Edgar Atheling* in *The Battle of Hastings*, *Benedick*, and some other parts, Henderson appeared, on the 24th February, 1778, as *Falstaff* in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, being well supported by the *Ford* of *Smith*, the *Sir Hugh Evans* of *Parsons*, the *Slender* of *Dodd*, and the *Dr. Caius* of *Baddeley*. In 1779, tempted by a larger salary, and influenced by the consideration that he should enjoy a wider range of characters—in this respect *Smith* was an obstruction at *Drury Lane*—Henderson accepted an engagement at *Covent Garden*. As *Falstaff* he had the assistance of the *Caius* of *Wewitzer*, an admirable representative of foreign characters, and the *Ford* of *Wroughton*, whom *Mr. Cole*, in his *Life of Charles Kean*, describes as a "second-class actor in general, with strong physical deficiencies, but occasionally inspired to excellence, as in *Ford*, *Darlemont* in *Deaf and Dumb*, *Sir John Restless* in *All the Wrong*, and *Apemantus* in *Timon of Athens*. He was a native of Bath, and retired from the stage in 1815. A portrait of *Wewitzer* as *Dr. Caius* represents him as a French physician of the eighteenth century, wearing a flowing powdered peruke, a three-cornered hat, a white cravat, and a long cloak, his hands being thrust into a fur muff of extraordinary size. In 1781, Henderson was playing *Falstaff* again at the *Haymarket*, with *Palmer* as *Ford*, and the elegant *Miss Farren* as *Mrs. Ford*. Within the next few years, *Falstaff*, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, was essayed by *Lee Lewes*, by *Ryder*, from *Dublin*, and by *John Palmer*. In 1796, at *Covent Garden*, *Fawcett* first undertook the part. At the same theatre, in 1804, *George Frederick Cooke* appeared as *Falstaff*, with *John Kemble* as *Ford*, *Blanchard* as *Sir Hugh Evans*, *Knight* as *Slender*, *Mrs. Glover* as *Mrs. Ford*, and *Mrs. Davenport* as *Mrs. Quickly*. *Kemble*, who was fond of mending *Shakespeare*, deprived *Sir Hugh* of his title, describing him plainly as *Hugh Evans*, unaware,

probably, that *Sir* was, in former times, applied equally to a knight and a clergyman. *Cooke* had, in a previous season, played for his benefit *Falstaff* in the First Part of *Henry the Fourth*. He was highly applauded as *Falstaff* of *The Merry Wives*, if, as his biographer notes, he "did not increase his reputation by playing the worse after playing the better character." The actor himself confessed, after playing the three *Falstoffs*, that he never could please himself with his performance, or come up to his own idea of the character. He remembered Henderson, "the best of *Falstoffs*, and endeavoured to profit by the remembrance." *Dunlop*, his biographer, adds: "Whatever his own opinion was of his performance of this character, it is certain that he had no living competitor, and those who never saw Henderson or *Cooke* can form no adequate idea of *Falstaff*."

A performance of *The Merry Wives* at *Covent Garden* in 1811, with *Fawcett* as *Sir John*, *Young* as *Ford*, *Liston* as *Slender*, *Mrs. Gibbs* as *Mrs. Page*, and *Mrs. Charles Kemble* as *Mrs. Ford*, and we come to *Reynolds's* conversion of the comedy into an opera at *Drury Lane*, 1824. The music was composed by *Bishop*, and the admired singers, *Braham*, *Miss Stephens*, and *Miss Cubitt*, were expressly engaged to interpret, operatically, the characters of *Fenton*, *Mrs. Ford*, and *Mrs. Page*. *Dowton* appeared as *Falstaff*, *Wallack* as *Ford*, and *Harley* as *Slender*. Thus embellished, the play was presented on twenty-four nights. There was probably no alteration of the text, except when it was thought expedient that a song should be introduced, and the necessary cue given to the leader of the orchestra. Thus *Fenton*, the tenor, having to execute the song of *Blow thou Wintry Wind*, after sauntering about the stage with no apparent object, remarked vaguely enough, "How I love the spot where dear *Anne Page* has so often met me and confessed to me her love! But, ah! methinks the sky is overcast! The wind, too, blows as though a storm were approaching. Well, let it blow on; I am prepared to brave its fury," and then his song was forthcoming. Or one of the ladies discovered that somebody or something reminded her of a soldier tired, and thus was enabled to interpolate the melodious effusion bearing that title. "Fancy," wrote an adverse critic, "the arch and perplexing rogueries of the frolicsome dames upon

amorous old Jack interrupted every five minutes by warbling information that

Crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together,

or by reminding us of the old proverb, 'All that glistens is not gold.' The singing edition of the play enjoyed considerable popularity, however. It was reproduced in the summer at the Haymarket for the benefits of Dowton and of Madame Vestris, when that lady, for the first time, played and sang the part of Mrs. Ford. She remembered and renewed the old success of the operatic comedy in 1840, during her management of Covent Garden. Falstaff was now played by Bartley, and Slender by Charles Mathews, who won great applause in a part for which his stage experiences had scarcely prepared him. In 1844 and 1846, when Mr. and Mrs. Mathews—their managerial cares over for a time—were fulfilling "starring" engagements now at the Haymarket and now at the Princess's Theatre, The Merry Wives of Windsor was again revived with more or less of musical embellishment. But Charles Mathews now resigned Slender for Sir Hugh Evans, playing the part with peculiar humour and an admirable Welsh accent; while Madame Vestris appeared as Mrs. Page in lieu of Mrs. Ford—perhaps the more conveniently to sing with Anne Page the duet of I know a Bank, borrowed from the Midsummer Night's Dream, and introduced with special disregard of appropriateness. The Haymarket Falstaff was Strickland, a comedian of genuine ability, who played the part with much hearty humour. At the Princess's Sir John was personated by Granby, Ford by Wallack, Page by Ryder, Slender by Compton, and Mrs. Ford by Mrs. Stirling—a thoroughly efficient cast. These were the last representations of the comedy with operatic adornments. When, in 1851, Mr. Charles Kean produced The Merry Wives of Windsor at the Princess's Theatre, the poet's text was faithfully followed. As Ford, Mr. Kean obtained, perhaps, his most complete success in Shakespearian comedy. Mr. G. H. Lewes wrote of his performance: "The very inflexibility of his face here gives him real comic force. Precisely because his features will not express any fluctuation of feeling, they are admirably suited to express the puzzled wondering stolidity of the jealous bamboozled husband." Falstaff was played by the veteran Bartley, now on the eve of retiring from the stage. He was very low of stature,

and his voice lacked richness and depth; but he was portly of presence, well versed in the text, an intelligent and very experienced actor; the public rewarded his exertions with most hearty applause. Mrs. Kean and Mrs. Keeley appeared as Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. Shallow was played by Meadows, Sir Hugh by Keeley, Caius by Alfred Wigan, Page by James Vining, Pistol by Ryder. Anne Page was Miss Mary Keeley. The dramatic personæ had usually assumed dresses of an Elizabethan pattern; but costumes of the time of Henry the Fourth were now worn, and the stage fittings and decorations professed to be historically accurate. Nevertheless, it has often been observed that the manners and language of the play are throughout of Shakespeare's own time; he presents to us Windsor under Elizabeth, a quiet country town sleeping in the shadow of the royal fortress, peopled by a merry company, frank and hospitable, little occupied, as Mr. Knight says, save in gossiping and laughing, and making sport out of each other's cholers and weaknesses.

At the old Adelphi Theatre Shakespeare appeared but rarely. Yet, in 1853, The Merry Wives of Windsor underwent performances upon the confined stage so long dedicated to melodrama and wild farce. For the first time Slender found a feminine representative in Miss Woolgar, and Mrs. Ford, personated by Madame Celeste, spoke with a very foreign accent. The Keeley family sustained the characters they had undertaken at the Princess's Theatre two years before, and Mr. Wigan again appeared as Dr. Caius; Mr. Webster played Falstaff; Mr. Leigh Murray, Ford; Mr. Honey, Shallow; and Mr. Paul Bedford, the Host of the Garter.

At Sadler's Wells, during Mr. Phelps's tenancy, The Merry Wives of Windsor was occasionally represented; Sir John being portrayed now by the manager himself, and now by his deputy, Mr. Barrett, a corpulent actor, lusty of voice, and possessed of considerable humour. The comedy was last seen in London on the stage of the Gaiety Theatre during an engagement fulfilled there by Mr. Phelps in 1874. Pains were not spared to give completeness to the representation. The costumes and stage decorations were truthful and liberal, a scene exhibiting Herne's Oak, with a panoramic view of Windsor Forest, being an excellent example of theatrical landscape painting. To the last act of the comedy Mr. Arthur Sullivan had supplied

new music. The pranks of the children disguised as fairies absolutely require orchestral accompaniment, except, perhaps, in the judgment of those who would be more Shakespearian than Shakespeare himself, the only change that needed excuse being the substitution of a song by Mr. Swinburne, Love laid his Sleepless Head on a Thorny Rosy Bed, the music by Mr. Sullivan, for Anne Page's canzonet, Fie on Sinful Fantasy. Mr. Phelps, if now and then over-sententious of manner and wearisome to the ear from his excessive deliberativeness of elocution, was yet a vigorous and humorous Falstaff, who, as Hazlitt says, "is not the man he was in the two parts of Henry the Fourth; his wit and eloquence have left him; instead of making a butt of others, he is made a butt of by them. Neither is there a single particle of love in him to excuse his follies; he is merely a designing barefaced knave, and an unsuccessful one." Mrs. John Wood and Miss Rose Leclercq were spirited representatives of Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford; as Dr. Caius Mr. Arthur Cecil was specially droll and vivacious.

DEATH.

THERE is a shadow standing by the cradle
Where sleepeth softly a beloved child;
It waiteth anxious at the gayest feasting,
And mocks our laughter with its laughter wild;
It standeth by our bedside, by our table,
And with its touch the present is defiled.
It jeers our faint attempts to be forgetful,
Slanting its fleshless body at the dance.
Joins all our pleasures, shading them with promise
That soon its claims it will in truth advance.
We dare it for awhile! then pray in anguish
That it will haste to throw its poisoned lance.
And yet it doth defer its blow. Ah! surely
Those have the best that follow it the first.
So shall they never see their dearest perish.
Going oneself is surely not the worst;
'Tis those who live beyond their best and dearest
Who really feel that Death's a thing accursed.

"LOLLA"

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

THE position of a hospital nurse does not in all probability look a very attractive one to most women. From an abstract point of view they regard it as singularly unpleasant, toilsome, and exacting. But if brought face to face with its self-sacrifice, its high and lofty mission, its countless opportunities for ministering to suffering humanity, its engrossing duties, its hours of busy completeness, none of which may be wasted or thrown over, I am certain that they would regard the life with very different feelings to those they have hitherto experienced.

The cry of "dearth of occupation for women" has long been heard, and it is well-known how few careers are open to them; careers which afford opportunities of independence and usefulness to those who have no home-ties and little, if any, means.

Such a position was mine when, at the age of five-and-thirty, I found myself alone in the world. My parents were dead, my sisters married and gone abroad.

I had a little money, but neither home nor occupation; and my mind was too active, my affections too powerful, to leave me content with such a state of affairs.

I looked around and about, and took counsel with myself as to what I should do with my life.

After long deliberation, a thought struck me. I would be a nurse in a children's hospital.

The idea pleased me. I should have plenty of occupation and interest. I should always have the consciousness that I was of use to others in ever so small a way.

I should be treated with consideration; my associates would be my equals; for I knew well how many ladies, some even well off, and in good positions, were devoting themselves to this life. On the whole I asked nothing better, and set myself diligently to work at the preliminary difficulties in my way.

I will not enter here into the minutiae of training and probation, or the slow and gradual steps by which I had to mount to the summit of my desires. But I will merely recount an episode that occurred when I was installed as head nurse of the girls' ward at the Victoria Hospital, Chelsea.

It was in the dusk of a spring evening that a little child was brought to the ward where I was on duty. She was suffering from a diseased hip-joint, I was told.

The mother was quite a young creature, with a pale pretty face. I saw how her lips trembled as I advanced to take the child. But the little creature clung to her with a mute despairing earnestness that seemed at variance with her baby years. Her mother spoke a few words to her, and tried to unclasp the tiny arms that were so tightly pressed around her neck.

"She is very shy, madam," she said apologetically, "and we have never been parted since she was born. Please excuse her. She will go to you presently."

The girl's voice was so sweet and refined,

that involuntarily I looked at her with closer attention. Though poorly and shabbily dressed, there was that something about her which bore the stamp of refinement, and betrayed it unmistakably.

I told her to take a seat, and waited while she spoke in low tender words to the little clinging creature. Gradually the child unclasped her hold and turned her face to me. It was such a beautiful little face! Clear waxen pallor on the brow and cheeks; great dark eyes, with lashes long and curled; a tiny mouth of faint red—not the rich ripe hue of health; and shading the brow and covering the little head, a mass of pale-gold curls.

I almost held my breath in surprise. I had never seen such a beautiful face within our walls.

"How old is she?" I asked the mother.

"Three and a half, madam. It is a sad heart-break to me to have to part with her, but I cannot afford the medical advice she needs, and I have been told I cannot do better than bring her here. You will be kind to her, I am sure!" she continued, raising her sad eyes to mine. "She is all I have on earth. I do not think she will be much trouble. She is very patient."

"I am sure she will soon be quite happy here," I said gently. "All the children are."

"Will Lolla say good-night to mother now?" she asked the little one.

The child looked at her. Large tears were in her eyes, but neither sob nor cry escaped her.

A sight more touching I never witnessed than that repressed grief. The mother's self-command gave way, but not the child's.

I saw the clinging caress, the tiny quivering lips; then the colourless face and deep dark eyes, were turned to me.

The mother placed her in my arms. A faint sob burst from her breast.

"God bless and keep you, my darling!" she murmured, and then, with a low curtsy to me, she left the ward.

I undressed the wee mite, noting with ever-increasing wonder how beautifully neat and clean were all her simple homely clothes. Then I took her to the bath-room, she submitting to all my attentions with the same patient mute tranquility. When she was placed in her cot, the surgeon came to see her, and made a note of her case. I saw how grave he looked, and followed him as he went away.

"A bad case?" I asked.

"As bad as it can be," he answered. "She must be operated on soon."

I went back to the little cot and sat down. The child lay on her back, her little waxen hands folded together, her eyes wide and anxious in their gaze.

"What is it, dear?" I said.

"Mother has not heard my prayers," she lisped in her quaint baby-fashion.

"Will you say them to me?" I asked.

"Yes, if you please," she answered.

"Will you tell me them? Mother always does."

I began the childish formula we were accustomed to use, and she repeated it after me.

At last she stopped.

"That is wrong," she said gravely.

"Mother never says that."

"Don't you pray for your father?" I asked wonderingly.

"No. I have no father, mother says."

"No father? Where is he? I mean——"

But I paused abruptly. Perhaps he was dead. I had better ask no questions. I resumed the prayers, and she repeated them without further interruption.

When she had finished, I asked her if she would like me to tell her a story.

"Please, yes," she said simply. "Tell me about some of those little boys and girls who can't run about."

"Have you never been able to run about?" I said.

"Yes. But that was long ago," she answered, as if her baby years stretched far back into the past.

I told her what I knew of the other children, building up for them a future far more bright and hopeful than was at all probable. She listened silently, her eyes upon my face.

"Shall I run about too?" she asked at last.

"I hope so, dear," I answered. "The kind doctors here will do their best to cure you, and send you home well and strong. How pleased mother will be then, won't she?"

I had touched a tender chord. She suddenly turned her little face away and sobbed as if her heart would break.

I tried to pacify her, but it was long ere I succeeded. At last, weary and exhausted, she fell asleep.

With an interest stronger than any I had hitherto experienced, I watched by her side.

I never saw anything so perfectly purely beautiful as she looked. The exquisite colourless face might have been sculptured in marble, so perfect were the

rounded outlines. The lids of the closed eyes were so transparent that the tracery of the blue veins was distinctly visible, and the long sweeping lashes lay like a fringe on the pure white cheeks, while over the broad and beautifully-formed brow lay a mass of soft and shining curls.

One of the other nurses came up to me as I sat there. She had the night duty.

"Are you not going?" she asked softly. "It is late."

I rose from my chair.

"Is she not lovely?" I said.

"Is that the new case?" asked Sister Grey. "Hip disease again, is it not?"

"Yes," I answered sadly. "The house-surgeon says she must be operated on. She is such a sweet little creature."

We both stood and looked down at the unconscious sleeper.

What is there about the slumber of a child that is at once so holy and so awe-inspiring? I have always felt it so, though I cannot explain the reason. I daresay many a mother has felt the same. In child-life altogether there is a mystery, a sacredness, wonderful and inexplicable. Their thoughts, their fancies, their ideas, their perfect trust, their vague searches into the future, whether of life or death, their boundless faith, which cavils not at any marvel, their imaginativeness, which affords such wide fields for delights and adventures—all these are traits more or less remarkable.

Where physical development is in excess of intellectual, a child, doubtless, lives in the joys of the moment more fully and entirely than if the latter faculty predominated. The immediate pleasure or enjoyment or sorrow are more intense and absorbing; but when sickness or suffering has enfeebled the frame, the mind often revels in a keener appreciation of those glories, imagined and unrealised, that thought and teaching have brought within the grasp of the young intellect. In perfectly healthy happy children we do not find this peculiarity so often. The present is enough for them. Their thoughts seldom travel beyond it; but I am speaking of those whose short lives have been too often only a scene of suffering and hardship.

While I and Sister Grey stood beside the cot, the child suddenly awoke. It was pitiable to see how her little arms involuntarily sought the protection of her mother—how wide and terrified the dark eyes looked as she turned them on our strange faces.

I bent over and soothed her, and the sister brought her milk, which she drank eagerly and thirstily. Then she lay back on the pillow once more.

"What is your name, dear?" asked Sister Grey.

The little lip quivered piteously, but once again that wonderful self-restraint I had before remarked came to her rescue.

"I am mother's Lolla," she said.

From that time she went by no other name among us.

After two days the child became quite at ease in her new life. Her patience and quietude were marvellous, even among so much patience and fortitude as we witnessed daily among the little sufferers. She would lie quite still and silent for hours, watching everything that went on with intense interest. The surgeons had not yet decided upon an operation, and she bore the treatment they prescribed with the utmost fortitude. One day, the child in the next cot to her died. She had had softening of the brain, and been four months in the hospital. Lolla missed her from her place, and asked me where she was.

I told her she had been taken away.

"Did her mother fetch her?" asked the child eagerly.

"No, dear," I said. "She has gone to heaven. God took her to be with Him there—one of His little angels."

"Will she be ill in Heaven?" asked Lolla.

"No, dear; no one is ill there."

"Has her mother gone with her?" she continued.

"No," I answered.

"How could she go alone?" persisted the child. "Does she not want her mother. Will she come back to her again?"

In what simple words I could, I told her of that separation which divides human love from heavenly, which sets the gulf of death between our hearts and their desires. She listened intently—her earnest eyes on my face.

"Was that little girl iller than me?" she asked at last. "Oh, don't let God take me from mother—she wants me so."

What could I say? The baby-mind was incapable of forming for itself an idea of happiness apart from that intense and heartfelt mother-love it had known, and of God's will and of resignation what could it understand?

I changed the conversation.

"Do you know who is coming to see Lolla to-day?" I asked.

She turned her pretty head aside with indifference.

"Dottors," she lisped.

"No, dear," I answered softly; "mother."

Oh, the light of love and rapture in the eyes that turned to me! She could not speak. She only gazed dumbly, breathlessly into my face, as if seeking there the confirmation of her hopes.

It was the visitors' day, and close on the hour when they were expected to arrive. Even as I spoke, the door of the ward opened, and the pale-faced delicate girl I remembered, came in. Her cheeks flushed; she made one rapid step forward. There was only a faint cry:

"Mother—oh, mother!"

"My darling!"

The little golden head nestled down on her breast, while tears both glad and sorrowful rained from those sad eyes that spoke their own life's history of sorrow so plainly.

I moved hurriedly aside, my sight all dim and blurred with tears of sympathy. Those two were happy now; they had each other, and for one brief hour they feasted on that joy of reunion.

It was my duty to report on the case of each patient, and after a time I came to Lolla's cot.

Her mother had brought her a picture-book, and the child was lying contentedly there looking at the bright plates.

The young woman rose as I came near. I told her the surgeon's opinion in words as little alarming as possible, but what could soften the fact that her child was a cripple for life, unless the operation they wished to perform should terminate successfully—an operation so critical that they would not perform it without her full consent? She grew white as death as she listened, and her eyes turned towards her child with a mute despairing tenderness that went to my heart.

The child seemed to guess something of the struggle within her breast, for she put aside her book, and gazed anxiously at her mother's face. The poor young creature knelt down by the cot and took the little form in her arms.

"Would Lolla like to run about again?" she asked. "Would she be glad to be well and strong, and walk with mother like other little girls and boys?"

"Oh yes!" cried the child eagerly. "Am I going to be made well soon?"

A sob choked the words that would have answered her. The little one clung more closely.

"Don't cry," she said. "I am so tired of lying here; I want to get strong and walk. I need not lie down always, mother, need I?"

"God forbid!" cried her mother passionately. "I will see the doctors, darling, and hear what they say. Anything would be preferable to having you like this all your life."

She dried her eyes, and tried to talk cheerfully to the child of happy days when they should be together—she strong of limb and active even as other children—of walks in green lanes where lilacs and laburnums grew, and daisies spangled all the grass. The little one listened with glad and wondering eyes fixed on her mother's face; the vision of that perfect life to come made her forget all present pain and weariness. At last came the hour I had dreaded, the hour of parting. There was weeping and wailing in many a cot around that room, and I and the other nurses moved from one to the other, soothing and comforting the little mourners to whom the coming "Good-bye" meant a week without mother or sister, or friend, as the case might be.

But Lolla did not cry. She seemed instinctively to feel that it would add to her mother's distress, and resolutely kept back the tears in her baby eyes.

"Come soon again," she whispered; "I do want you—so drearily."

"I will come very soon, my darling, and Lolla will be very good, won't she, and not give the kind ladies any trouble?"

The child nodded.

Remembering all her patience and sweetness, I merely said I wished she would give some trouble. I should have greeted it as a more hopeful sign than the languor and inertness which was her usual condition.

Before leaving, the poor young mother had an interview with the house-surgeon, and heard from him the serious nature of the operation. I could well understand the conflict of feeling going on within her. On the one hand was life-long pain and helplessness for the child who was her all; on the other, a chance of complete recovery coupled with a dangerous risk.

She went away weeping bitterly. On Sunday she was to come again; by that time her mind would be made up.

"We shall not operate just at present," said the surgeon, as he bade her farewell. "The child is weak and low, and will need her strength got up. Don't fret. We have had many a case more hopeless than this."

She went away. In thought I followed her to her lonely home. Doubtless it was poor and humble enough; but now there was no little tongue to prattle of childish joys, no baby lips to meet her own in sweet soft kisses; no welcome to greet her entrance as she returned. How she must miss her child; how she must pray and hope for that one boon, that the well-beloved little life might be spared. What anguish and fear unutterable must throb in her tender mother's heart, as she thought of all her darling had to bear.

No wonder I pitied her as I thought of these things.

Days passed on. Lolla was just the same—so still, so patient, so uncomplaining. She never cried or murmured like other children around. Only her eyes grew wistful, as, now and then, some little convalescent patient was allowed to get up, and run about the ward once more. I could read her own unspoken longing well enough; but she never said anything of it now.

I will pass over the intervening time that lay between these probationary days and that one which was to see the result of the dreaded operation. Her mother had at last decided on it, and the doctors agreed that the child might go through it now. Her strength had increased perceptibly after a course of good plain food and nourishment regularly administered. She had gained flesh too, but still that waxen pallor never changed, and at night she bore still the same resemblance to marble I have previously remarked. She was a general favourite. I think everyone in the ward loved her—who, indeed, could help it? The lady visitors, who often came, grew quite fond of "Mother's Lolla," and many were the presents she received from their hands. She had grown accustomed to her mother's visits and absences now, and no longer grieved in that unchildish mournful fashion.

On the night after the operation, her mother had permission to remain. The time fixed was three o'clock in the afternoon. I had seen many a painful sight—my nerves had by this time grown steeled to suffering and horror, I thought; but when I saw the preparations for this ordeal, the basin, and knives, and bandages, I grew faint and sick. My hand shook so that the surgeon noticed it, and made some hasty remark. Nerves in a hospital-nurse are not allowable. With a vigorous effort I mastered my agitation. I had

determined to be present, and any sign of weakness would have caused my dismissal from the operating-room. But I think I never underwent such torture in my life as when I had to stand by and witness the manipulation of that little waxen unconscious form. The time was short enough, I daresay, but to me it seemed hours long. Then the limb was dressed, and the child restored to consciousness.

I breathed freely once more as I laid her back in her little cot. The effects of the chloroform were about her still—her eyes were vacant and wandering, her lips and face more colourless than usual—but, after a time, I soothed and sung her to sleep, and then, with the long feeling of dread that had been upon me removed at last, I, too, went back to my own room to rest and sleep, for the coming night-watch had fallen to my share.

It was eight o'clock when I returned to the ward. All was quiet and peaceful. Some of the children had fallen asleep after being washed and dressed for the night. Lolla had taken some nourishment, I was told, and then fallen asleep again.

At nine o'clock her mother arrived pale and anxious. I gave her the surgeon's report, and begged her not to disturb the child. Then, after going my rounds, I came back to Lolla's cot and sat down beside her. She was still sleeping—a deep tranquil sleep that was a good sign. I watched her for a long time, at last I turned to her mother:

"I have often meant to ask you how the accident happened?" I said. "Would you mind telling me?"

IN THE SUNNY RHINELAND.

XII

EARLY rising doubtless is a luxury to be enjoyed in moderation. Nothing can be more delightful than the aspect of a strange and foreign city, seen in the tender rays of morning sunshine; the eyes unwearyed, the mind fresh and unfettered by the cares and wants of the day. But, as hot noon comes on with the prospect of still more sultry hours—mind and body already jaded and exhausted—how bitterly one repents the indiscretion of the early morning! Still, very often the game is worth the candle; the moment of joy may outweigh the retributory sufferings; and to-day I rather want to grow dull and sulky and miserable somewhere about noon, and then I shall be proof against

all feminine wiles. Otherwise, if John's wife is in one of her charming, amiable moods, she will twist me about her little finger; all my plans will be disarranged, she will lead me captive back to Wiesbaden perhaps, and parade me up and down the Kursaal there.

Anyhow, I rose early that morning, and strolled quietly through gardens fresh with morning dew, and streets still quiet and deserted, with many turnings and windings among quaint old houses, churches, and towers, till I came out upon the Römerberg—an open place of which the main feature is the three antique massive gables of the Römer itself—dominating the square with a kind of homely grandeur; the Römer, or Roman-hall, long the centre of the life, both civic and imperial, of ancient Frankfort; the kernel, indeed, and nucleus of the great German land.

The morning sun shines brightly on the grand ungainly pile—yes, it is ungainly, while also charming and impressive. It is as if the architect who designed it had no conception of a palace except as of a dwelling house—a good deal bigger than usual; but the platz itself is in harmony with the building that dominates its quaint homely houses of solid burgher grandeur, with shops beneath, where apprentices, yawning, are pulling down the shutters. Out of the bright morning sunshine, the cloistered arcades of the Römer are cool and dark and refreshing. A broad handsome staircase leads up to the first floor—everything antique and curious, but it is antiquity carried forward into the life of the day before yesterday. Karl the Great stalks in procession, with a host of half legendary potentates—such a procession as the witches showed to Macbeth—but these are of the past, while the rear is brought up by bag-wigs and laced coats. They vanish within the great double doors of the Kaisersaal—the banqueting-hall of the Teutonic Cæsars. There is not a soul about on the broad staircase, or in the wide corridors; but the sun shines cheerfully in upon this scene of ancient state, and in a shady courtyard the birds chirp and twitter without any dread in their hearts of the ghost of Henry the Fowler.

It is a charming courtyard that in the very heart of the Römer, a bit of mediæval Frankfort, where the shadows rest tranquilly beneath the overhanging eaves. The Kaisersaal is closed—is only open to the public between eleven and one—but there is a bell that one can pull. And this I

pull with some inward trepidation. If old Barbarossa should appear now, out on leave from his cavern among the Hartz Mountains, and mutely demand my business? But no such formidable custodian appears. The man who has charge of the building shows it at irregular hours with a view to a small fee, and so I enter respectfully the hall of the Cæsars.

It is just a huge town-hall, only, instead of portraits of worthy past mayors and chairmen of quarter-sessions, we have emperors looking down upon us—Charlemagne, Barbarossa, and all the rest of the visionary procession we saw just now; fancy portraits, of course, and painted to order. But who shall say that they are not the very moral of the originals? Only one battered old panel or tattered canvas of the period would be worth them all.

But, anyhow, here is the hall. The four walls of it are genuine, at all events, if all the rest be modern counterfeit—the hall where the newly-elected Kaiser dined in state with his very limited constituency, and dined badly, no doubt, with plenty to look at in the way of gratifications, in indigestible pastry, and peacocks in their feathers, but with never a savoury entrée or tasty relevé to break the sodden uniformity of roast and boiled. And there are the triple windows too, where the emperor appeared after he had dined and drunk; and made his bow to the people there assembled—the representatives, as it were, of the great German race of which he was now the head. Not a Jew nor a stranger might show himself at the Römerberg that day on peril of his life; and, indeed, during the time of the election, there was a pretence of excluding strangers altogether from the city in jealous respect for the incubating process then going on.

Beyond the Kaisersaal is the Wahlzimmer, an election-room where the electors met to choose the new emperor—met with their tongues in their cheeks, no doubt, the whole thing decided beforehand, and metaphorically jingling in their pockets the gifts of the Teutonic man in the moon. But this room is more satisfactory on the whole, for it remains unchanged from the days—those pre-revolutionary days, not very remote, historically considered—when the solemn farce, as it had then become, was last enacted.

Goethe saw the room, and describes it surely, in his grand vague way, in his autobiography. And so I leave the Römer impressed, at all events, with the reality of

those German Cæsars, whose history is so wearisome to the untrained mind, and who have left such little impress anywhere of their existence except, perhaps, here in Frankfort.

Decidedly, this is a place that suits me; I will stay here for awhile. Such are my reflections as I walk home to breakfast. The world is now well astir; yellow mail-carts are rattling about; flame-coloured flies from the railways; the sober-looking carriages of financial dignitaries of brisk and early habits; employés are hurrying to their business; stout comfortable dames and tall fair maid-servants on their way home from market. Where are the storks, by the way? I was told that at Frankfort they were to be seen everywhere sitting on the housetops, but not the leg of one have I seen. Perhaps it is not the time of year for them. But, storks or not, everything looks bright and cheerful, inspiring the wandering stranger with similar feelings. If these feelings only stand the shock of breakfast, I shall see a lot of Frankfort this long summer's day. But then they don't; after breakfast comes the languor of the early riser. I had meant to go to the Städel Art Institute, which is over the water in the Sachsenhausen suburb, but I think of the hot shadeless quay which lies between, and frizzle. After all, why should I go? I don't care for German art, and it would only be for an opportunity of girding at it. A cool tankard of lager, and a cigar by the open window, is what my heart inclines to. In this way time flies rapidly till noontide approaches, and I remember that I ought to go to the station to meet my friends.

We only parted yesterday, but it seems a long time ago. I am speculating how they will all look; whether John's wife will seem as handsome as of old. Madame Reimer will look awfully yellow I am sure. I had got used to her olive hue and had come rather to like it, but among these fair-skinned Franks, she will show as a very tawny Tartar. How stupid of John to put such notions into one's head about marrying little Gabrielle, for instance. It is a pretty name too, and I like its owner, and she suits me, which is something, and I feel that it would be a good deed finally to extinguish the chances of that recreant Hector; but then there are a lot of things the other way, even if that semi-defunct husband did not rise like Banquo at the feast, and menace the happiness of the future. Still the notion, however absurd,

is not altogether unpleasant, and as I have fairly been released from my allegiance to John's wife by her late cruel neglect, the suggestion comes to a heart slightly on the rebound. Anyhow the situation is not without interest. I could be very fond of that little woman I feel convinced, if I could think that she were fond of me. And as to that, her demeanour at the approaching meeting may give me a little inkling.

It is rather cool in the big rambling station, that occupies so much more ground than there is any occasion for that one suspects occult military reasons in the way of filling trains rapidly with columns of pickel-haubes. But the train is punctual to a minute, and John's wife is the first person to greet me. "Well, how are you getting on? Anybody could see you have had nobody about you. Have you brushed your hair since you left us?" Some retort as to the curled darlings of Wiesbaden was checked by John's interference. "My dear fellow, let us get out of this as soon as possible, first to the post-office, and then to see the lions, for we must get back by an early train." Madame Reimer had hung back a little and received my greeting last of all.

"I am afraid you have been walking too much," she said; "you limp a little, my friend. The foot is not worse?" she asked anxiously. I imagined that there was nothing materially wrong, only that the pavement of Frankfort was so barbarous in places, as in other German towns. But as we walked to the post-office, Madame Reimer was evidently full of pre-occupation. She made an effort to talk—to be amusing—but it was quite evident that she was suffering from cruel suspense. But John's wife was more than usually chatty and cheerful; full of the delights of Wiesbaden. Already they had secured such a pleasant suite of rooms, and already had made the acquaintance of some very nice people. But I did not grind my teeth as she told me how very agreeable was Colonel Smirke, and how handsome his friend, the Honourable Mr. Smiler. For one thing, Mrs. John did not look as nice as usual. She had evidently been melting down the proceeds of some of John's circular-notes with the Wiesbaden shopkeepers; and, as I think I have before remarked, elaborate millinery did not suit her. Her own taste was not bad, perhaps, but weak, and John's was atrocious; they had been shopping together, and hence the

result. Now Madame Reimer in her neat unpretending costume, in which every single detail, however, was perfect of its kind, was just the woman to trip along by your side through crowded streets, or to rule with easy grace in her own little salon, or to preside over the potage which would surely give forth a savoury steam.

Yes, the prospect is too tempting. "I cannot give thee wealth, my dear Gabrielle, but if——" Stay, I am going too fast. It has not come to that yet; and Madame Reimer is at this last moment almost panting in her eagerness to reach the post-office wicket.

"Yes, there is a letter for Madame Reimer," says the imperturbable official with a suspicious glance at me however, as if he remembered the application of the night before, and thought me quite capable of instituting a spurious Madame Reimer for the purpose of getting hold of letters that were not meant for me. However, madame seizes her letter and retreats with it to the desk where people write telegrams, but hardly seems to have courage to open it. There is a letter for me also, as it happens, in a well-known handwriting that fails to excite any violent emotion—my landlady's, indeed, but with an enclosure making an appointment with me for the following Monday in London, an appointment that it would be very much against my interest to postpone. Let me see; to-day is what—Thursday; well, there is plenty of time, but the necessity of cutting short my tour comes like a cold douche upon me. Just now everything was so pleasantly indefinite, with plenty of play for the imagination as to the future course. Now I am to be ruled and regulated by trains and steamers. And John's wife receives my announcement with perfect equanimity. Well, perhaps we shall meet again somewhere before long, she remarks calmly. She may have a heart of gold this woman, as Madame Reimer said once; but it must be as cold, and surely also as hard.

Then Madame Reimer comes up, a strange solemnity in her large liquid eyes.

"Il est mort," she whispers, putting her hand on my arm as if for support.

And the "he" who is dead, there is no difficulty in concluding is the long-missing husband. Madame Reimer makes no pretence of sorrow, and yet it is easy to see that the news has startled and moved her.

"It happened a year ago," she added softly; "a whole year."

It occurs to me that this simplifies matters wonderfully.

The period of widowhood which French law, as well as custom, imposes, was already past. Madame Reimer was now free to enter into any matrimonial contract.

"Well, are we ready?" cried John.

"Then let us start for Goethe's house."

"Oh, I don't want to see Goethe's house," said Madame Reimer in my ear. "I want to be quiet for a little; somewhere where I can think."

Neither did I care to see Goethe's house again, especially with John, who would dogmatise, and his wife, who would yawn. Madame Reimer and I would go to the museum instead, I told John, and we would meet where?

"Meet at the Palm-garden, which you can get at by tramway from the Rossmart."

"Really!" cried Mrs. John, arching her eyebrows. "What mischief are you two plotting now?"

We really did go to the museum, where I wandered about, craning at antique tablets, and looking wise over inscriptions, but thinking a good deal more about deciphering the riddle of the present moment, while Madame Reimer sat in a quiet corner, and conned over her letter and pondered over it.

And then we took the tramway, and rolled off to the Palm-garden, pretty enough, and with a good collection of plants, which it turns out came from the enchanted palace of the former Dukes of Nassau, at Biebrich, upon which the priest had descanted so feelingly. And here in the shade we sat, and waited for our friends, listening to soft strains of music, with the inevitable waiters hovering about. And Madame Reimer pulled and twisted her letter into all kinds of shapes, and seemed altogether unhinged and unable to talk.

Why didn't I take the letter from her hands, and imprison the hands themselves, and say to her, then and there, what I was thinking about? But I dallied and delayed. And then she turned to me suddenly, and said:

"Monsieur, I want you to do me a great service."

Of course I would do anything.

"Then, monsieur," she said, clasping her hands, and looking at me with an appealing glance I could hardly read the meaning of, "I must—at least, I think I must"—then after a pause—"yes, I am sure I must go to Cologne to-morrow to

meet some friends who expect me. Will you take me there, monsieur? I dare not go alone, I am such a wretched traveller. Will you take care of me, monsieur, and put me into the hands of my friends?"

Why, that was no favour at all, as it happened; on the contrary, it was I who was favoured in having such a travelling companion. I was pleased, indeed, but yet somehow I felt that things had gone wrong.

Then John and his wife appeared, and we had lunch together pleasantly enough under the trees. This we felt was really a breaking-up entertainment. To-morrow would see us finally dispersed, with no chance of coming together again.

John and I clinked our glasses affectionately; the two young women conversed lovingly together in low tones at the other end of the table. Amy was tender and caressing in her manner—Gabrielle full of life and sparkle—and they were just as amiable when their confidences ended. They mingled in our conversation: Amy handed me my coffee with a glance of the deepest tenderness, while Gabrielle leant affectionately over John, as he imparted the information he had gathered from Bradshaw about the trains. And in the matter of time-tables, John, I admit, is pre-eminent. There is an inflexibility about him that accords well with the seven forty-five and eight twenty-seven trains. And he has undertaken to produce Madame Reimer at the station here in time for the nine fifteen train to-morrow morning, for she must go back to Wiesbaden to pack up and bring away her baggage.

"Well," said John, as we took a stroll together under the trees, "I suppose you have settled matters pretty well by this time, you and Gabrielle; and I tell you what, she is a very nice little thing, and you might have done a great deal worse."

I hastened to assure him that I had not done anything, either for better or worse up to now; but John put that on one side in his usual dogmatic way.

"I assume it will come to that," he said; "in fact, I don't know that I should trust her to your charge, if I did not consider you practically affianced."

And then he went on to explain that the discovery of the proofs of the death of the missing husband would make a considerable addition to Madame Reimer's resources. There had been a heavy insurance on his life, which had been kept up at a great sacrifice of present income. Now both the

income would be released, and a considerable capital sum would come in. Gabrielle would be comparatively rich. All this was very good to hear, and as my friends had apparently settled the matter for me, I was quite content that it should be so. All the same, I wished I had spoken under the trees, before John and his wife came up, when I knew nothing about these business details.

But while John was thus confidential and interested himself somewhat in the affair, his wife did not approach the subject even remotely, when we were talking together soon afterwards. I was to do a lot of things for her in London, matching silks, and getting patterns and all that, and I was to send a nice long and amusing letter with the things, telling her everything that happened—with a searching ambiguous glance at me—on the journey home. And I promised all this, not quite sure of being able to perform it to the letter. If anything really did happen—if I secured Gabrielle, that is—well, she should write the long amusing letter, which would come to the same thing, perhaps.

But our last words were soon cut short; inexorable John announced that it was time to start for the train, and soon we left the gardens and took the train back to the city. And there Madame Reimer must go again to the post-office to send off a telegram.

"You are quite, quite sure," asked Mrs. John, detaining her for a moment, and giving her a searching glance.

Gabrielle hesitated, but only for an instant.

"Yes, I am quite sure," she replied, and went and wrote the telegram with a firm hand.

Well, they were gone, and I was alone once more; but the loneliness was different now, seeing that I thought how soon I should no longer be alone, and that life was broadening out with indefinite but delightful possibilities.

Positively I was in love, and seriously so. The fair Gabrielle had won my heart at last—at least, she wasn't fair, "gipsy" would be a better epithet; and she had won my heart, because I thought I had won hers.

A rosy light was spread over everything. Frankfort seemed a city of the blessed that night, and the Maine might have been one of the streams that water Paradise.

It was a lovely evening, the sky glowing

with purple and orange, and the river repeating the sky. The boats coming through the evening glow sent ripples of vivid colouring quivering to the banks.

The bridges were bathed in light, and the floating bath-houses, where strapping youths were taking headers into the expanse of molten gold; while children ran laughing about, and pretty girls came past with their lovers, whom I regarded with sympathetic and approving eyes; I had no touch of jealousy in the inner heart, no secret longing to punch that young fellow's head, and that, I think, is a pretty good sign that this time I was really in love.

And then when, what with the ripple of the waters, and the glow of the sun, and the glow within my own breast—when I became decidedly thirsty and sought the lager-beer cellar as before—I am sure that Charlotte felt the change in me and sympathised with it.

Charlotte was cutting bread-and-butter when I went down—little rolls with slices of sausage inserted—for the postmen who had not yet mustered in force, and she laid her hand affectionately on my shoulder as she deposited the foaming beaker before me. And that touch I felt meant sympathy; but the garlic was very noticeable. And even the melancholy waiter had somehow brightened up. He brought up my dinner with alacrity. He found for me another bottle of the old Rauenthaler.

And under the influence of that golden fluid, heavens! what visions of future happiness crowded upon me! I was too excited to sleep, and smoked about half-a-dozen cigars, leaning out of the window and examining the stars.

A man and his wife were in the next room, and I could hear them bickering gently—saying spiteful things to each other in soft-whispered tones.

There was a big door between the two rooms, as is the general and objectionable arrangement of the sleeping-rooms in these German hotels, as if they expected excellencies and high mightinesses, demanding whole floors of communicating rooms; but for ordinary people the effect is disagreeable when you know that your neighbour is conscious of your every movement.

Well, these people quarrelled in a dulcet way that was quite laughable, but it had no warning effect upon me. We should not quarrel, Gabrielle and I—we should just suit each other like fingers and glove.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY.

CHAPTER XXXII. AN EXPEDIENT.

MRS. MABBERLEY'S even suavity, in which there was no cordiality, was not in any way disturbed by the evident reluctance with which Miss Chevenix returned to her house and society. She received her unwilling inmate with politeness that was almost warm, and when the discovery of the loss of the dressing-case was made, she displayed womanly pity and indignation.

Beatrix felt quite grateful to her. This one little bit of fellow-feeling made the two almost intimate.

Mrs. Maberley was inquisitive about the details of the occurrence, and when, early on the following morning, they heard that Lady Vane was a fellow-sufferer, she extended her sympathy to Lady Vane also.

When the excitement and vexation of her loss had subsided in some degree, and Beatrix had given all the information that was supposed to be useful, and which Mrs. Maberley drew up in a remarkably clear form for the assistance of Scotland Yard, the subject of Mr. Horndean was discussed between the two, with less covert antagonism than usually characterised their conversations.

As Mrs. Maberley listened to all that Beatrix had to say, her shifting glance was frequently turned upon the speaker's face, with an expression of doubt and surprise; but she did not interrupt her by a single question.

Beatrix concluded by saying:

"You understand my difficulty—I need not dwell upon it; and I think I may fairly expect you to help me out of it, as you must have foreseen from the first that it would arise, whenever a chance of marriage came in my way."

"I understand your difficulty perfectly," said Mrs. Maberley, "and we will discuss the way out of it presently; but first I want to be certain that I understand yourself. The advantages that a marriage with Mr. Horndean has to offer you are considerable, but they are not extraordinary. There are higher prizes well within your reach, and the same trouble would have to be faced in any instance. Are you not deciding in too great a hurry?"

"The higher prizes have not come in

my way in all these years," said Beatrix bitterly, "and I do not grow younger or brighter; besides, I have other motives. I shall not marry Mr. Horndean for his fortune only."

"Indeed! You love him, then—do you mean that?"

A long-untouched chord in Beatrix's breast vibrated under the coarse touch of this alien hand, but she stilled the revolt within her.

"I do mean that, Mrs. Maberley. Will you kindly accept it as the truth, and let it pass?"

"Certainly, my dear. I beg your pardon for allowing my surprise to be so visible. I ought to have remembered that love has made more unlikely conquests before now. I myself never pretended to despise that, or, indeed, any other human passion. It is enough that it is to be reckoned with in the present case; it shall by all means be taken into account. Let me see, let me see"—she played noiselessly with her fingers upon the table before her—"you will want to have an absconding trustee, an insolvent banker, or, much better—for investigation will not be easy—a friend of a speculative turn, who has led you into disastrous investments. You will have been entirely ignorant of money matters, and absolutely reliant upon the judgment of your friend, and it will be only when the necessity arises for your looking into affairs, for 'realising,' as it is called, that you will discover that your confidence, not in the honesty, but in the judgment of that person, has been misplaced, and that your fortune has been muddled away. There will be no difficulty in selecting among the bubble schemes of this year, a few whose reputation will be none the worse for any charge you may bring against them. You will make this unpleasant discovery, and inform Mr. Horndean of it, and he will assure you, with perfect sincerity, that it is not of the slightest consequence, and the rest of the world will be none the wiser. What do you think of my combination; does it offer you a feasible way of escape from your difficulty?"

A flood of conflicting feelings, so entirely new to Beatrix that they seemed to change her identity, had surged up in her heart as she listened to Mrs. Maberley's slowly and carefully uttered words. Fear, shame, and something terribly like despair were among them. She loved this man, with all the strength of her nature, for good and

ill, and she rebelled against the necessity for deceiving him. It would have been a luxury to Beatrix, as great as any material good she had ever enjoyed, to have been able to tell Mr. Horndean the truth.

But it could not be; the meshes of the great fraud of her unfortunate life were around her, and there was no escape in that direction. She could not but acknowledge that Mrs. Maberley had contrived a way of escape for her in another with singular ability. It would depend on herself only to make it secure, by giving it as much as possible the air of truth.

"This will be the best thing to do, no doubt," she said, "but I shall have to be préciser. One cannot put off the man one is going to marry with vague generalities, as one might put off a mere inquisitive acquaintance. I decline the trustee—he knows I have none; I decline the banker; banks do not flourish or fade without a local habitation and a name; I 'opt' for the imprudent, but well-meaning friend."

Something feverish in the manner of Beatrix, and the fictitious gaiety of her tone, again awakened surprise in Mrs. Maberley. She looked covertly at her from under her eyelids, and thought:

"It is well that she has almost served our purpose; the colonel was right, she is dangerous with her eyes shut. She would, however, be impossible with them open, so I have no choice."

"You see things with your usual clearness, my dear," she said aloud, "and define them with the plain speaking that I have always admired you for. And now we have reached the point at which I think I can help you effectually. You will have to be préciser, as you say; you will have to tell Mr. Horndean and his sister who the imprudent but well-meaning friend that has risked your little fortune in ruinous speculations is—well, you have only to tell him that I am the involuntary culprit."

"You?"

"Yes, I. You are astonished, no doubt, but you may entirely believe me. I am quite willing to incur the odium of folly. Women who dabble in speculation are among the features of our time, and although I never did anything of the kind, and consider a woman who meddles with speculation as a fool foolisher than all her tribe, I have not the least objection to playing the part of terrible example for Mr. Horndean's benefit. You may begin as soon as you like to hint at my business faculties; if he has any sense,

or knowledge of the world at all, he will be prepared for squalls after such an intimation as that, if you have previously given him to understand that you are completely in my hands."

"But why—what do you mean?" asked Beatrix in bewilderment. "Why should you take such an imputation upon yourself? It must injure you very severely."

Mrs. Maberley smiled, in the covert and deeply-meaning way that Beatrix always shrank from with a sensation of fear, as she answered:

"I mean that I am prepared to help you out of your difficulty, and that I am totally indifferent to Mr. Horndean's opinion of my business faculties. He will keep it to himself for your sake, and his believing me to be one of those fools who are soon parted, not only from their own money, but from that of other people who are silly enough to trust them with it, will not do me any harm. You will 'handle me gently, as if you loved me,' as Isaak Walton says of the fisherman and the frog, in the telling—also for your own sake, and, when you and I part, we shall be quits."

Her voice had not varied, nor had her face changed for one fleeting instant, while she spoke thus, and yet, never had Beatrix felt so much afraid of her. A thrill, as of a cold wind at the back of her neck, passed over her.

"This," continued Mrs. Maberley, "is the best, indeed the only thing you can do. And now, as regards your immediate plans, it would not suit me that your marriage should take place very soon. When it does take place, I may as well relieve your mind by telling you at once, you and I part company for the future."

If Beatrix's life had depended upon her subduing every trace of emotion, she could not have kept down the long breath of relief that she drew on hearing those words, or hindered the wavering of the tell-tale colour in her cheek.

"You are glad to be assured of that," said Mrs. Maberley, with her composed and complacent smile; "so should I be in your place. You will have nothing to fear from me. Chantage is not in my line. Mrs. Horndean of Horndean will have no debts to pay for Miss Chevenix, no *arrièrè pensée* need trouble you. But the time has not come yet, and you must see yourself that delay is in your interests. My imprudence, my ruinous credulity must be amply demonstrated."

"What do you mean by time?" asked

Beatrix sullenly. "I must give Mr. Horndean a reasonable answer."

"Certainly, my dear; and considering how short your acquaintance with him has been, I don't think there is anything unreasonable in my saying that you cannot marry until after Christmas."

"Certainly not," said Beatrix, relieved; she had feared a much more considerable postponement than that, and then she added, under a momentary impulse to which she yielded with a kind of desperation:

"Do forgive me, Mrs. Maberley; but I never know whether I ought to feel grateful to you or not. I wish you would tell me your motive."

Mrs. Maberley sat silent with downcast eyes, and fingers beating noiselessly on the table for a full minute, before she replied, and then she said:

"You owe me no gratitude; if even you were capable of it. Between you and me it would be an idler word than it is nine times out of every ten that it is uttered. My motive was a powerful one, it is nearly exhausted. This marriage of yours falls in very well with my plans; let it suffice you to know so much, and that you will be free from me ever after."

"But it does not, it cannot," said Beatrix desperately. "I feel like a person walking in the dark."

"Straight into the light, however," said Mrs. Maberley; "let that content you. You cannot say I have not adhered to my part of our bargain; you have not much longer to hold to yours. This much I may say to you; it, too, will be good news for you. I don't intend to remain in England much longer. I have relatives in Canada, and I think of going there early next year. When I do go, you can tell Mr. Horndean that it is because I have come to grief by speculating in bubble companies. And now, let us drop the subject. The terms of our present agreement remain unchanged; you make your engagements only with my approval and consent, and accept such as I make for you."

"With the exception of any that involve my meeting Mr. Ramsden," said Beatrix, rising, and standing before Mrs. Maberley in a resolute attitude, and with a look of disdain. "I positively refuse to recognise that man; he is an insolent, low person. I was astonished to see him at Lady Vane's ball, and was very near asking her how she came to invite him."

"It is fortunate you did not, for it was I who asked her for a card for him, and the question coming from you would not have been in good taste. Mr. Ramsden does not please you. Ah! that is to be regretted; but if you will take my advice, Beatrix, you will not let the fact be too apparent. I do not know a man whom I would not rather have for my enemy than Mr. James Ramsden, especially if I had anything to conceal."

"I do not care; I will not meet him."

"I do not foresee at present," said Mrs. Maberley, without the least disturbance of her profound calmness, and moving her crochet-needle with her usual quickness, "that there will be any further occasion for your meeting Mr. Ramsden; but if there should be, you will be a greater fool than I take you for, if you are rude to him. You are not in a position to brave enmity, my dear, and although I am going out to Canada, I have no reason to suppose that Mr. Ramsden will be leaving London."

At this moment a card was brought to Mrs. Maberley.

"Mr. James Ramsden," said she, glancing at it. "He calls early. Some message from his mother most likely. Yes, I can see him."

Beatrix darted out of the room by a side-door. She was raging with anger and humiliation, and it was long before she could subdue them sufficiently to take the good out of what Mrs. Maberley had said. Every hour since she had parted with her lover had seemed to lessen her content, and to bring with it some new apprehension and misgiving.

She walked up and down her room with something of the impatience of a caged animal, and only controlled herself when she had to begin her letter to Mr. Horn-dean. He had begged her to let him know Mrs. Maberley's views as soon as possible, so that if they were not favourable to his own, he need not propose any change in his sister's plans. She had to tell him that they were opposed to his wishes, and she had to write in a considerate and affec-

tionate tone of the woman whom she hated and feared.

From this the pride of Beatrix recoiled as much as her love—so potent, although of such recent growth—revolted. As she sealed the letter, she felt that it would be for ever hateful to her to remember, although it settled the time at which she was to be emancipated, and become the wife of the only man whom she had ever even fancied that she loved.

Mr. Horn-dean was as impatient and as indignant when he found that he was not to have his own way, as he always had been when circumstances and individuals did not bend themselves to his will, even before he ceased to be "troublesome" Frederick Lorton.

His reply to Beatrix was a passionate love-letter, but it was a very ill-tempered production as well, and Beatrix, heartily in love with him as she was, recognised the vehement self-will in it. She was not frightened by this; the same existed in herself, though in the one instance of Mrs. Maberley it had been subdued, and she always was to be the one person in the world to whom he would submit readily.

The same post brought her a welcome letter from Mrs. Townley Gore. The weather had turned very cold, everything was deadly dull, Frederick was detestably sulky—the writer had no doubt Beatrix knew perfectly well what made him so—Mr. Townley Gore was sick of Horn-dean, and so was she, and they were coming to town at once. Frederick would come up a day or two later, and she should be so glad to see Beatrix at Kaiser Crescent again.

There was no news, Mrs. Townley Gore added, except that Mr. Warrender had returned to Chesney Manor with his sister, Mrs. Masters, who had come home from India, and had been detained at Paris by an accident.

"Her children have been here some time," added Mrs. Townley Gore. "Mr. Warrender and she arrived on Tuesday; I am going to call there to-day."

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PRICE TWOPENCE

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART II. PHOEBE'S FATHERS.

CHAPTER X. THE BEGINNING OF PHOEBE DOYLE.

THINK how things had gone with Phœbe from the beginning; and ask if they must not have been like a dream—like a page torn out from the second, that is to say the most bewilderingly complicated, volume of one of her familiar story-books, and applied to herself in a way that out-dreams dreams.

She had risen in the morning without the prospect of anything more exciting than a silent conversation with that withered bush, which stood for the symbol of a dead and empty life that had to depend upon fancy for all its leaves and blossoms, until fancy itself, from overwork, should become even more barren and sapless than reality.

She had to conjure a ruler of nations out of a pot-house orator, a hero of romance and liberty out of a thread-bare fiddler, and a mysterious heroine out of herself; and though it was all easy enough at present, she could not, in her heart of hearts, expect the soil on which she and her bush stagnated together to give them food for new sap every day—rainy days and all.

Quite enough little things had lately happened to make the freshly tasted excitement of something in the shape of real food a sort of second necessity. It was as yet no less easy than it had always been to feast on fancies, but she had tasted the salt of real looks and of real words, and this had made the flavour of unsalted fancies feel pointless and poor.

It was thus she had begun her day.

By nightfall, she knew that she had given her whole self to Stanislas Adrianski; before night the mystery of her life had been unveiled.

Stanislas Adrianski had, in his knightly and masterful fashion, wooed and won, not Phœbe Burden, a struggling law-clerk's foster-foundling, but Phœbe Doyle, the acknowledged daughter and heiress of a rich stranger who had, at last, come back from beyond the seas to do justice and to find and claim his own.

And yet, dreamlike as it ought to have been, it was all mere right and natural to Phœbe than a commonplace flirtation in a ball-room would have been to ninety-nine girls in a hundred. Phœbe was the hundredth girl. If the veil had been torn from the mystery of her birth to show her, standing within the shrine of home-love, some mere grocer or market-gardener, or any other honest but uninteresting person, she would have thought it strange, and have preferred the enjoyment of an unbroken and undiminished mystery.

It was at any rate something not utterly rapid and ignominious to be the adopted daughter and confidante of a chief of associated Robespierres, whose taste for tea and shrimps was merely a great man's foible, and would therefore, as such, fill a respectable corner of the world's history in time to come.

She had already read "Shrimps, His Liking for, page four hundred and seventy-three," in the uncompiled index to an unwritten biography of Horatio Collingwood Nelson. But the story that parted her old life from her new did not seem to her strange at all.

"We call her Phœbe—because it is not her name."

These were the first words of which her ears were conscious when she came downstairs from her bedroom, and felt, with her only too quick and ready instinct—as quick and ready as a flight of fancy—that the distinguished-looking stranger of middle age and with the big beard, whose acquaintance she had already made, held the key to the secret of her birth and destiny. So they had been talking about her. Who was she? What was she to be?

“So!” said he. “So this is the child who has been thrown upon charity by her own people, and whom charity has forgotten. I don’t blame you, Mr. Nelson,” he said with a certain contemptuous indifference in his tone, not thinking it worth while to express his opinion of a man whom he had mentally convicted of a mean lie to cover a petty fraud. “You have done more than your duty——”

“Pray don’t mention it,” said the admiral. “It is what England expects of every man.”

“And so you have doubtless expected more than your pay. It is not right you should lose——”

“Ah! If every man,” said the admiral modestly, “if every man had his deserts, as I always say——”

“And so you shall not lose.”

Here, he felt and knew now, was he, after a long, lonely, weary term of exile, undertaken and (till habit and success had hardened and warped it into other grooves) maintained for this very girl’s sake, returned to find himself alone true to a compact which he had been taking for the one link that bound him to his fellow men. Lawrence would have allowed him no right to feelings too fine to be measured by gold.

But it may well be that even a usurer has depths beyond the reach of the philosophy of the very cleverest of young men. He knew—none else can guess—what that compact had come to mean to him. He himself had never known what it had meant till now, when he found how little it had meant to other men, whom it had never cost a moment’s struggle against self or a single act of self-denial.

It was for a chance promise made to a chance baby-girl that he had performed the miracle of changing his nature, whether for good or for ill. Whatever the means, it was for that baby-girl’s sake that he had ceased to be whatever he had been, and had become whatever he had become; as much and as truly for her sake as other

men crush themselves, with loving goodwill, under the lighter labours that have wives and children for their comfort, and the welfare of wives and children for their ample reward. If it had not been for the one duty of sending a few pounds a year to England, what would his life in India have been? It had been lived alone; but, save for this seeming nothing, it would have been lived absolutely, unsurpassably alone. And now it all turned out to have been a stupid blunder. Nobody else concerned had cared a straw about the matter, and he had bothered with throwing away so much capital—so his reason, ashamed as usual of his heart, chose to put it—to help a silly knave to pay his rent and to stave off the reprisals of a gas company; perhaps, and probably, to save the expense of a cook and housemaid. The lost capital had not been much, it is true, but the principle was the same.

“And we, calling ourselves, some of us, gentlemen, have united together only to make a present of this child’s life to that fellow, who is evidently only just saved from being a whole rogue by being more than half a fool,” he thought to himself, while bending his eyes upon Phœbe in such wise as, without meaning her to be aware of their gaze, to make her feel less excited than confused and shy. Who could he be? Ought that voice of nature, of which stories tell us so much, to command her to exclaim something or other and to fall into his open arms? It is true his arms were not open; but then, if they had been, the voice of nature was as stupidly dumb as usual. “Of course, she is only a girl, and will be only a woman,” he thought on. “So, of course, no harm in particular has been done to her. But if she had been only a kitten that we had saved from drowning, we solemnly swore to do the best by her, body and life and soul, that we could; not to let her coming to grief—as of course she will—be our fault instead of her own. . . . We were bound jointly and severally, as the lawyers say. If Esdaille and Ronaine are bankrupt, and since Bassett and Urquhart repudiate, and since this fellow here does worse than either, and is not fit to bring up a sparrow, on whom does the debt fall? On me. There’s no getting out of that, anyhow, twist it and look at it whichever way I will. There’s only one possible thing to be done. But how? How can I, at my age, and my ways, saddle myself with the life of a girl? Why, I couldn’t even meddle in the matter

without scandal—though nobody knows me, and I should say that nobody that matters a straw knows her. But then, what have I to do with scandal, or scandal with me? Here's something that must be done by someone, if only out of common honour, and there's nobody but me to do it; and——”

“I quite agree with your sentiments,” interrupted the admiral. “They are such that do any man honour. I always say myself that all expenses to which a fellow-man is put in the execution of his duty should be punctually repaid. It's not the money; but it's the principle of the thing.”

The admiral did not speak at all fiercely this time, but very gently and deferentially, merely saving his visitor the trouble of having to complete his own sentence, as it were.

“Of course, of course,” said Doyle hastily. “I never knew anybody who didn't call money ‘the principle of the thing.’ They muddle the spelling a little, I suppose. So that is the girl. And so she has nobody in the place of a mother, or of a sister, nobody about her in the shape of womankind?”

Phoebe herself began to disbelieve in the voice of nature; or was the stranger only her grandfather, and does the voice of nature apply to grandfathers? He did not even appear to be taking any personal notice of her, but to be speaking of her as if she were a mere nonentity in her own history—a very undignified position for a conscious heroine to be placed in.

“I have been father, mother, brother, and sister to Phoebe all in one,” said the admiral solemnly. “It has been a lofty responsibility. But it has been piously and nobly fulfilled.”

“But surely she has been to school? She knows other girls of her own age?”

The admiral did not answer immediately. He could not but feel that at Phoebe's friends might expect her to have been sent to school. But then they might want to know the name of the schoolmistress, and that was a question more easy to ask than to answer.

“Well, not exactly to what you might go so far as to call, school. But——”

“She has not been to school? All the better. And her friends?”

“Friends!” exclaimed the admiral with alacrity. “Do you suppose that I, as her responsible guardian, would allow her to mix with the people about here? They

are ignorant and vulgar, sir, to the backbone. I have been her friend.”

Such a speech might have roused any other man to double pity. But not Doyle.

“Strange!” he only thought. “A girl, and without mother, sister, teacher, school-fellow, or girl-friend! Why, such a girl might, in truth, become what a woman never is or has been; what a woman ought to be. If I could row in the same boat with Urquhart and Bassett by breaking my word, how could I leave a girl who, thanks to fate, has escaped from women to gain no good out of such a miraculous escape from evil? She is young, away from women; her own nature cannot surely as yet have taught her any very irreparable harm. Mr. Nelson.”

“Sir.”

“I am a plain dealing and plain speaking sort of man, as I dare say you see.”

“And I, sir, am a ditto. There's nothing about me that isn't plain. When I say ditto, I mean ditto; nothing less, nothing more.”

“Then I need say but few words. I have learned all that I need to know. That she has formed no ties except with yourself, and——” He had to beat about the bush; for it was needful that he himself should invent a romance off-hand, and his imagination, despite his having once upon a time been a hanger-on upon the skirts of literature, was neither so strong nor so quick as Phoebe's. “I said that I had undertaken to make enquiries about her on behalf of her friends and family, who have come to hear of the story of her loss—no matter how; and, as I am satisfied, so will they also be. You have not asked me anything about them, nor who they are. I will tell you all that you need know.”

He was addressing vacancy, or the ceiling, as most people do who are inventing their facts as they go along. But his eyes fell, for a moment, indirectly upon Phoebe's listening face, and the sight of it inspired him, professed woman-scorner as he was, with the excitement of a new feeling that this girl was, after all, the only thing that stood to him for a phantom likeness of the purposes that other men live for, and of what they expect to find waiting for them when they come home. Had she been the plainest and commonest looking of all womankind, he felt, there was something in his long silent heart that was hungering for some of the links, for any of them, that bind a man to his kind. Honour and duty were at the summit of the wave; but who

can guess from what distance, or from what depth, a wave may come? Certainly not he.

"There was once, I am not going to tell you how or when, since my story is not my own, a man of—of good rank and position, who secretly married against his father's—and her father's—will, a girl, who—well, let it be enough that she was all they say a woman ought to be, except rich—"

"Ah!" interrupted the admiral; "that was sad, to be sure. But then it is odd that her parent should have objected to the young man."

"They had their reasons, I suppose. Perhaps they were of those eccentric people who—I assure you I have known actual cases, strange as you may think it—who fancy that there are more important things than money; the young man may have been wild, or a gambler, or—who can tell? Anyhow, they married without leave, and then the young man's father, on whom he depended, quarrelled with him and cast him off, and he had to go abroad to make a living. What was worse for him, he had to leave his wife in poor lodgings in London, alone. Time went by. And—and—and when—of course you understand that letters had ceased—when he came home again it was to find that his wife was dead, and that his child had been lost in the streets of London. It had been sent out by a nurse-girl who had never returned. Everywhere he made enquiries—of the police, at the workhouses, in the hospitals," he went on, his imagination warming, as he felt his story working itself together without any too apparent flaw, "and nowhere could he obtain a clue, until he was obliged to give up his search in despair. But at last, by a curious chain of circumstances, he came to learn, from one who knew all about it at the time, your story of the lost child. Date, even to the hour, descriptions, all possible circumstances agreed. He enquired yet more closely, and to such good purpose that my own final enquiries to-night will leave not the faintest shadow of a doubt upon my—upon my friend's mind that his lost daughter has been found. But there are family reasons why secrecy as to all this past history should still be observed, and—and—why it should not be supposed that his daughter has ever been brought up in a manner unbecoming her position and—and—name. And therefore, to come to the point, will you, Mr. Nelson, besides

having the pleasure of restoring your foster child to her friends—will you undertake to breathe no word of anything you know or have ever known about Miss Burden? Will you separate yourself from her as if you had never known her? Will you consider Jane Burden—whatever her name was, as dead, and keep from all attempts to see her, or to learn her name? If so, you shall not lose; you shall have what, as you truly say, every Englishman expects—that his duty shall be well paid. You have, you say, hitherto done your duty—piously and nobly—for nothing. You shall henceforth do it yet more nobly—you shall do it for the arrears of that hundred a year for her bringing up that you tell me you have never received. . . . Yes," he thought to himself, "that has to be done too. Since they have done nothing, I must do all."

Phœbe's ears were still busy in trying to carry all she could gather of this, to say the least of it, meagre history of her birth to her mind. It was not strange to her, for she had read of such romances over and over again. They were commoner than blackberries in the land where the leaves and blossoms of her withered bay-bush grew. More, there was no need at present to understand. But she, looking towards him who had hitherto been her father, and wondering, with some new awe and inconsistent alarms, about who her real new father might turn out to be, less understood the flash of real intelligence that suddenly beamed over the admiral's face—she had never seen such a thing there, or anything like it, before. But it was only for a moment—perhaps she had misread what she had seen.

"Phœbe!" he exclaimed, in a voice pitched so high as to be almost a wail. "Come to my side—to my left side, where my heart is, and tell them all if Horatio Collingwood Nelson is the man to surrender the child of that heart for a sum that—that—in short, isn't worth his taking, and with no more security than a stranger's bare word—I mean for all the gold mines of Golconda, paid down: that's what I mean!"

It was a speech—except for a few words in the middle—after Phœbe's own heart: it was worthy, she felt, of an Associated Robespierre. What ought a true heroine to do? Should she not go at once to the side of the only father she had ever known, and refuse even coronets and diamonds with scorn? But it was no natural impulse

that called for an answer. She did not go to his side ; and the moment's opportunity for heroism was gone.

"I see," said the stranger quietly. "I forgot the arrears of interest. That will come to a good deal more ; but you're right. You must have that too. It's stiff to reckon off hand. Suppose we say in round numbers, for arrears and interest, two thousand guineas. As for security for the money, you shall have a cheque that will be duly honoured. I'll make arrangements for that to-morrow ; and, understand, that the signature will tell you nothing, and that any enquiries you make at the bank it is drawn on will tell you nothing more. As for security for getting the cheque, seeing that Miss Burden leaves this house with me in an hour, and without leaving an address, consider that a father is not bound to pay a penny for the recovery of his child. Take a fair and just offer, or leave it ; in offering it, my duty is done, and I shall advise him accordingly. No. I know what you are going to say. The father will not appear to claim his daughter in person. He will act wholly through me."

Again—though Doyle saw nothing of it—the look came into the admiral's face that would make a stranger, who only saw him for these passing moments, take him for anything but the fool that most people thought him. And yet that look did not prevent him from saying, as simply as if Doyle had not been making him an offer, which—as being without a single grain of real security, and based on no sort of sufficient proof—nobody but the most confiding of mortals could be asked to accept or even consider :

"Phœbe ! Duty is duty after all. I have been a good father to you, but Heaven forbid that I should allow you to stand in my way—I mean, that I should allow myself to stand in yours, for the sake of a few paltry thousand pounds. You know I have never cared to be rich, but when there is the cause, the cause of mankind. Be a heroine, Phœbe. It is hard, my poor girl. But tear yourself away, don't cry, think of Mankind !"

"Go !" asked Phœbe. "With this—this gentleman ? Now ? And—and—what shall I do about my things ? And—who is my father ? Where is he ? Ah !" she cried, struck by a sudden light ; "my father—it is you ! And—and," she added sadly, "if you are not, nobody is—though you don't seem like one ; you have not—taken money to send me away."

It was not the least like the scene she had planned. It had all gone wrong. There had been no voice of nature ; no agonies at parting ; no raptures at meeting. Only a cold instinct that the Grand President of Robespierres was something of an impostor, and that story-books are something of impostors too. Nevertheless, her broken words did not sound cold. To Doyle, they seemed to ring of something real at last ; and "My father—it is you !" went more deeply through him than he could tell, and struck a chord in him that was sadly strange and sweetly new.

"Your father ?" said he. "Let it be so then. . . . I did not mean to say so now. . . . But—I am he. You have no other ; and—never mind what you call your 'things.' Get ready anyhow, and come. Come—home."

It was the least he could say, and yet, little as it was, it was the most, too. And, though little was the most, there was something in his tone, for all its coldness, that seemed to call her as if he needed her, and to make her able to answer him in only one way.

And thus it happened that Marion Burden had died, and that Phœbe Doyle, the only child of a rich English-Indian, had come into the world. Only Stanislas Adrianski, who had missed his plighted bride from her garden for many wondering days, had been permitted to recognise, amazed, the ghost of his Phœbe in a fine lady sitting in a box at "Olga." And what should he be to Phœbe Doyle ? Only a fiddler now—or a hero for ever, whatever else he might be ?

Only one thing is certain : nobody as yet, not even herself, had ever known the real Phœbe. And least of all those who have looked on her and her garden life through those eyes of hers, that had so wild a way of seeing all things in forms and colours that were not their own.

IN THE SUNNY RHINELAND.

XIII.

It would have been pleasant to stop at Frankfort for a time. The place attracts, because, for one thing, it is racy of the German soil, so thoroughly German that even its foreign element assumes the pervading tone and is hardly noticeable in the general German mass. But if I am sorry to leave the place, I am not at all sorry for the cause. There is nothing unattractive

in the prospect before me—a pleasant railway journey with a charming companion—while the slight element of doubt as to our personal relations gives a kind of zest to the affair. If everything were irrevocably fixed there would be no end of doubts and misgivings; as it is, all looks couleur de rose, which is a good colour in its way, if in its nature evanescent.

The quiet stolid hotel where I am staying is not in the least put out at my sudden departure; in fact, I think I can detect a feeling of relief in the face of the melancholic waiter. Other guests arrived last night, and the waiter clearly dislikes a crowd and bustle which interfere with his studies. No fiery chariot is summoned to transport me to the station, but I depart quietly with my portmanteau, this last upon the shoulders of the odd man about the hotel, who does not, happily, wear a uniform of green and gold and call himself porter; in which case he would not condescend so far. Still, this is really a departure, I feel; I am turning my face homewards. I might, if I had time, think out an elaborate farewell to this German land of which this pleasant German city is, de jure, the capital and representative. But I have not an instant to lose. First I have to dart to the Taunus Bahnhof to meet the train from Wiesbaden, which is luckily just in to time.

"I have only one piece of baggage," cries Gabrielle, with a hasty pressure of the hand.

Only one piece, indeed! but that piece the biggest slice in the way of luggage that could very well hold together.

John pokes me in the ribs playfully.

"There, my boy, you'll have to look after that for the future; I'm well out of it."

But John, too, is in a tremendous hurry, having to run round to the other platform to catch a train back again to Wiesbaden. And it is very well to be in a hurry when you have only yourself to look to; but when you are charged with such a piece of luggage as Gabrielle's, you have to get the porters to be in a hurry too, and that no money will bribe them to be. Why should they put themselves out of the way to hurry from the Taunus Bahnhof to the Neckar Bahnhof? They are all in a row; three roomy rambling stations, as much alike as so many drops of water, suggesting the query as to why they should not be all run together and amalgamated as one big Bahnhof. As it is, one is tormented by all sorts of doubts as

to being on the right track. Why should we be going to the Neckar Bahnhof? We are not going up the Neckar; I only wish we were. But then the third Bahnhof is known as the Weser, and we are still more emphatically not going down the Weser.

"And now, my friend," said Madame Reimer, putting her purse into my hand, "now that we have parted with Monsieur Jean and his grand ideas, let us travel, please, in the way that costs the least dear." Nothing could suit me better. Gabrielle was evidently likely to prove a treasure in the way of judicious economy. So third-class tickets are procured for Cologne at something like eight-and-sixpence each. But the third-class waiting-room is a long way off—so far, indeed, that doubt arises as to whether it can possibly have any communication with the railway, a doubt which is not dispelled by the aspect of the crowded room, where everybody is smoking and drinking, as if moving on were the last thing to be thought of. Indeed, it is like a new world to us, this jovial waiting-room, where bright sunshine streams upon fair and flaxen locks, upon the bright accoutrements of soldiers, upon the faded garments of peasants, with here and there a relic of national costume in the form of a bright kerchief, an umbrageous cap, or gleaming plates of gold about the temples. There is a jolly buffet, too, with flaxen-haired girls as ministering spirits, and at this buffet I can supplement my unsatisfactory complete tea with two eggs, with a jug of foaming beer, and a "bread with flesh," and get change out of threepence. Happy, jolly third-class, where one can live at third price; where there are no waiters with white napkins and white ties; and where there are no bills because nobody will give you credit! And Gabrielle owns, privately, that she has a weakness for beer—the light beer of Vienna in those tall glasses—and sips approvingly. There is no hurry, my friends, with your trains. Leave us here for a while where beards and tongues wag pleasantly, and where the fair-haired Gretchen casts mild, sympathetic glances from her soft blue eyes. But soon the spell is broken, the doors are flung open, and the assembly dissolves—soldiers tighten their buckles, emigrants gather together their belongings, and everybody marches off.

The third-class carriages are fairly comfortable; no luxuries in the way of cushions and hat-rails, but roomy and without unpleasant angles.

"Decidedly we are very well here," cries Gabrielle, settling herself in a corner. There is only one other passenger in the carriage, a man of commercial pursuits, who understands neither French nor English, so that we can talk as we please. It is a pleasant country through which we are passing. We crossed the Main just by Frankfort, and are journeying among pleasant meadows, varied by clumps of lordly trees, with the white façade of some ancestral schloss gleaming through the verdure. Apple-trees grow among the fields, and there are huge plantations of potatoes. It is quite different to Nassau, with its hills and brünnen, and its friendly simplicity. We are in Hesse Darmstadt now, and knowing nothing of its history—if it has a history to itself, that is, not a prolonged protocol—we would say that it was a lordly aristocratic country—England without its citizen life—a country of great proprietors; while here and there peasants are to be seen in droves, cultivating the fields of their lords. Passing Niederrad, there is heavy and continuous firing—troops at exercise, no doubt—but not a button of them to be seen. And then we pass through a forest of pine and beech, the silvery sheen of the one contrasting effectively with the lurid shades of the other; and then we rejoin the sparkling Main, with mountains in the background. Then, presently, we thunder over the Rhine stream itself, just where the Main loses itself in the mightier stream, the joint rivers rushing on with renewed force, while timber-rafts circle in the eddies, and steamers rush to and fro, roaring loudly in answer to the challenge of the train above. And then we are once more under the surveillance of the menacing loop-holes that seem loth to lose a chance of making mouths at peaceful passengers; and that is a sign that we are fairly within the fortified city of Mayence.

And all this time we have chatted freely—Gabrielle and I—on everything that passed, but with nothing intimate, nothing confidential, in our conversation. On the whole, perhaps a third-class carriage is not quite the place for making love in, with its constant change of occupants and disturbing incidents; and certainly not at a bustling station like Mayence, where people pour into the carriages with all the freedom of excursionists. Indeed, the passengers are mostly people of the town, who are on pleasure bent, and bound for the next station or so. And so we roll out of Mayence, with a view as we pass of the west

front of the cathedral, which does not impress the stranger, although it harmonises well enough with some quaint unwieldy street-scenery. Still, it takes an effort to see anything attractive in Mayence, and we leave it without a pang of regret, as we roll on in company once more with the swift Rhine; through a river-plain rich and varied, with vineyards showing here and there, rich groves by the river, and yellow corn-stacks shining forth from a dark background of pine-wood; charming blue hills beyond the river—hills in whose bosom lies our beloved Schlangenbad.

By-and-by we stop at Ingelheim, where Charlemagne had his palace, and watched the snow melting away from the sunny flank of the hill of Rudesheim. And here people come with trays, beer in glasses, sandwiches, and the like, and it is pleasant to quaff a goblet to the memory of the stout potentate. From Ingelheim we have only a solitary fellow-passenger, a stout infantry soldier, bluff and good-humoured, who has no small change in the way of foreign languages evidently; hence now or never is the time to say a few appropriate words to Gabrielle. But when I clear my voice to begin she is looking out of the window.

"Here is our dear Rhine again," she cried, we had been running inland for awhile, "and those bluff hills rising from the river; and there surely is Bingen where you were so suffering."

"And where you were so angelically kind," I cried, seizing her hand enthusiastically.

"Ah! but no, it was nothing, that. Confess now, would you not have infinitely preferred the charming Amy for a garde malade?"

"Indeed, no," I cried; and should have said a great deal more, but at that moment my voice was drowned in a general babel and clatter.

We were at Bingen station, and everybody seemed on the move, and to make a noise at Bingen appeared to be the whole duty of man and woman; everybody was talking at once; fruit-sellers, and wine and refreshment vendors, all eager to deal.

With a few turns of the wheel we have crossed the little river Nahe. Kreuznach is higher up the stream where the Mums are settled, and here is Mumm himself at the Bingerbrück junction, in a white hat and gossamer suit, hurrying to catch the train for somewhere.

By the time we leave Bingerbrück our

carriage is pretty full. And now we are in the very thick of the Rhine scenery again—castles looking over the heads of castles, and vineyards disputing with each other every inch of ground whether horizontal or perpendicular, or a mixture of the two. It is the same scene, but yet quite different, seen under such different conditions; sometimes grander, sometimes softer, but always caught in hasty glimpses that are cut off altogether as the train plunges into some cool and darksome tunnel. And really the day is so hot that we enjoy the tunnels as much as anything, the tunnels and the cool cuttings in the rocks all overgrown with verdure. How we pity the unfortunate right-bankers, as we catch sight of a train on the opposite side of the river in the full blaze of the sun's rays.

But the stream itself seems to grow more familiar to us as we wind along in company. It is a tight squeeze: the river that has gathered the waters of a big slice of Europe; the railway on either hand; and two broad roads where waggons creak slowly along; roads bordered with fruit-trees, where passengers pick as they please; and all this in a narrow ravine that has made considerable difficulties in accommodating even the river. In the tightest places the railway, of course, goes to the wall—to the rock, that is—buries itself neatly in a tunnel, and comes panting to the surface further on; with a glimpse of the rushing stream between the vine-clad rocks; gay Dutch barges that seem familiar and friendly; a big crowded steamer; then more rocks and vines, and the train runs into a little station almost lost in vineyards. And the little towns on the opposite bank, with the blue-slatted roofs and white walls gleaming in the sunshine. Who lives in these snug white houses? They can't all be lodging-houses and annexes to hotels. There must be cool cellars in the rock under those houses, and casks of wine in the cool cellars. And what a happy thing to have a friend living in a white house by the Rhine, with a cool cellar and many casks of wine, and to drop in upon him on this broiling day, and sit in his garden-house in the shade, and watch the river flashing by, with a flask of the old wine that was bottled in the years of plenty! But there is no such luck in store for us. Even when we draw up opposite a pump half overgrown with foliage—a shady pump deliciously cool looking—there are no means of getting a drink. The guard—happy

man—has a teapot, which he pumps full, and then takes a refreshing draught through the spout. But the train has been waiting while the guard takes his draught, and now goes on ruthlessly.

And then the queer ancient towns that we break into, unexpectedly diving through a big gap in some ancient wall, with its watch-towers and its ramparts all overgrown with ivy or straggling vines. There are plenty of people getting in and out; artists with their load of easels, and campstools, and stretchers; and tourists who take the train here and drop it there, and are first on one bank and then on the other, vagaries which the railway company actually encourage by making their tickets available for the line on either side. And here are a lot of pretty English girls in their cool fresh garments, who have come to meet their brother, hot and tired, with the dust of London-town still on his shoes, to meet him and carry him away in triumph to the white house by the river—their home for the summer season—the grey old walls echoing their talk and laughter.

At one station—Bacharach, I think—we gain the company of an American, a dry-looking man, anxious for information.

"Now, what I want to know, mister, is what there is inside them Rhenish castles," pointing to a castle on the opposite side. "I should kinder like to know their interior fixings. Why, there's people living in 'em still."

"Exactly; the modern taste for mediævalism has led to sundry princes and others fitting up the shells of ancient castles, which could be bought at one time for an old song."

"There ain't any to be sold just now I expect, sir?" queried the American anxiously.

"Well, no; it would take a good many songs of even the finest prima-donna to buy one of those castles now."

"But what I want to get at, mister," said the American, striking one finger on the other, "is, what are them castles there fur? What are they there fur?—say. Kinder custom-houses, says one. But you don't tell me as trade could live with a custom-house every quarter mile. They'd eat each other's heads off, sir. Robber castles, says another. But you don't ask me to believe that robbers could git together all that hewn stone, and hoist it up to the top of precipices, and steal the masons to put it all together. Not in

them barbarous days, sir, when credit was in its infancy. No, sir; that castle question wants elucidating."

The American stuck to that point, and seemed to think that if he could only obtain a full and exhaustive view of all the interior fixings of a castle, he would be well on the way to solving the question himself; and with this view he got out at the next station, where he had heard of an extensive castle ready to be explored. For my own part, I had taken my fill of castles coming up on board the steamer; while from the railway the interior of the towns and the charming little churches, many of which show features of great interest, attract the attention most.

Coblentz came as a full stop to our notes of admiration; hot, baking Coblentz, with that detestable Ehrenbreitstein still acting as Dutch oven. The time-bills gave us half an hour at Coblentz, and Madame Reimer had planned a hasty drive to the burial-ground on the hill, but the train was twenty minutes late, and we should start again, we were told, in less than ten minutes. So that must be given up. And from Coblentz the line ceases to follow the curves of the river, and passes through a country which seems tame in comparison with the scenery we have left behind.

There are few passengers with us, and all Germans, and this seems to me a favourable opportunity for saying my say to Gabrielle. Her face is pensive now, and thoughtful, the long eyelashes outlined on the clear olive cheek. I begin in a voice which I mean to be tender, but which is undeniably husky.

"Gabrielle!"

She turned the full power of her dark eyes hastily upon me, with something of surprise and trouble in their expression.

"Listen," she cried quickly, without giving me an opportunity of saying more; "we have been excellent friends, have we not?" laying a hand on my sleeve, "and you have taken an interest in my troubled life. Well, would you like to hear the dénouement?"

I nodded assent, and she continued:

"It was owing something to you, monsieur; you ought to be pleased with me after the pains you have taken to soften my prejudices"—this with an appealing glance that took away any sting from the words—"but really I am ashamed to tell you"—after a long pause—"I am going to marry a German."

"Hector, of course?" I suggested moodily.

"Yes, Hector, of course," continued Madame Reimer, with an embarrassed little laugh; "he is with his sister and mother at Cologne, and he will meet me there. It was he, I found out, who had taken such care for my poor father's memory, and after that, how could I say 'No' to him?"

I suppose Gabrielle saw from my gloomy face what was really the matter with me, for she ceased talking about the future, and began to look out of the carriage window intently. Puff! my dream had vanished into thin air; it had been a kind of midsummer madness—a mere bubble of the fancy. And yet the loss of it made me angry and miserable. And Gabrielle, turning her eyes once more softly upon me, must have read what was passing in my mind.

"You are not really hurt?" she asked, laying a hand again caressingly on my arm. "How could I know?" and her voice melted into half a sob. "Why didn't you tell me in the palm garden?"

But after that she was adamant. It was all fixed and settled now; there was no going back to yesterday. And if it was distasteful to her to become even temporarily a German by marriage, yet Hector had resolved to sell his manufactory at Mulhausen, and join a firm which had once been Alsatian also, but which had established itself, since the war, at Elbeuf, the rising centre of the woollen manufacture in France.

"And we shall have a house at Rouen, monsieur, and I hope you will come and see us there."

I don't think I responded cordially to this invitation. I had become frozen, as Madame Reimer complained, and apparently immersed in Bradshaw to find the readiest means of getting away from Cologne.

By this time we had approached the river again, and a thundering "Bo-o-o" from a steamer that was making rapidly down, seemed at once a reply to the question and an invitation.

That prolonged scream could only come from one of those Netherland boats, and, indeed, I soon made her out as belonging to the line. And quickly as she was coming down the river, we should be at Cologne at least half an hour before her, and I should have just time enough to embark. I think Madame Reimer was well pleased when I imparted my plans to her, although she urged me gently to stay

a few days at Cologne. And as in a few hours we should part for good, there was no use in spending the time unpleasantly. Let us make believe that I was the successful lover, and that the other man was about to get his congé.

Madame Reimer laughed at the notion, but did not disapprove, nor rebuke me when I made tender speeches, a state of things far more pleasant than could have been expected, and that somehow seemed to correspond with the scenery. From Andernach the scene from the carriage windows was very beautiful—woods and river and richly tinted rocks making everywhere charming pictures. A German tourist had come aboard at Andernach, travel-stained and sunburnt, with a little wallet, also with a panoramic map of the Rhine, upon which he annotated as we passed the various scenes—Schön! or perhaps Wunderbar! But the poor man was sleepy in spite of his enthusiasm, and finally dropped off, and slept tranquilly for half an hour, and then took up his task where he left off, evidently under the impression that he had only closed his eyes for a moment. And so the train ran into Bonn, when our worthy German was still among the seven mountains.

At Bonn we felt that everything had come to an end. I had no more heart for tender speeches. Only there was a kind of mist before my eyes. And Gabrielle, too, looked a little sad.

"They are so tiresome, these partings," she said pettishly.

But the train darted ruthlessly on, and presently we were among the woods of Brühl, and were reminded of the imminent end of our journey by the demand for tickets.

"Oh, this is sad," cried Gabrielle, when the tickets were given up; "the last link is broken. Oh, monsieur! help me to be firm."

But I couldn't. I could only take her hands in mine, and pressing them to my lips, lose myself for a little moment in a mist of half-pleasurable regret. And with that all was at an end. We collected our belongings, separating carefully hers from mine.

"I have still something of yours, however, madame, that I shall cheerfully hand to my successor."

It was the ticket for the little piece of baggage. And madame's laugh rang out merrily enough.

And now we have cleared the woods, and over the flat cornlands rise the tall

spires of the Dom of Cologne, frosted silver against the purple sky. It is a straight run in to the city, and the driver puts on speed. It will be over all too soon, this summer day's journey. Even now, with a prolonged and demoniacal yell, the steam is shut off, speed is slackened, and we are thundering over drawbridges and rumbling between casemates, and generally running the gauntlet of cross-fires from loopholes and embrasures as we circle the strong fortifications of Cologne. A strange little railway journey that—half the circuit of the town, beneath frowning walls and stern ramparts, and peeping down into deep grassy ditches—with curves so sharp that the whole bulk of the long unwieldy train is made visible to us.

"But we are leaving Cologne behind us!" cried Madame Reimer, half in terror, thinking for the moment that I am really carrying her off to parts unknown.

But presently the train whirls suddenly to the right, and, piercing the fortifications through a strongly-guarded opening, descends slowly but irresistibly into the town. Across busy streets, where the great gates are shut and the traffic is suspended while we pass; across narrow alleys, where there is no traffic to suspend, but where knots of children collect to see us pass; right through back-yards, almost brushing against the water-butt and surprising the denizens in the midst of their occupations; peering into a cloistered churchyard, where the dead have slept undisturbed for centuries; and so, among houses and streets, the train thunders and clanks, with the cheerful noises of the town and the shouts of children accompanying it, till it glides into its own particular house, and comes gently, as if unwillingly, to a stand.

All the world is there to meet us with noise and cries, and shouts for porters and for cabs. As for Gabrielle, she is at once lost to sight in the arms of a tall and stalwart man of martial aspect, and disengages herself, blushing.

"Hector, this is monsieur who was so kind."

Sundry profound salutations, a warm pressure of the hand from Gabrielle.

I have not an instant to lose if I must catch the boat.

"But, monsieur!" cries Gabrielle in imploring accents.

Has she repented after all? No; it is the baggage ticket, which I hand to the stalwart Hector.

"It is your affair now, my friend—that minute piece of luggage."

And this time I am fairly away, without a lingering look behind, and at a pace which makes the porter who carries my portmanteau run to keep up with me.

One glance at the towers of the Dom, rising grandly above us, and then down to the pier, where I find an ominous blankness. No steamer there: Has she gone? Nobody knows. One says he thinks she has passed; another fancies she hasn't. Finally it appears that she has not been sighted yet, although some hours overdue. But that is nothing in the fruit season. She may be here any minute, or perhaps not for hours. And so I take my seat among the idlers of the quay, perched upon a commanding barrel, the bridge of boats in full view and the river beyond, for a long reach.

The heat of the day is over, and the rush of waters sounds cool and refreshing. There is plenty of life on the river: steamers hurrying up and down; the clean gaily-painted barges from Holland floating gently down; and long convoys, dragged by powerful tugs, making way slowly upwards. But no Netherlands boat. Yes, there is one, but it is coming the wrong way. And this boat, it turns out, is the one we travelled up in, John and I, and as they make fast, and people come ashore, I recognise Fritz the energetic, and the dignified conductor. And the recognition is mutual. It is like meeting with old friends on a foreign strand, and it is, perhaps, pleasanter sitting on board the steamer than upon a barrel, however elevated, especially as the barrel is going on board also. And on board I sit comfortably enough, and amused by the scenes about, till daylight fades and the stars shine out, and the young moon shows her silver bow in the skies.

The truant boat appears at last, and, once on board of her, I feel that my cares are at an end. I pick out a comfortable seat on deck, where the heaped-up fruit-baskets have left but little room; and here I mean to stay till daylight doth appear. It is a perfect summer night. As the boat slowly leaves the pier and steams down the river, and under the great lattice-bridge, the graceful towers of the cathedral gently recede, and the moon, that seems to be gliding after us through the sky, shows for a moment in silvery radiance through the fairy tracery of the further of the spires, and then settles for one

short moment between the two, perched on the very apex of the roof—a charming, fantastic sight that will never be forgotten while memory holds her sway. And then we surge swiftly down the stream, the towers and gleaming walls of Cologne fading away in the lucent gloom, and the boat feels and imparts the send and thrill of the stream, while the stars shine out in one glorious galaxy.

And here, on deck, I meant to stay all night long, not sleeping, but resting; only it occurred to me that I had eaten nothing in particular since that sandwich at Frankfurt in the morning—that morning which seemed so far distant now—and then came supper, and then no more etherealisation after that, but bottled beer and unrestricted cigars, till I was fairly overpowered with sleep.

It was chilly, too, on deck, and so I took my corner in the salon, pulling my boots off this time without hesitation, for in the other three corners were sleeping damsels, and they had pulled off their shoes—and after that, oblivion.

The Rhine awakes me in a playful manner, dashing in a handful of water through the open window.

In the night we have travelled far and fast, have passed out of the Prussian lines altogether and are in the pleasant Dutch waters. The tri-coloured baskets on the long poles are evidence of that, and the general air of homely comfort afloat and ashore.

Here is a pleasant picture, framed, in the cabin window; it is nothing in itself, trees softened by morning mist, a star, a mill, the orange glow of sunrise, the waters reflecting it; a boat, with two boys and a cat eager for fishing and full of glee, the cat especially—a black-and-white one—hardly to be restrained from jumping overboard in chase of the gleaming fish.

The barefooted damsels have departed, dropped in the night at some riverside town, Düsseldorf, or Wesel, or Emmerich the doleful, perhaps.

But still passengers come and go, early as it is, dropping in from humble little piers where it seems a condescension for our big boat to haul alongside.

Some of these Dutch women are charming. It is heresy to say it, perhaps, but they are more refined than the Germans—with more grace and manner—but then the best of them are married, and seem fond of their husbands, so that it is no use my proclaiming the truth abroad.

There is one young woman on board who pleases me mightily; she has a little boy aged two or three, and keeps him happy and amused, but she is not engrossed with him nor over-anxious. When he pitches himself headlong from chairs and tables, she just picks him up in time. There is a slight abstraction about her that does not prevent her from doing everything at the right time; and she moves graciously with the consciousness of full ability to manage everything well.

But this consciousness receives a severe shock; just now this young woman was trying for something to amuse the boy, and pulled out a key, a regular Bluebeard's key it seemed, for the face she made over it. And she who prided herself on her perfect management, especially of her husband, had actually carried away the key—evidently the master-key of the house at home: the key to the master's schnaps, to his cigars, to his orange pekoe, the key to all the other keys that are all huddled together in a little basket within.

For a moment there is dismay, and then the face brightens into a smile as she feels the humour of the situation and pictures poor Jan schnapsless, cigarless, dinnerless; and she calls for paper and envelope, and indites such a pretty little letter—I can see it is a pretty letter from the curl of the lip, and the dimple that shows on the soft full chin—and then she wraps up the key and seals all up, and dismisses it from her mind.

Jan will swear and stamp around all this livelong day; but when evening comes he will get this sweet letter and the key, and all will be peace.

But these and other figures pass away, softly floating off in boats, or dropped at neat and gaily-painted piers. I can see everything through my window, and don't care to move.

When I lift my head, I see framed, as in a picture, some pleasant riverside scene: a row of cottages with red-tiled roofs, steps leading to the river, a boat moored at foot. Through the foliage of a clump of elms the sails of a windmill are seen revolving. A ship is building close by, and the clang of hammers resounds cheerfully. And the river widens and widens, joining other rivers and throwing off branches as big as itself till the land seems afloat in the waters and the people on shore in their houses of brick a mere fraction of the people afloat in their houses of wood; and then in the midst of a big tangle of masts and rigging,

and girder bridges, and tall trees, and windmill sails, and smoke, and sunshine, gleam the red roofs and homely spires of Rotterdam.

And so farewell to the sunny Rhine. I won't take you to the Hook of Holland, where it is blowing pretty fresh, and big ships are coming in with the tide, and a long line of steamers are making out to sea. For it isn't sunny there, nor indeed am I quite sure whether it is the Rhine, or the Maas, or the Waal, or indeed any river at all, but just on an arm of the North Sea, or German Ocean as the maps have it; I should prefer to call it the North Sea. And indeed I am a little sorry to say farewell, having left a little bit of my heart in that sunny Rhineland; and have brought back nothing but memories and imaginations which are of no use perhaps to anybody but their owner. Approach the Docks, the Tower, Saint Paul's, and Ludgate Hill; and farewell, once again, to the Rhineland. Farewell to rocks, vineyards, and castles, to milk-white maids and amber wine. Bright land, farewell! And yet, as the poet observes:

There can be no farewell to scene like thine.

"LOLLA."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

A STRANGE hard look came over the delicate young face.

"It was through her father," she said, in the same low voice that I had used. "My story is not by any means uncommon. I had been a nursery governess. I was very unhappy and very badly treated. To make matters worse, the son of my employer fell in love with me. I would not listen to him. I left my situation—he followed me. I had heard that he was wild and unsteady, but he was the only one who had ever had a kind word or look for me among them all, and I had grown to love him very dearly. It was hard to shut my ears and heart to his prayers when he found me out, and begged me to marry him. I consented at last, and for twelve happy months I envied no man or woman in all the wide earth. A year—it is not much to be happy in—not much in a whole life that was all trouble and weariness before, all bitterness and despair after. But it is all I have had or ever shall have, I suppose. After Lolla was born, he changed. He grew sullen and discontented, took to staying away from home, and came back only too often in a

state of helpless intoxication. It nearly broke my heart to see him so changed, but I did what I could for the child's sake. However, things grew worse and worse. He took to ill-treating me systematically. His associates were now low and common men, and he seemed gradually sinking into deeper and deeper degradation. We were miserably poor. We had but one wretchedly-furnished room, and what little money I could make barely kept life in my baby and me. I wonder often how I lived through two years of such a time, but my child kept life and hope within me, and for her sake I bore all. There came a night, however, when endurance was strained beyond what it could bear. He came home mad with drink. The child was asleep in bed—the one bed we possessed; he swore at me for putting her there, and then—ah! the horror of that moment!—he raised his heavy foot and kicked her out on to the stone floor. That act roused all the passion and wrath of my whole nature. For myself I had borne blows and kicks and ill-usage without complaint, but for the child—God forgive me what I said and did in my agony as I raised the little terrified creature in my arms, and tried to hush her wailing cries. I told him that I had borne with him long enough, that for the future he should never see me more, and I took my child in my arms, and went out into the cold winter streets, a creature so broken, so utterly desolate, that the tempting of the black river rushing under its gas-lit bridges was a tempting I could scarce resist. What had I to live for? The child at my breast wailed in its pain that I could not ease, and each moan struck to my heart like a knife, and filled me with fresh loathing and horror for the man who had dealt us this fresh misery. All that night I roamed the streets. I think I was scarcely in my right senses. At daybreak I found a friend—a woman compassionate enough to give me shelter, to believe my story, and to help me in my sore need. She was very poor—she kept a little shop in Chelsea—but she was a good Christian, if ever there was one, and to her I owe my safety—my life—my present occupation. I live there with her now. She procured me needlework from the shops, and, little as I earn, it just suffices to support us. I was fairly happy and at rest until—until, day by day, I saw there was something wrong with Lolla; she could no longer walk and run about as she had done; she was always tired and

languid, and complaining of pain in her hip. I took her to a doctor—he treated her for a long time, but she got no better. At last I was told to bring her here. I procured the necessary letters through the doctor's assistance, and came with her as you know, madam. That is all my story. That child is all I have that makes life of any value to me. Without her—but no, God is too merciful to rob me of my one treasure! He will—he must spare her!"

She knelt down by the little cot, her breast shaken with heavy tearless sobs, her face hidden in the white and trembling fingers that shut it from my sight. My own eyes were wet with tears of sympathy, the sad heart-broken tale had affected me deeply, even though such tales were by no means rare for me to hear.

She raised her head at last. "Please excuse me, madam," she said. "It is not often I give way, but to-night I cannot help it."

I took her poor thin hands in mine, and with what simple words I could command, I led her thoughts away from earth and its troubles, to that sure and perfect haven of rest, where life's storms and shipwrecks are remembered no more in the glory of an endless heaven.

She listened, crying softly and silently; but at last she grew more calm, and sat there by her child's bed during the long night-watch—subdued and hopeful even amidst her fears.

Lolla slept well and soundly, and at six o'clock, when her mother had to leave, she was not yet awake. I gave up my post to the sister who came to relieve me, whispered all the necessary instructions, and then left the hospital. The Nurses' Home was at the end of the grounds, about a minute's walk from the hospital itself. I went out with the poor young mother, and together we walked to the house where my room was. As we stood at the gate talking, a young man, singularly handsome and well dressed, passed by us. As his eye fell on my companion he started, coloured, paused, then approached.

She, as she saw him, turned white as death. Involuntarily her hand clutched my arm, and she trembled like a leaf.

"Mary," he said, with strange humbleness, "won't you speak to me? I have been searching for you so long."

She turned still paler, and shrank closer to me in her terror; she seemed quite unable to speak.

"I don't expect you to forgive me all in a hurry!" he continued in the same humbled voice. "God knows what a wretch I've been; but since you left me, Mary—and I knew I had driven you away—I have never had one happy hour. I have cut all my old companions and ways; I have a good situation now, and am earning plenty of money. It is a year and more since you went away, Mary. Can you forgive me? Will you believe me and trust me once more?"

Still no answer. Still that same look of shrinking—of horror.

"The child, too," he went on brokenly; "I have thought of her so often—her pretty ways, her sweet face. She is mine, too, you know, Mary. I won't force you to come back against your will; but I am so lonely, and in the long evenings I sit and think of you both, and curse the hour I ever drove you away. Mary—you used to be kind and gentle once—can't you look over the wrong I did you? I am humble enough now, you see, when I can beg your pardon before your friend. For our child's sake, Mary, will you grant it?—our child's sake!"

She found words then. A shudder shook her from head to foot, all the softness left her face. She turned from him with a gesture of loathing.

"Could you find no other plea to harden me?" she said. "For my broken heart, my ruined life, I forgive you—that is easy enough; but for my child—you are her murderer. Go, for Heaven's sake, go!"

He turned so white I thought he would faint; but he made no sign, uttered no other word, only turned and went away with uncertain steps, with the morning sunshine mocking the darkness of his own remorse as it fell on his handsome face.

I led her into the house, and I made her sit down, for she was hysterical, and then I went to fetch her some tea. When I brought it she was calm and more like herself. She drank it without a word, but when she had finished she put the cup down and looked appealingly at me.

"Have I not done right?" she asked. "Could I have acted otherwise?"

I sat down by her side and looked compassionately at her doubtful face. "My dear," I said, "I scarcely know whether to blame you or not. Your duty is to obey your husband, but I can well understand your shrinking from a renewal of such trials as you have undergone. Yet he

seemed thoroughly in earnest, and if he has given up his vicious habits, then it would be but right and generous of you to forgive the past, and, in a true womanly spirit, return to him, and strive to keep him steadfast to his present resolutions. You loved him once, did you not?"

"Yes, and I love him still," she murmured sadly. "But when I think of Lolla, it hardens me. What has my darling ever done that she should suffer for her father's crimes? If she lived—if she recovered, I might forgive him; as it is——"

Her face grew stern again; she rose abruptly. "I cannot do it," she said; "the task is beyond my strength. You do not know what my child is to me."

"But she is his child also," I said gently.

"He should have done his duty as a father when he had the chance," she answered sternly. "You are very good and kind, madam, and you have a gentle compassionate heart, but you cannot understand what I feel. If I am hard—he is to blame. I cannot forget; and when I see my child's suffering, and think of what she might have been, I cannot forgive."

And, weeping bitterly, she left me.

That day Lolla seemed worse; she was feverish and restless, and called incessantly for her mother. With the evening she came again. I was not on night duty, so I had but a few words with her before I left the ward. When I reached the house I was informed that a gentleman had been to see me, and, hearing I would be in shortly, had promised to call again. I felt a little nervous, being sure that it was Mary's husband who had called.

The event proved that I was right—he was ushered in shortly after I had finished tea, and I rose to greet him with evident perturbation. He was still very pale, and had a harassed weary look that made me compassionate him.

"I trust you will excuse my calling on you," he said. "You were a witness of my meeting with my wife this morning. It was totally unexpected. I am ignorant of her place of abode. I do not wish to know it so long as she is averse to my doing so, only I thought, perhaps, I could befriend her through you. Is she in want? She looks sadly altered. Pray tell me what you know of her, madam."

I could not resist his appeal. What need to do so? I bade him sit down, and

told him all I knew of Mary and the child. I never saw a man so broken down in my life as he was when he heard that sad history. That Lolla still lived seemed to relieve him from a great dread, for Mary's words that morning had alarmed him terribly, and all through the day he had been haunted by the idea that his child was dead—that he had taken her life in that moment of frenzy.

"Can't I see her?" he entreated—"only once. Oh, madam, pray let me see her. Not when her mother is there—she need not know. But some time when you are on duty—pray, pray let me!"

"She will not know you," I said, remembering the child's words when she said her prayers to me.

"Not know me? No; of course she would have forgotten," he said faintly; "but do you think Mary has never spoken to her of me?"

"I fear not," I answered.

He covered his face with his hands. "I am justly punished," he said slowly.

I sat there in silence waiting till he should be calm once more. He turned his white face to me at last.

"Is there anything I can do?" he asked eagerly. "Does she need anything? I have money."

I shook my head sorrowfully.

"She has all she needs," I said; "everything that human skill and care can do for her is being done. But I fear that it is beyond human skill to keep that little blighted life with us."

His head sank on his hands once more. "May God forgive me!" he groaned in his agony.

Night in the ward once more. Days have come and gone since Lolla's father heard of his child's fate, and with each day she grows weaker and worse. Her mother is almost always with her now. In extreme cases such permission is always granted. To-night I have acceded to the father's petition. He is to come for an hour. Mary is not expected till nine, and at eight I told him to be here.

We have not many patients in this ward now, and Lolla's cot is in a corner by itself. The little thing is lying there more like a waxen image than ever—the eyes closed, her placid hands folded above her breast, her soft breathing alone showing that life is lingering still in the weak and pain-racked frame.

She lies so when her father comes in and

stands beside her. I see how he catches his breath; how his lips quiver. He bends over the little motionless figure, and softly touches one wee white hand. The child opens her languid eyes and looks at him. She sees many strange faces, and in her mind they are all more or less associated with pain. She turns to me. "Is it dotters?" she asks.

"No, darling; not doctors," I answered "It is Lolla's father come to see her. Won't she kiss him, and tell him she is glad to see him?"

The dark eyes grow more wistful and bewildered. "Lolla has no father," she says, with a little sorrowful shake of the pretty curly head so like his own. "Mother says so; mother knows."

A choking sob burst from the man's lips. He knelt down beside the cot and buried his head in the snowy coverlet.

"Poor man! don't cry," said the child pityingly; "Lolla is sorry for you. Are you some other little girl's father? Lolla has none."

"Yes, dear, Lolla has," I whispered, raising her on my arm, "and he is very sorry for Lolla and has come to see her. Won't she be kind to him and kiss him."

She shook her head. "Mother always says Lolla has no father," she reiterated; "mother would not say it if it wasn't true. But I will kiss the poor man, if he likes. Why does he cry?"

I thought then, and I think still, that such a moment as this might have expiated even a worse crime than his. No wonder he wept; no wonder that his heart seemed broken as he looked at the little fragile blossom God had sent him from heaven, and on which he had bestowed neither thought nor care nor culture. And now it was too late! No tears, no prayers, no efforts of human love or human skill could keep her here on earth, and while he knelt there, broken down and desolate, her baby lips stabbed him with a cruel and unconscious truth, and brought him face to face with the folly and the sin of his own misspent youth.

There was silence in the ward. The children and the nurses moved noiselessly to and fro. I drew a screen around that corner, and moved softly away. Perhaps he could explain to his child something of what was in his heart, though I knew it was beyond his power to bring that longed-for word from her lips. What did she know, or what need had she, of any father? Was she not "Mother's Lolla" only?

An hour had passed. I was expecting Mary Kennedy every moment. I went behind the screen to tell him he had better leave now, but the sight I saw stayed the words on my lips. The child's head was pillowed on his breast, his arms were around her, and she had fallen asleep.

He looked at me appealingly.

"I dare not lay her down for fear of waking her," he said.

Even as he spoke the screen was moved aside by a quick touch, and before him stood his wife. She made one hurried step forward—her face flushed hotly. I touched her arm and spoke. "For the child's sake!" I whispered.

She turned away for an instant and covered her face with her hands.

Presently she recovered her composure, and took off her bonnet and shawl as usual. I told her of the surgeon's last report. I wished I could have made it more hopeful. I saw the anguish in her eyes, the quiver of the poor pale lips, but she neither spoke nor wept now.

It was a strange pathetic scene; the strangeness and sadness of it all came home to me with a curious pain and regret. They might all have been so happy, and yet by the man's own rashness and folly the three lives were ruined and desolate now.

They did not speak to each other for long. It was the father who broke the painful silence at last.

"You never told her of me," he said, half reproachfully.

She raised her dark sad eyes, and looked calmly at him.

"What need?" she said curtly. "Were you ever a father to her save in name?"

A deep, shamed flush rose to his brow. He bent his head over the golden curls.

"You would forgive me if you knew what I feel now," he said brokenly, "when I see all that I have lost—too late! Will you do one thing for me, Mary? I—I will not trouble you again. Tell her that I am indeed her father. She does not believe me."

A flash of triumph lit the girl's dark eyes.

"No," she said; "I am all to her. I resolved it should be so. What have you ever done for her that deserved a thought of love—a prayer of gratitude?"

"At least, she is my child, too," he said wistfully.

"Does nature speak at last?" asked his wife bitterly. "She was your child when you denied her the food she so sorely

needed! She was your child when your step brought terror to her baby-heart! She was your child when you broke her mother's heart, and turned her life to one long fierce despair! She was your child when your brutal blow crippled her little limbs! She is your child—yes, but I gave her life, and you—you have brought death as your gift. How can I forgive you? I am less your wife than her mother. It is beyond my strength."

He raised his haggard face and looked at her.

"I see it is," he said; "I asked too much; I never thought of what I had done, till to-night."

His eyes fell on the little waxen face—the closed lids, the pale lips through which the faint breath scarcely stole.

One deep hoarse sob burst from his lips. He laid the child down and turned away.

The mother bent over the little sleeper. A faint cry escaped her lips:

"Nurse!"

I came forward directly. I, too, saw the change. So soon it had come after all.

"She has fainted," I said.

For a little while we restored her to her senses, and the languid eyes opened on her mother's face. Yet she seemed restless; her lips moved, she strove to speak, but the effort seemed beyond her strength.

"What is it, darling?" her mother whispered. "Can mother get you anything?"

She turned her head aside in that little restless way of hers.

"Is it—is it——" she lisped faintly.

"Is it what, my precious one?"

"Is it—father?"

The wistful eyes looked up for answer—dumbly—appealingly.

I saw the struggle going on within the woman's breast.

She raised her head and met the anguished entreaty of her husband's eyes. Her husband! Had she not said she would give him that name no more, that forgiveness was beyond her strength?

"Is it?" urged the faint voice.

How much fainter it was now!

Then, low and distinct, came at last the answer, for which he listened with such breathless dread:

"Yes!"

A smile broke over the beautiful little face.

"I am so glad!" she said softly. "I told him I would ask you. Where is he? I want him!"

She made a sign, and the young man came from his shadowy corner and knelt beside her. The child looked at him earnestly for a moment, then took his hand in her little waxen fingers.

"Father!" she whispered faintly. "You are my father—she says so—I wish I had known you before—I can't get well, now. The doctors said so. They thought I did not hear them, but I did. Mother will miss Lolla; she is going like that other little girl who slept there. I thought I should be able to run about again. But you must take mother where the daisies grow—and be very good to her—won't you?"

He could not speak for the sobs that rose in his throat; every little halting word seemed to stab him like a dagger.

But for him she might be well and strong now, running about in the daisied grass of which she spoke!

But the mother shed no tears, she seemed in a passive despair that held her dumb and powerless, counting, with eager greed, the moments that spared her child to her still.

There was a long silence, broken only by the man's stifled sobs.

Once more the sweet baby-voice was heard.

"Are you so sorry for me, father? Why did you not come before? I was well once—I could run about like other little children. But I am tired now—very tired. I do not think I even care to get well—I am so tired of lying here."

"Lolla does not want to leave mother, does she?" asked the poor young desolate creature by her side, to whom these words came as a fiat of doom too terrible to bear.

"No," said the child, clinging more closely to that fond and faithful shelter which had been her only home. "But nurse said God knows best. He loves little children, too; and in heaven no one is lame any more!"

There was no answer. What could they say? To the child the exchange would be only one of glory and happiness. To them—what need to picture it? Soon, only too soon, the dread would be realised to its fullest extent.

"I am so tired!" said the child, presently, with a faint sigh.

I stepped hurriedly forward. Too well I knew that grey unearthly pallor spreading over the waxen face. Her eyes closed, then opened once more.

"Father's Lolla, too!" she said.

Then a smile of unearthly radiance flitted over her face. She glanced up at me, as I bent anxiously over her.

"Good-night, nurse," she whispered faintly; "good-night, mother! I am—going to sleep."

To sleep? Yes, but never again on earth, or to those who weep around her here, will "Mother's Lolla" wake.

Shall I say more? Shall I tell how, by the child's death-bed, those long divided hearts were reconciled? How, in after years came peace and hope to the poor tortured mother's heart; or how the father, receiving a baptism of purity from those baby-lips, lived to be a good, and great, and honourable man?

I think there is no need. With Lolla my story began; with Lolla let it end!

OLD LADY CORK.

It is curious to think that little over forty years ago there was flourishing an animated old lady, giving "Sunday parties" in New Burlington Street, who could tell stories about Dr. Johnson, whom she had met in society some sixty years before. This remarkable woman retained her ardour for company and the enjoyments of life to the last, and competed with Lady Morgan and Lydia White for her share of such "lions" as might be roaring or stalking about town.

Mr. Luttrell, the wit, likened her to a shuttlecock, because she was all "cork and feathers," an indifferent conceit; while others speculated on her vast age in somewhat unfeeling fashion. The late Mr. Croker, who had a morbid penchant for convicting women of suppression on this point—in them a not unpardonable failing—made some investigations into the question of her age, apropos of a dinner to which she had invited him. In 1835 he wrote: "The Hon. Mary Monckton, born April, 1746. Lodge's Peerage dates her birth 1737; but this is a mistake, for an elder sister of the same name, now in her eighty-ninth year, Lady Cork, still entertains and enjoys society with extraordinary health, spirits, and vivacity." In July, 1836, he puts down that "she wrote to me the following lively note: 'I would rather be a hundred, because you and many other agreeable people would come to me as a wonder. The fact is, I am only verging on ninety. I wish the business of the nation may not

prevent your giving me the pleasure of your company at dinner on Wednesday the 3rd, at a quarter before eight. It is in vain, I suppose, to expect you at my tea-drinking on Friday, the 5th, or in the evening of the 3rd, in the event of your not being able to dine with me on that day."

This pleasantly-turned invitation — so amazing for its freshness and even grace — suggests to the critic that there is only "one mark of anility" in the whole, viz., that she did not remember he was out of Parliament and out of office at the time; a fact not of so much importance after all, and which younger folk might not have kept in mind.

"I found," he says, "by the Register of St. James's parish, that she had understated her age by one year."

Of her proceedings in the pursuit of lions, and her art in collecting and making them perform, some very diverting stories are told.

She took a great fancy to Mr. Thomas Moore, then in the zenith of popularity; and one evening took it into her head to gratify her guests with some passages of dramatic reading. "Mr. Moore was the medium selected for this 'flow of soul,' upon which it seemed the lady had set her heart, but against which it proved he had set his face: he was exceedingly sorry — was particularly engaged — had besides a very bad cold — a terribly obstinate hoarseness; and declared all this with an exceedingly 'good-evening' expression of countenance. Her ladyship was puzzled how to act, until 'Monk' Lewis came to her relief; and in a short time she made her appearance with a large Burgundy pitch-plaster, with which she followed the wandering melodist about the room, who in his endeavours to evade his well-meaning pursuer and her formidable recipe, was at length fairly hemmed into a corner."

More droll, however, was the following incident, contrived by the same agreeable farceur:

The vivacious countess determined to have a charitable lottery, combined with some shape of entertainment, and consulted her friend on it. "Under his direction the whole affair was managed. As it was arranged that everybody was to win something, Lewis took care that the prizes should be of a nature that would create the most ludicrous perplexity to their owners. Gentlemen were seen in every direction, running about with teapots in their hands, or trays under their arms,

endeavouring to find some sly corner in which to deposit their prizes; while young ladies were sinking beneath the weight, or the shame, of carrying a coal-scuttle or a flat-iron. Guinea-pigs, birds in cages, punch-bowls, watchmen's rattles, and Dutch-ovens, were perplexing their fortunate, or, as perhaps they considered themselves, unfortunate proprietors; and Lady Cork's raffle was long remembered by those who were present as a scene of laughter and confusion."

Long after, when Mrs. Gore, the novelist, then in the height of her popularity, brought out *The Dowager*, the character was instantly recognised as a portrait of Lady Cork, whose death had just taken place. Mrs. Gore thus wrote to her friend Lady Morgan:

"You are very kind to like my new book. Till you praised it, I was in despair. It sells, and I was convinced of its utter worthlessness; for surely nothing can equal the degradation of the public taste in such matters! The subject and title were of Bentley's choosing; and my part distinctly was to avoid hooking 'M.C.O.' into the book. In certain mannerisms *The Dowager* may resemble her; but not in essentials. She was better or worse."

What an amiable disclaimer! Lady Morgan's comment in a diary on the poor old lady's death, which took place in 1840, is that she died "full of bitterness and good dinners."

The truth was there could be little respect for the exhibition of this craze for society at such an advanced age. It was curious that there should have been three old ladies with the same mania — Lady Cork, Lady Morgan, and Lydia White.

One of the most graceful of Sir Joshua's portraits represents the lady in a dreaming pastoral attitude, seated in a garden half stooping forward, her arm reclined on a pedestal beside her, a dog at her feet. A few days before her death, Mr. Redding met her at dinner, when he noticed that she was well able to ascend from the dining-room like other ladies, leaning on a friend's arm.

"She invited to her house men of all creeds and parties, because their opinions had nothing to do in sharing her hospitalities. The peculiar circumstances attending her marriage were well known, at least in contemporary life. It would be unfair to judge her by the last score or two of years that she lived. My impression is that she had at no time superior mental

attainments to other ladies in the circles of fashion, where youth and vivacity never fail to be attractive. She had some eccentricities, and I am inclined to think she was not of an amiable disposition, because she did not disguise her distaste of children, and this is a good criterion for judging of female character. To more advanced youth she was a torment in employing it for her various purposes. There were two sweet girls in their 'teens,' whose visits to town were few and far between, and had, therefore, little time for sight-seeing. She would drive to them in their lodgings of a forenoon, with a list of names, and occupy them with writing her notes of invitation until dinner time, knowing perfectly well how they were situated. I advised that they should not be 'at home,' for the exaction was unjustifiable. Sidney Smith admirably developed her character under another head, when he made a species of allegory of her conduct, illustrative of that of the bishops towards the deans and chapters. His friend, Lady Cork, told him she was so deeply moved at his charity sermon, that she 'borrowed' a sovereign of someone going out of church and put it into the plate. All the world knew her propensity for carrying off anything upon which she chanced to lay her hands. 'Don't leave those things about so, my dear, or I shall steal them,' was, perhaps, said for her. She called one morning on Rogers the poet, and found he had gone out, when she carried off most of the best flowers upon which he was choice. The poet of the epigrammatic month could not forgive her for a good while, and the distance lasted nearly a whole year, when she wrote to him, that they were both very old, that he ought to forget and forgive, and closed her note with an invitation to dinner the next day. Rogers wrote her that he 'would come, dine, sup, and breakfast with her,' and thus their quarrel, which at their age Lady Cork called ridiculous, was made up."

Let us now look back sixty years to the "Blue Stocking" days when Boswell sets before us a picture of himself and the lady with some of his happiest touches.

"Johnson was prevailed with to come sometimes into these circles, and did not think himself too grave even for the lively Miss Monckton (now Countess of Cork), who used to have the finest bit of blue at the house of her mother, Lady Galway. Her vivacity enchanted the sage, and they used to talk together with all imaginable

ease. A singular instance happened one evening, when she insisted that some of Sterne's writings were very pathetic. Johnson bluntly denied it. 'I am sure,' said she, 'they have affected me.' 'Why,' said Johnson, smiling and rolling himself about, 'that is because, dearest, you're a dunce.' When she sometime afterwards mentioned this to him, he said, with equal truth and politeness, 'Madam, if I had thought so, I certainly should not have said it.'

"Another evening Johnson's kind indulgence towards me had a pretty difficult trial. I had dined at the Duke of Montrose's with a very agreeable party; and his grace, according to his usual custom, had circulated the bottle very freely. Lord Graham and I went together to Miss Monckton's, where I certainly was in extraordinary spirits, and above all fear or awe. In the midst of a great number of persons of the first rank, amongst whom I recollect, with confusion, a noble lady of the most stately decorum, I placed myself next to Johnson, and thinking myself now fully his match, talked to him in a loud and boisterous manner, desirous to let the company know how I could contend with Ajax. I particularly remember pressing him upon the value of the pleasures of the imagination, and, as an illustration of my argument, asking him, 'What, sir, supposing I were to fancy that the—— (naming the most charming duchess in his majesty's dominions) were in love with me, should I not be very happy?' My friend with much address evaded my interrogatories, and kept me as quiet as possible; but it may easily be conceived how he must have felt.* However, when a few

"* Next day I endeavoured to give what had happened the most ingenious turn I could by the following verses:

"TO THE HONOURABLE MISS MONCKTON.

"Not that with th' excellent Montrose

I had the happiness to dine;

Not that I late from table rose,

From Graham's wit, from generous wine.

"It was not these alone which led

On sacred manners to encroach;

And made me feel what most I dread,

Johnson's just frown, and self-reproach.

"But when I enter'd not abash'd,

From your bright eyes were shot such rays,

At once intoxication flash'd,

And all my frame was in a blaze!

"But not a brilliant blaze, I own;

Of the dull smoke I'm yet ashamed;

I was a dreary ruin grown,

And not enlighten'd, though inflamed.

"Victim at once to wine and love,

I hope, Maria, you'll forgive;

While I invoke the Powers above

That henceforth I may wiser live."

days afterwards I waited upon him and made an apology, he behaved with the most friendly gentleness."

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOXY.

CHAPTER XXXIII. TIDED OVER.

CHESNEY MANOR had no great architectural beauty to boast of; the old house lacked the stateliness which so fitly distinguished the ci-devant Charlecoete Chase. It was a long, low, rambling building, originally of not more than half its present dimensions, to which several successive owners had added, each according to his own requirements and his own taste. The result was a roomy, comfortable, unaccountable sort of a house, with haphazard doors, quaint and independent windows, and unexpected staircases. The prevailing tint of the house was grey, but the walls were almost concealed by climbing plants, and the wide terrace on which it stood was divided from the park and the lake by a balustrade of red brick, with a wide coping, and almost covered by a luxuriant Virginia-creeper, which was famous in all that part of the country. The park was extensive and effectively laid out, and the gardens were large and of the old-fashioned order. The manor was essentially a quiet place; there was nothing precisely shabby about the house or its furniture, but neither was there anything new or fashionable. An air of staidness and order pervaded the place, and the stability of a family firmly fixed in the respect of the people seemed to be conveyed by the physiognomy of Chesney Manor.

Mrs. Masters was so happy to find herself in her old house again, surrounded by the soulless things that were so full of meaning and memory to her, and in the society of her brother to whom she was strongly attached, that she cheered up as she had never expected to do during her dreaded separation from her husband. There were many old places and old friends to visit; she and John would have much to go back upon together; the memory of the past and the dead was dear to them both; her brother was little changed during her long absence; no one had come to occupy the place she had left vacant, in the old-familiar rooms where she and John had passed their childhood. She would have been at Chesney Manor a month sooner, but for the troublesome

accident that had detained her in Paris, and kept Mr. Warrender with her. She felt envious of the good fortune of her children and their governess, who had been sent on in advance, and had enjoyed all the early autumnal beauty which she was too late to see in its perfection.

The largest and the handsomest room in Mr. Warrender's house was the library; his books were the treasures that he most highly prized, and as the taste was hereditary, they were nobly lodged. The four lofty windows on the ground-floor to the left of the wide portico of the main entrance, belonged to the library, which occupied a similar extent in the left angle of the house. From the front windows a beautiful view of the park and the lake was to be had; those of the side looked into a smooth bowling-green with a fine orchard beyond it, and an intervening settlement of beehives.

In winter and summer alike the library was a cheerful room, and there we find Mrs. Masters installed one day, very shortly after her arrival at Chesney Manor, and in confidential conversation with her children's governess. The latter is a young lady of youthful but grave aspect, with beautiful grey eyes in which there is a most attractive mingling of trustfulness and timidity, a very fair complexion, just a little too pale for complete beauty, and a slender graceful figure. She is seated by the side of Mrs. Masters's couch, which is drawn up close to one of the front windows; a small squat Algerian-table stands at her feet covered with papers, and she holds with both her hands a large photograph, at which she is looking with eyes dimmed by tears. Sweet and grateful tears they are; for this girl, on whose youthfulness a shadow of gravity has fallen, is Helen Rhodes, and the photograph in her hands represents her father's tomb in the English burying ground at Chundrapore. Into the safe haven of Mrs. Masters's protection, extended with glad and generous alacrity, has the orphan daughter of the English chaplain, whose last deliberate act was one of compassion, been brought. The papers before her have just reached Mrs. Masters from Chundrapore, and she is telling Helen how she had written to her after the death of Herbert Rhodes, enclosing the photograph of the tomb, but had not had any acknowledgment, and how, after a long interval, the packet was returned to her through the post-office.

"We knew Miss Jerdane's address,"

continued Mrs. Masters, "so I wrote to you at the Hill House. It would have been wiser to have addressed my letter to the care of the lawyer, but I did not think of that. Miss Jerdane had, of course, left England before my letter reached the Hill House, and nobody there knew anything about you. They naturally refused to take it in, and so it was returned to me. Colonel Masters and I were very much distressed about it, and I always intended to apply to the lawyers on my arrival in London."

"You mean papa's lawyers, Messrs. Simpson and Rees, who sent me his letters," said Helen. "They did not know anything about me, I think. I did write to them once, when I was in Paris, but not to tell them anything, only to ask a question."

"So that I should have failed again. When I heard the good news from Madame Morrison, by what some people, I suppose, would call an accident, I wrote at once to ask Colonel Masters to send me the photograph and the letter, and now, after many days, you have them."

"The one as precious as the other. I have so much to thank you for that I am unable to thank you at all. How well I remember the vain longing I used to feel to see someone who had known my father, and how I wished for the sake of that that I had gone out to Chundrapore, even when it would have been too late. To think that I did not even know your name!"

"And that I might never have found you; that I might have passed alongside of you and missed you, as Gabriel missed Evangeline, if it had not been that my brother chanced to come in while Madame Morrison was with me, and asked her about the pretty young lady whom he had seen 'rehearsing.' Of course you know, Helen, he had no notion of what you were really doing, but took you for a bride-elect."

"It was a fortunate day for me," said Helen, striving to hide the trouble into which she was thrown by Mrs. Masters's words—the speaker felt them to be thoughtless as soon as she had uttered them; "I can never merit the happy fate it has brought me."

She spoke in a tone of simple conviction, and Mrs. Masters, looking at her attentively, saw peace and serenity in her face.

"That is a healed heart," she thought; "and what an innocent one!"

"Oh yes, you can," said she briskly. "You are an excellent friend for the children, and a dutiful elder daughter to

me already; and, my dear, how like your father you are sometimes. Not always."

Here Mrs. Masters raised herself on her couch, and looked out of the window in the direction of the park.

"I see my brother and the children," she said. "They are going to the hazel-copse, no doubt. How strong they grow in the English air."

"They were so well while you were away," said Helen. "Not even nurse could make out that Maggie was pale, or Maud 'dawny,' as she says."

"By-the-bye," said Mrs. Masters, settling down again among her cushions, "I wonder whether nurse thought it odd that you did not go outside the grounds, after the accident to Tippoo Sahib?"

"I don't think so; the grounds are so large and the village is so dull, and every other place is beyond a walk. I thought it was the only safety."

Helen said this in an anxious questioning tone.

"Of course it was. You were quite right. If I had had the least notion of who was at Horndean I should not have sent you to England before me; but I had not. I have been so long away, and my brother is so silent about his neighbours' affairs—indeed, so unobservant of them—that I did not know, and he did not tell me anything about the people there. I remember Mr. Horndean, a quiet, stiff old gentleman, with a risen-from-the-ranks look and manner, and I remember a magnificent Miss Lorton, who barely condescended to recognise my existence in the old time before Colonel Masters appeared on the scene; but I never heard of her after I left England, or if I did I had quite forgotten her. When Madame Morrison told me the story of your being taken up by a friend of your father's, and made so miserable by the man's wife, it never occurred to me that Mrs. Townley Gore was the Miss Lorton of my former acquaintance, and that you could be placed in any difficulty by living at Chesney Manor. It was not until you wrote and told me of the state of the case that I heard of old Mr. Horndean's death. My brother had not mentioned it, and neither he nor I know anything of Mr. Lorton. But I am not sure, unless you had objected very strongly yourself, that we should have thought it a reason why you should not come to Chesney. We have always agreed with Madame Morrison that it would be well you should be formally

reconciled with Mr. and Mrs. Townley Gore, especially as you do not want any favour from them, and as you acknowledge that he meant kindly to you."

"Indeed he did," said Helen, "and I was very much to blame."

Mrs. Masters laid her hand with maternal kindness on the girl's fair bended head, as she said :

"There is nothing I have observed about you, Helen, that I love better than the frankness of your admission of that. We will speak of it no more, but I take it into account in considering the present circumstances. While I was away and you were here alone, you were perfectly right in avoiding the possibility of encountering Mr. or Mrs. Townley Gore ; it would have been very awkward and unpleasant ; but now that I am here, and it is in the nature of things that we should meet, I do not think you ought to avoid them. What I propose is, that I should tell them, when they call on me, that you are with me, and how it came about. You may be quite sure that Mrs. Townley Gore is too clever not to take the cue that I shall give her by my manner of speaking of you, and also that if she does not take it, she will lay herself open to having a large piece of my mind administered to her with polite frankness."

"She will think me very fortunate ; far, far happier than I deserve."

"Perhaps so ; she took such pains to make you wretched that it would be a contradiction in human nature if she could be glad to know that you are happy and well cared for ; but she will keep her feelings to herself ; the matter will be passed over smoothly, and no doubt Mr. Townley Gore will be sincerely glad to see you. The position has its awkwardness, but that will soon be got over, for they are sure not to stay long in the country, and we shall be here all the winter. So," added Mrs. Masters, in the tone in which one closes a discussion, "it is agreed that I prepare Mrs. Townley Gore for seeing you, and that you meet her as if nothing particular had happened."

"Yes," said Helen submissively ; "but suppose she tells you I am a wicked, base, ungrateful girl, and that she refuses to see me ?"

"In that case, Helen, I shall inform her, very politely, that I do not believe her. Take away your treasures, my dear, and remember that no one and nothing can ever counteract the effect of your own perfect candour with me, or shake my resolution

to befriend to the uttermost the child of Herbert Rhodes. Now go ; I have to write to my husband."

Helen left her and went to her own room—a pleasant, spacious chamber, with old-fashioned chintz furniture, and from whose deep bay-windows the woods of Horndean, and the widely-spreading shrubbery of Chesney Manor, severed from its neighbour only by a sunk fence and a railing, were visible. An old-fashioned bureau stood between the windows, and had from the first been selected by Helen for the safe keeping of all her little treasures. She put away the photograph of her father's tomb in one of the drawers, and placed the letter from Mrs. Masters, that would have been so great a help to her if it had reached her according to the writer's intention, in the blue-velvet bon-bon box. Her father's letters—those which had been sent to her by Messrs. Simpson and Rees, in obedience to his instructions—and the letter which Frank Lisle had left for her, were in the box. She had often taken out Frank's letter and asked herself whether she ought not to destroy it. Its writer had deserted her ; the phase of her life with which he was concerned was over and done with for ever ; the page was closed, and even if she could, she now knew that she would not reopen it ; would it not be wiser that she should destroy this one remaining record of what had been ? Yes, it would be wiser, and some day she would destroy it, but not just yet. And then she heard the children's voices in the hall below, and she replaced the box, locked the bureau, and went downstairs.

That same afternoon the event anticipated by Mrs. Masters took place. Mr. and Mrs. Townley Gore called upon their neighbours at Chesney Manor. They found Mr. Warrender and his sister in the library, and the first civilities having been interchanged, the quartette divided itself, and while Mr. Warrender and Mr. Townley Gore discussed sport and local news, Mrs. Masters and Mrs. Townley Gore talked rather laboriously of Horndean, the changes that had taken place during Mrs. Masters's absence, and the plans of the respective households for the winter.

Mrs. Townley Gore presented to Mrs. Masters a rather curious subject of observation. Her good looks, her self-possession, her self-satisfaction, her air of assured prosperity, as of one beyond the reach of the darts of fate, all made an impression upon a woman who, although remarkably

sensible and self-controlled, possessed a lofty and sensitive mind, and was solicitous for those whom she loved, and dependent for happiness upon the interior rather than the exterior of things. Knowing what she knew of her, and feeling with each minute of their interview, and every sentence that Mrs. Townley Gore uttered, a growing inclination to tell her that she knew it, Mrs. Masters's imagination was easily reconstructing Helen's experiences, as she listened to the smooth tones in which the conventional phrases were uttered.

She was just wondering when the conversation would take such a turn as might enable her to introduce Helen's name, and thinking that an enquiry for her children on the part of her visitor would probably furnish her with an opportunity, when Mrs. Townley Gore's attention was attracted by a water-colour drawing on an easel near her.

"Your copper-beech is a great favourite," she said; "and deservedly so. It is the finest in the county, I believe. I am the happy possessor of a portrait of it, and I see there is one nearly finished. I suppose you have heard to what an extent my brother's friend, Mr. Frank Lisle, profited this summer by Mr. Warrender's kind permission to us to make our guests free of Chesney Park."

"Mr. Frank Lisle? No, I never heard of him."

"I am very sorry that I cannot bring him to make his acknowledgments in person; you and Mr. Warrender could not fail to be pleased with his appreciation of the beauties of Chesney. We found my brother's artist-friend a great acquisition during the summer; he is very amusing, and immensely in earnest about his painting. He was constantly running over to Chesney to draw something or other, and he was particularly proud of his success with the copper-beech."

"Is Mr. Lisle at Horndean now?"

"No, I am sorry to say he is not. He is going to Italy for the winter, and my brother joins him in London in a day or two. He will miss Mr. Lisle very much; they have been friends and travelling companions for a long time."

This topic interested Mrs. Masters; she led Mrs. Townley Gore to talk of her brother, of his illness and absence at the time of Mr. Horndean's death, and of Mr. Lisle's having taken care of him, and returned to England with him. When she

had heard all that Mrs. Townley Gore had to say on these points, she began to wish for the departure of her visitors; she needed to be alone, she had something to think of. She had changed her mind about making mention of Helen; she would postpone that for the present. It was only by an effort that she could attend to what Mrs. Townley Gore said, afterwards, of her brother's regret that he could not accompany her to Chesney Manor, and his intention of calling there on the following day; of their imminent removal to London, and intention of returning to Horndean in the spring.

When Mr. Warrender returned to the library, after seeing Mrs. Townley Gore to her carriage, he found his sister looking perplexed. She asked him abruptly:

"Do you know much of Mr. Horndean? What was he doing before the old man died?"

"I know very little about him," answered Mr. Warrender, "and most of that by hearsay. I believe he was an unsatisfactory sort of person enough, until he had it made worth his while to be respectable, but I have no personal knowledge of the facts. Mrs. Townley Gore used to be said to keep her brother dark; she never talked of him to me.

"He was not likely to have very reputable friends and companions, I suppose?"

"Hardly; but this young artist, Mr. Lisle, seems to be a pleasant, clever, harmless fellow. I wish he had stayed a little longer, he would have liked to have seen the things we brought home from Italy. By-the-bye, you did not spring your mine upon Mrs. Townley Gore. You said nothing about Miss Rhodes. Why did you change your mind? Were you frightened, when it came to the point? Don't mind admitting it, if you were," added Mr. Warrender, smiling, "for I should be entirely of your way of thinking, if I had ever intended to say anything even constructively unpleasant to Mrs. Townley Gore."

"No, no; I was not afraid," answered his sister, with a little confusion which confirmed him in his belief that she was. "It was not that; but when I found that they were going away on Wednesday, and there could be no risk of their meeting Helen, or hearing anything about her, I thought it would be quite useless and unnecessary to mention her. When they come back it will be time enough, and the reprieve will be acceptable to her, I have no doubt."

Mr. Warrender accepted the explanation—although his own inclination would have been to get an unpleasant business over as promptly as possible—and left Mrs. Masters to her reflections. These were perplexing. She could not resist the conviction that Helen had been exposed to the risk of meeting the man who had deceived and deserted her, under circumstances which would have combined every element of disaster to her peace and her fair fame. She could not doubt that the artist, Frank Lisle, who accompanied Frederick Lorton to Horndean, was identical with the artist, Frank Lisle, who forbade Helen to mention his name to Mrs. Townley Gore, lest she might get a clue to his "friend," who was in that lady's black books; and that the "friend" was Mrs. Townley Gore's brother, now restored to her favour by the potent interposition of prosperity. Was this man's desertion of Helen connected with that revolution in the fortunes of his friend? She recalled the circumstances, as Mrs. Townley Gore related them, she compared the dates, and she arrived at the conclusion that Frederick Lorton's illness, and the devoted attendance on him, that led to Frank Lisle's position as *l'ami de la maison* at Horndean, were synchronous incidents. The man was a baser creature than even she and Madame Morrison had judged him to be, that was all. The protection of which he had robbed the orphan girl, the one resource to which he well knew she never would resort, was that of the Townley Gores, and it was by them and their position that he was profiting; this gay-hearted, careless, happy young artist, who was such a favourite with everybody. She could not help thinking what a thunder-clap it would have been for him had he and Helen met, and almost regretting that the encounter had not befallen; but she remembered that to Helen it would have been a thunderbolt and fatal.

It took Mrs. Masters some time to make up her mind that she would not say a word of all this to Helen. The danger was over, it might never recur; if it threatened, Mrs. Masters would find a way to avert it; she could not throw Helen back into the fever of mind that she had been so hard bested by. The man was out of the way, and silence was safest and best. When she summoned

Helen, and the girl came, trembling, to learn what had passed, and she witnessed her thankfulness, her relief, her simple acquiescence in the infallibility of her friend's judgment, Mrs. Masters congratulated herself that an extraordinary complication in a difficult affair was safely tided over. That portion of Helen's story in which Frank Lisle was concerned, was the only secret which Mrs. Masters had ever kept from her brother. She had not hesitated to conceal the facts from him for Helen's sake, because her own absolute conviction of the girl's perfect innocence satisfied her that no breach of faith was involved in the concealment. Had she not chosen Helen as a companion for her own children? How heartily she now congratulated herself that Mr. Warrender knew nothing of the matter. What complications might arise if he knew the truth? What indeed?

Helen was very bright and happy that evening, almost as gay as the children themselves, and Mr. Warrender, remarking the beauty of her smile, and the melody of her laughter, approved of the decision to which his sister had come. He had few dislikes, but Mrs. Townley Gore was the object of one of them: perhaps it was the unconscious influence of this feeling that made him find Helen more interesting than he had ever imagined a girl could be, even interesting enough to beguile him from his books at unlikely hours.

The party at Horndean broke up, and the house was deserted, while the little group at Chesney Manor settled down to a peaceful and enjoyable life. Mr. Horndean and Mr. Warrender had not chanced to meet, nor did Mrs. Masters see Mr. Horndean before he went up to town. He called at Chesney Manor on the day after his sister's visit, but Mr. Warrender was out, and Mrs. Masters had not left her room. As he was riding homewards by a short cut, where there was a bridle path through a wood, he caught sight of two little girls in a field on the Chesney Manor side of the railing. The children were tossing a ball, and a little white dog was following it, lamely. At some distance he perceived a lady, seated on a fallen tree; from her attitude he concluded she was reading.

"The Masters children, I suppose," said Mr. Horndean to himself, "and Frank's four-legged patient."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER I. JACK DOYLE'S GHOST.

THERE comes a period, at least once in every life, when we are compelled, whether we wish it or not, to pause and to take stock of ourselves and our surroundings, unless we are content to let ourselves and them drift into hopeless confusion. We have been hitherto obliged to regard the history of Phoebe and of so many of her fathers as do not appear to be hopelessly lost, piecemeal; following out their fortunes, now with the eyes of a girl who had learned to see all things wrongly, and then again with those of a man who, if he saw anything rightly, had not the art of looking round things, or of imagining that anything he saw could possibly have an unseen side. As for the admiral, it is plain that his spectacles can be of no value to anybody who has nothing to sell, while Sir Charles Bassett and his old friend had their reasons for being blind, and the new generation of young men had no reason for caring about chance scraps of other people's lives. I cannot help feeling the need of mounting a little higher above the ground over which these people were walking without seeing more than a yard of mist before them, so as to take more of a bird's view of the plan of the paths that now begin so singularly to converge and blend. Phoebe, all unconscious of anything that happened beyond the four walls of an empty backyard, had been, from her babyhood, the means of transmuting a Bohemian of Bohemians into a sober and successful money-lender—unless report, which can

hardly be deceived in such a case, did him too much right or too much wrong. Who was she? Nobody could really tell her that; certainly not the man who, thinking himself compelled by duty to obey the instincts of heart-hunger—a craving from which there is no reason to think money-lenders more free than money-borrowers—had given her the place in his life which, when empty and before it hardens and closes up for ever, cries out for the love of friend, wife, or child, wherewith to be at least a little filled. The act of adoption was sudden; but it grew as naturally out of his life as interest from principal. He must have been somebody even before those now far back days when he was Jack Doyle of the back slums; and when a man goes so thoroughly to the dogs, one may safely guess that he has rather more heart than his neighbours. The dogs are not fond of hearts that are colder than brains, and had rejected him ever since he had taken to make money. There was nobody who cared for him. That, perhaps, is too common to signify; but it did signify that there was nobody for whom he cared. He had sworn joint fatherhood to Phoebe, to the extent of some twenty pounds a year—a trifle, but his vow had made him what he was—and he was the only one who had kept it; a good reason to make him go on keeping it, if only out of pique and pride, to prove, perhaps, that a usurer is as good as a baronet and may be better. In effect, he was proud, angry, disappointed, hungry, and alone. And so—to the admiral's exceeding bewilderment—he had assumed the character of the one, true, lawful, and natural father of Phoebe Burden.

For it must not be supposed that the admiral—who deserves a passing glance

from our height of prospect—swallowed such a monstrous story as that a man, though twenty times a father, should come back from India to bother himself with a daughter whom he had never seen, and should pay a stranger over two thousand pounds for silence unless silence were a very important thing indeed. He was by no means such a fool as not to argue, "True—a promise is no security that he won't carry off the girl and leave me to whistle for my money. He gives me neither address nor name to trace him by. But then—why want the girl at all? He either is her father, or else he isn't her father. If he is her father, he needn't have offered me a penny. He could have claimed her, and proved his claim, and taken her off straight away. And so, being her father, there's something he wants over and above the girl, that's better worth buying. And he'll buy—or else he's as sure I shall talk as that I stand here. And, if he's not her father, all the more reason why he should pay. He can't think me such an ass that I couldn't find out what he doesn't choose to tell. That girl worth offering two thousand for? Then she's worth paying four thousand for. Nothing venture, nothing win. I needn't give up that five pound a quarter from Doyle. And if anybody else asks after her? That isn't likely, though, now; and if they do, why it's easy to make her as dead as a door-nail. . . . And the boys? It's a good job Phil's gone. It won't do, though, to tell them about that two thousand—or three—or four. There wouldn't be much left at the end of a year. Let me see. . . . And I mustn't tell them she found a rich father, or they'd be down on him. . . . I wish I could think of a tale for the boys. Let me see. It won't do, merely to say that she went out for milk, or candles, and never came home. That might strike them as queer. What would a girl be likely to do? Put yourself in her place—what should I have done, if I'd been a girl? I should have been sorry to part with me, of course, but I couldn't have gone on living with the boys. I should have gone on the stage. But then that would be a fine excuse for the boys to go to all the theatres in London. No; I should have gone off with somebody, with a young man. By Jingo! that's the very thing. And it's true, too, all but the young man. She made believe to go out on an errand—no; when I came back I found she'd gone, and left a note to say she was very sorry and hoped we'd forgive

her, and she wouldn't do it any more, but she'd gone off with the man of her heart to be married (naming no names), and—yes, she's the very girl that would do that sort of thing. And the note? Oh, I can tear that up in a rage. It'll break my heart, I'll never forgive her, and forbid them ever to name her name. And Phil! Ah, Phil! it is a good job he's out of the way just now."

So, changed even to her christian-name, dead to Sir Charles Bassett, romanced away out of the vision of her foster-brothers, efficiently bought from her guardian, there was no reason why Marion Burden, changed into Phoebe Doyle, should ever be heard of again; while nothing was more natural than that there should be a Phoebe Doyle. Who was she? It would take a clever detective to discover that now. He would have to connect Phoebe Doyle with Marion Burden, and Marion Burden with some unknown child who had been lost in its cradle days and had never been looked for. And the secret was less likely to be found out inasmuch as, except to herself, the solution was of no consequence to a soul, while Phoebe did not dream of questioning the solution she had received. Why should she? Doyle's impromptu romance of her birth and parentage, though lame enough to the secret mind of the admiral, was real enough to her. She was Jack Doyle's Daughter; and, as such, her grown-up history begins:

She afterwards remembered, with shame for such transgression of the first laws of the literature from which she had obtained her knowledge of the world, that Stanislas Adrianski had not entered her mind from the moment when she first knew that she saw her father to that when she found herself beside her new found father in a cab—a mere common cab, and not a chariot and four. Indeed, she had unlimited reasons for being vexed and disappointed with herself, as soon as the first whirl was over. The sudden wrench from all the early associations which ought to have become part of her very being had not cost her a single pang. She had forgotten to shed a single tear, while hurrying on her bonnet, for one of the boys, though she perfectly understood that she was never to see one of them any more. She had not felt faint, or resolute, or tender, or anything that became so grand an opportunity for bringing out the behaviour of a heroine. It was really disappointing

to find that she had spent years in cultivating herself to this very end, only to throw away the chance when it came. It was too late to know now what she ought to have said and done. Never, so long as she lived, could she hope to be claimed by another long lost father. But this was all nothing to her love treason. It had been impossible, of course, to proclaim her engagement to Stanislas then and there. But she might at least have scribbled a note to her lover, wrapped it round anything heavy enough that came to hand, and thrown it out of a back window into his garden. She could even see, in the air, the very words she ought to have used: "The secret of my life is revealed. Constant and true. In time you will know all." And yet, even while she was reading her own unwritten message to her lover, she was doubly troubled by a yet more shameful feeling—the consciousness that she was not even sorry for her failure to act up to her own knowledge of what romance required.

"What will he think of me?" thought she. "What will he do? The Duke of Plantagenet, when he lost Lady Adeline, disguised himself as a groom and got a place at the castle where she was confined, and threw the marquis who carried her off from the top of a tower. I must let him hear from me; and how can I write without saying I'll be constant and true? And that I love him? I do love him; of course I do. I must manage to feel it a little more. I'll give myself five minutes, and then I really will love Stanislas with all my heart and soul——"

"Miss Burden—Phœbe," said her companion, breaking in upon thoughts that, as usual, could not keep themselves within the lines of reality, however wild it might be, "I don't wonder at your asking no questions. I'm afraid you must be feeling—strange. But—you mustn't go on feeling strange with me."

"Indeed, sir," began Phœbe, in a tone as if she had been accused of some new sin against dramatic proprieties; "indeed, sir, but it is all so strange."

"You must learn to call me 'father,' just as I must call you Phœbe."

It would have been natural in a father, who had so much missed his lost child and had taken so much trouble to find her again, to have made some outward and visible sign of affection. But there were no tears in his voice, which did not even tremble, and

his hands made no movement towards hers.

She was glad of it, for it saved her from a great deal of trouble; and yet she could not help feeling that her father was unnaturally undemonstrative and cold. As for him—well, he could not, after all, manage to make himself her father simply by calling himself so, and he felt no temptation to use the advantage which his claim had given him over a pretty and seemingly over-docile and unassertive girl. Had she been plain, his part would have been infinitely more easy. But he simply felt awkward and constrained; the suspicion never entered his head or heart for a moment that he might possibly have been taking a hand at the old game of fire. He felt himself as safe from that as he had felt from ruin when playing to lose non-existent millions in the old Bohemian days.

"Don't you ever want to know your name?" he asked after a pause.

"Of course. Phœbe——"

"You are Phœbe Doyle. My name is John Doyle. I suppose you won't be sorry to know that I am what most people call rich, and you are my only child."

A brilliant speech came into her mind. Something to justify her character of heroine she must say or do.

"Am I like my mother?" she asked. "Have I her eyes?"

He could not help opening his a little. It was not at the untimeliness of such a question in a dark cab, where faces could only be seen by flashes when they happened to be passing a gas-lamp; but it seemed to betray a theatrical touch about the girl that did not please him. He had noticed her eyes, and his ingrained ideas of women as a sex were strong enough to make him fancy that she knew her own strong point, and wanted a compliment, after the manner of girls who are brought up among such surroundings as hers must have been.

"Your mother? No."

Not even then, to her extreme wonder, did the tone of his voice change. She had only thought of doing justice to the finer part of her own nature, and not of moving him, when she asked her question; but surely the mention of the wife whom he had loved so much by her newly-found child should have moved him deeply.

"I wonder if I should have loved my mother?" she thought sadly. "I wonder if I can love anybody—except Stanislas, of course? I wonder if my mother loved my father? He seems made of stone. And I

—do I take after him, that I don't seem able to feel anything at all?"

Doyle, too, fell back into silence, and it was really to think of Phœbe's mother—of that mother who had not only never died, but who had never even been born.

It was natural, after all, that her child should speak of her. But what was he to say? He had committed himself to saying that she was not like Phœbe. Well, he could make her like or unlike anything he pleased; and then he thought—

If our bird's-eye view has not yet been high enough to see back into the pre-Bohemian days of John Doyle, it was because they had been dead and buried, even so long ago as when there was a Charley Bassett, of Gray's Inn, instead of a Sir Charles Bassett, of Cautleigh Hall. Some ghosts men are able to lay out of their own sight, and therefore from the sight of all men; but what ghost is laid always and for ever? Not such a ghost as had once been slept and drunk out of sight—a spirit exorcised by spirits—by the Jack Doyle of old.

Phœbe, whether we can believe it or no, was the first girl, presumably pure and innocent, with whom, for a number of years equivalent to a lifetime, he had spoken more than a chance word. Even in his roughest and worst times, he had been a notorious woman-hater, and had taken no share in what used to pass for adventures and Bonnes Fortunes among Charley Bassett and his friends. It had been a matter of chaff among them, behind his back, at least, for upon that one point it had always been dangerous to rally him openly.

But there had been—who can have for a moment doubted it?—a cause. The cause was truly not only dead, but buried, as deep underground as the corpses of the past can be laid and buried by hands of men.

But—no need to say why—the fingers of women are stronger than the hands of men. It was not Phœbe's chance question about a woman who had never been, but Phœbe's mere being in the world, and the sound of her voice so close to his ear, and the immediate nearness of her life to his own, that had called up Jack Doyle's ghost to life again. If we have not caught sight of it before, it was because it had been too completely and successfully buried to be seen.

It was as long ago as when he was a

scholar of his college at Oxford, a place where, to the belief of his comrades in Bohemia, he had never been any more than they had been there themselves—for it might have been noticed that he chose his comrades from a strictly non-collegiate circle—that the shadow of his life began. There were men about in London who would have remembered him well had he allowed them to do so; but his holding himself out of their ken was hardly needful to save from recognition, in Jack Doyle, the student who was reading for a fellowship to be followed by holy orders. The sermons that he had written for the price of a bout of brandy he had once meant to preach from the pulpit, and the nickname of archdeacon, which had managed to follow him even to India, was a burlesque upon what might have been a very probable reality. The worst of him at Oxford was that he was so painfully steady a young man. He was more blameless than a young Quakeress, and seemed in as little danger of coming to any sort of grief as if he had been a monk of Mount Athos, where not even so much as a hen-bird is allowed to come. But, I suppose, the rule of the monks is no rule for the air, and that, at least, a hen-sparrow will chance to perch upon its hardest rocks now and then. Nor have I ever heard that the hearts of hermits, bookworms, or any other similar monsters, are less likely to take flame from a spark, when the time comes, than those which keep themselves healthily open to the outer fire.

It was with an actress—of all people in the world—with an actress at a country theatre, that he fell in love, not in any common way, but to the full extreme of unknown and untried passion. He was spending his last long vacation in reading at Helmsford, the little sea-side town where, by chance, he first met the girl. Of her, there is nothing else to be known; she is only visible to his eyes, and to all others dead and forgotten. The most inveterate playgoer may search in vain for the name of Miss Stella Fitzjames in his memory of the stage. He loved her so much that he made her a goddess, and did not even know that he was a fool. He did not read. He spent all he had to spend upon her, and more. He allowed himself to lose the class at which he had been aiming ever since he was a school-boy. He cut himself off from a fellowship that would mean calibacy. He gave

up the calling for which he had unfitted himself as much as a man can.

Stella became his one thought, his complete faith, his whole world. He made no secret of his love; he brought himself to part from her in order that he might make a clean breast of it to his friends at home. He had already bought the marriage-license, and had left it in her hands. When he came back, after a hopeless rupture with his family, to Helmsford, it was to find that the license had already been used, and that, in the marriage register, there stood recorded his own name as that of the husband of Stella Fitzjames.

Who had supplanted him, and why in such a way, he did not care to know. It was enough, and more than enough, that his faith in Stella's sex had been destroyed, and that nothing, save death in life, had been given him in return.

No wonder he shuddered a little at Phœbe's theatrical question of:

"Am I like my mother? Have I her eyes?"

It was as if the ghost of Stella had suddenly laid a finger on his arm.

"She shall have had no mother!" his thoughts exclaimed. "She shall be good and true—she shall be like no other woman that has ever been. Phœbe——"

At last he held out his hand. She could not refuse hers, and he kissed it, but as little like a father as a lover. After all, it was she who had saved him from his worst and most desperate self—this child. He owed her more than two thousand pounds! In the midst of her wonder at suddenly feeling his lips upon her hand, the cab stopped—she did not know in what part of the town—at the door of an hotel.

NUTTING.

ARMED with a long hooked stick, and having an ample wallet slung over my left shoulder, I hardly know any pleasanter pastime for a bright breezy day in October than that of foraging for filberts in a hazel coppice. Just at this season the woodlands are in their fullest luxuriance. Autumn has only here and there, as yet, begun to lay his fiery finger upon the foliage. Otherwise, whatever tinge of yellow there is in the colouring of the landscape is derived from the golden stubble-fields whence the harvest has but recently been carried.

If you have gained any experience at all in the art of nutting, you know precisely where to go with a tolerable certainty of finding the ripest clusters. This will be no less surely the case even though the dingle you are about to enter has never before echoed to your footsteps.

Supposing the soil and situation thereabouts to be in any way favourable to the growth of the particular description of small trees or large shrubs you are in quest of—for they admit readily of being classed under either of these denominations—you examine first of all instinctively the outskirts of the grove you are approaching. There, as securely as in the slips or outer enclosures of a garden or an orchard, you rely upon discovering them if they are to be discovered anywhere in all that countryside.

For, if you know nothing else about the surroundings of the hazel, you know this at least: that free exposure to the air and sunshine are as essential to its branches as to its roots are the light loam and the dry substratum by which that light loam is supported.

What the daisy is among the flowers of the field, that the hazel is among the nut-laden bushes of Europe, Asia, and America. It is scattered broadcast over all three continents. It is restricted to no climate and to no country.

Among all our deciduous shrubs it, at any rate, beyond any manner of doubt, is indigenous. In its wild, or entirely uncultured state, it was as familiar to our remote forefathers, the ancient Britons, as it is to ourselves. As illustrative of this, "hazel," which is a purely Saxon word, signifies in that tongue, with reference to its fringy husk, a hood or head-dress, just as the botanical Greek title of the plant, "corylus," means to this day a cap or phrygian bonnet.

As delightful an adornment to our woodland scenery as any that could well be named, is this prolific nut-bearing undergrowth. And it makes good its right to be regarded as such from the earliest spring time to the latest autumn. Before the leaves of the hazel have burgeoned, before their germs even have put in an appearance, its numerous stems and sprays are delicately starred and tasselled, here with male and there with female blossoms. The latter, which are the less readily distinguishable, are the tiniest tufts of crimson, while the former are pendulously-clustered greyish catkins,

profusely powdered over with fertilising pollen, like so much fine golden dust. As for the catkins, they are all of them terminal—dangling, that is, from the spray-ends like so many aiguillettes; the radiant little stigmas, on the other hand, being set close upon the yet unbudded rind, the hue of which is ash-coloured on the stems and of a rich clear brown on the saplings.

Cultivators of the plant, by the way, know well the trick of lightly brushing the female blossoms in February with a fresh-culled spray of the male catkins. When once the frondage of the nut-tree has unfolded, the glory of it not merely remains undimmed, but is perpetually enhanced until the very closing in of winter.

What first attracts my attention when I am approaching one of the finer specimens of the hazel, is the multiplicity of the parallel stems springing upward faggot-like from the one root, and then diverging from one another as they ascend in leafy luxuriance, until here and there a more richly-laden bough droops heavily under the weight of its shaggy knot of fruitage.

Throughout the summer, the leaves of the hazel are chiefly noteworthy for their dark and lustrous green, each of them being remarkable besides for a slight bloom of down upon its surface, as well as for the paler and thicker down discernible underneath.

As the autumnal season advances, the verdure of the nut-tree ripens into the richest saffron-yellow, the leaf-stalks retaining their hold upon the branches so tenaciously that they are only shredded off at last by the severest frosts of November.

Whenever I enter a wood in the nutting season, I there look confidently for the hazel as an undergrowth, but more especially when I observe that the oak tree flourishes in the neighbourhood.

As a rule the plant is far more of a shrub than a tree, seldom attaining any great altitude. As large a specimen, perhaps, as any known in this country is one at Eastwell Park, which has a height of thirty feet, its main trunk having a diameter of one foot where it emerges from the ground.

Scattered about England in various counties are localities so fruitful of the nut that the fact has been rendered patent to all by their distinctive designations. Thus, in Wiltshire there is Hazelbury; in Surrey, Hazelmere; in Cambridgeshire, Hazelingfield; in Northamptonshire, Hazelbeech;

while in Suffolk, Derbyshire, and Yorkshire, alike, there is Hazelwood.

Among all our English counties, however, pre-eminently the shire for nuts—as indeed also for hops, apples, and cherries—is Kent.

Thither, consequently, I go by preference whenever I can find the opportunity, in October, nut-hook in hand and wallet on shoulder. There, in the green lanes, among the more umbrageous hedgerows, scattered even at intervals about the hop-gardens, skirting the boundary line of most of the orchards, interspersing the sylvan growth of every well-timbered park in the county, the nut-trees, in delightful variety, flourish as they flourish nowhere else in England; in some parts of the shire, as for example in an especial manner towards the very heart of it, in the vicinity of Maidstone, with an extraordinary luxuriance.

Had this favoured shire a crest, as it undoubtedly has an escutcheon, it ought surely to be, as about its aptest symbol, the squirrel, of which animated nutcracker Cowley sings, in his quaint couplet:

He culls the soundest, dext'rously picks out
The kernels sweet, and throws the shells about.

Famous for its filberts as the county is, those choicest outcomes of the cultured hazel are of great variety, five kinds in particular being each of them of peculiar excellence. These are the red filbert, the white filbert, the frizzled, the thin-shelled, and the cobnut or Barcelona.

As for the red filbert, it is readily distinguishable as an oblong egg-shaped nut of medium size, which, when cracked, reveals a kernel encased in a reddish pellicle, formerly employed medicinally as a powerful astringent.

In contradistinction to this the kernel of the white filbert is enclosed in a delicate white skin or membrane.

What gives to the frizzled filbert its distinctive title, on the contrary, is not its internal, but its external covering—the ragged, curly, and dishevelled extremity of the green pod or calyx, in which the ripening nut is imbedded. Comparatively small in size, these filberts have the double merit of coming early to maturity and of being produced in great abundance.

The thin-shelled filberts, besides possessing that peculiarity, are noticeable as having their shells beautifully ribbed or streaked lengthways—striated, is the correct term, longitudinally. Besides these four leading species of filberts, there is, as already intimated, a fifth, which

nobly rivals them all, in the shortish, egg-shaped cob-nut, the shell of which is exceptionally hard and thick, but well-filled, too, with a crisp and flavorful kernel. Originally introduced into this country a little more than two centuries ago, in 1665, from Barcelona, this particular kind of filbert is variously known in England as the cob or Barcelona. Similarly, as having come in the first instance from Cosford, in Suffolk, the delicious thin-shelled filbert is otherwise spoken of simply as the Cosford. While, as indicative of how very recently these curious varieties of the cultured hazel have sprung into existence, it is singular to note the fact that the first frizzled filbert ever grown was nurtured, ripened, cracked, and eaten in a garden at Hoveton, near Norwich. Almost all of these five leading kinds of filbert have their husks or pods, according to the botanical phrase, hispid, otherwise covered with a sort of vegetable bristle.

Many other varieties of the cultivated hazel there are apart from those already mentioned. Each of these, however, in its turn may be readily enough recognised by reason of its distinctive peculiarities. The Downton, for example, a large square nut, is known of course as such directly its obtusely four-sided shell is seen or fingered. Another, a distinctly oblong filbert, accordingly as its husk is smooth or rough, is known at once to be respectively the Northampton and the Northamptonshire. Occasionally, or rather it should be said very rarely indeed, when you are out nutting you may have the good fortune to come upon a singularly beautiful little filbert-tree, the leaves of which have the peculiarity of being of a dark red or purple. Needless to say, specimens like that, however, are cared for more as adornments to a sylvan landscape than for any particular merit they have in their fruit-bearing capacity. More tempting by far in their way are those homelier-looking filberts, technically called "glomerata," or cluster-nuts, hanging like the berries of the vine in bunches, whence, in fact, the French name for them is, quite literally, "noisetier à grappes."

Once in a way, too, the skilled nutter comes, with a satisfaction he would hardly feel on recognising the red-leaved filbert, on the more fruitful Lamberti, or Lambert's nut, supposed by some to be a mere corruption of the German word for it, meaning the long-bearded nut, *Langbartnauss*. Of old the distinction drawn between nuts of a good and those of the

best quality, was by terming the former the short-bearded, and the latter the long-bearded or full-bearded—whence, according to a popular belief, by corruption, filbert. Quite as plausible, however, and certainly far more poetical is old John Gower's suggestion in his "Confessio Amantis," that the name was traceable back to the mythic age when Phillis, as he says, "was shape into a nutte tree," or, more precisely, into the almond; and certainly a colourable excuse is given to this notion, which must otherwise have appeared only fantastic, by the fact that the old English name, alike for tree and nut, was the philberd. Thus, says Caliban to Stephano:

I'll bring thee to clustering philberds.

Whenever I am wandering, nut-hook in hand, through the woodlands, I have an eye, even at a distance, for the upright growth of the tree bearing the cob-filbert, knowing well that the probabilities are, beforehand, I shall be rewarded. Although it may be overshadowed by loftier timber, so long as it is not actually under the drip of it, my hopes are strengthened. As I draw nearer, if I note that a litter of decaying leaves and grasses has gone to enrich the soil, I am more sanguine than ever that my spoil will be abundant. A glance upwards as I approach soon makes good my expectations. There are the nuts, clustering mostly at the extremities of the branches, where they are more fully exposed to the ripening influence of the sunshine, and to the sweetening effect of the fresh air. I have to make little or no research at the very beginning. Autumnal beams have already browned the fringy points of the drooping clusters. Some of the more prominent of these I can reach, and, with a rustling snap of the branch-stalk between finger and thumb, gather without an effort into my gaping wallet. Other clusters higher up and less accessible I can readily enough, with the aid of my nut-hook, bring within reach in their turn, and just as easily despoil. It is afterwards, however, when the nutter's difficulties increase, when he sees the goodliest, brownest, ripest bunches of all so far beyond the range of the utmost stretch of his nut-hook, that the passion of his quest gains upon him to so great a degree that he becomes at last reckless of the ravages he commits in the way of spoliation.

A couple of poets, each a very high-priest of Nature—Thomson in the last century, Wordsworth in this—describe,

with-out equal zest, the ruthless eagerness to grasp the spoil evidenced by those who go out nutting.

In his Autumn, we find Thomson recording graphically how the sylvan explorer enters the secret shade in search of the clustering filberts :

And where they burnish on the topmost boughs,
With active vigour crushes down the tree,
Or shakes them ripe from the resigning husk ;
A glossy shower, and of an ardent brown :

while Wordsworth, after depicting almost with rapture his reckless devastation of the nutty lair he has been despoiling, adds remorsefully :

Ere from the mutilated bower I turned,
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.
Then, dearest maiden—

he exclaims, in a sudden revulsion of tenderness, turning for sympathy to the most amiable of his listeners, his very soul overflowing in his words with more than the pagan pantheist's reverence for the hamadryad—

move along these shades
In gentleness of heart, with gentle hand
Touch—for, there is a spirit in the woods.

Judging from the extraordinary superstitions which formerly were associated with the hazel, the spirit lurking in the nut-grove would seem to have been of a weird and eltrich character. According to an eccentric belief which prevailed in those more credulous days, the ashes of the shells of hazel-nuts had merely to be applied to the back of a child's head to ensure the colour of the iris in the infant's eyes turning from grey to black.

According to another fantastic notion, akin in its absurdity to the nursery legend about capturing a bird by putting a pinch of salt on its tail, you had but to stroke the deadliest snake with a hazel wand to stun it more surely than you could with a blow from any other bit of timber.

As for the supposed wonders effected in the way of discovering hidden springs of water and rich lodes of metal by means of what was known and believed in, not so very long ago, as hazel-rod divination, the world's literature abounds with records of that most extravagant phantasy. Its practice assumed to itself, indeed, the dignity of a science, that of rhabdomancy, its cultivators being known as rhabdomists.

So comparatively modern and staid an authority as John Evelyn has, with exemp-

lary gravity, set forth in his *Sylva* this amazing statement :

"Lastly, for riding switches and divinator rods for the detecting and finding out of minerals (at least, if that tradition be not imposture), it is very wonderful by what occult virtue the forked stick (so cut and skilfully held) becomes impregnated with those invisible steams and exhalations, as by its spontaneous bending, from a horizontal posture, to discover not only mines and subterraneous treasures and springs of water, but criminals guilty of murder, etc., made out so solemnly, and the effects thereof, by the attestation of magistrates and divers other learned and other credible persons (who have critically examined matters of fact) is certainly next to a miracle and requires a strong faith."

How the mystic hazel-twigg was handled as a divining-rod by Goodman Dousterswivel, who is there but remembers perfectly well, who has, even though it be but once, looked into Sir Walter Scott's *Antiquary*?

"As to the divination, or decision from the staff," quoth Sir Thomas Brown again, "it is an augurial relique, and the practice thereof is accursed by God himself: 'My people ask counsel of their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them.'"

"Of this kind of rhabdomancy," adds the author of *Vulgar Errors*, "was that practised by Nabuchadonosor in the Chaldean Miscellany delivered by Ezekiel."

Bearing in remembrance the wild and mysterious uses to which the hazel-switch has thus at intervals been applied in the lapse of many centuries, I seem, whenever I think of the incantation scenes in *Macbeth*, to recognise, as though in a lurid glare from the cauldron of the witches, the significance of the name given to Scotland by the Romans—*Cal-Dun*, or the hill of hazels, being the root-germ, according to Sir William Temple, of Scotia's beautiful Latin designation, *Caledonia*.

Associated in a homelier way, and innocently enough, upon the whole, with these eerie superstitions, were the once popular Scottish revelries of *Nutcrack Night*, as, north of the Tweed, the 31st of October is still called in vulgar parlance. Supposing the celebration of *Hallowe'en* eventually to die out altogether, the memory of it, at least, will be happily perpetuated by the lyric masterpiece of Burns, beginning :

Among the bonny winding banks,
Where Doon rins wimpling clear,
Where Bruce ance ruled the martial ranks
An' shook the Carrick spear.

Some merry, friendly, countra folks
 Together did convene,
 To burn their nits and pu' their stocks,
 And haud their Hallowe'en,
 Fu' blithe that night.

Years before the Ayrshire ploughman had begun to tune his oaten reed, however, Gray had evidenced, through The Shepherd's Walk, that one part at any rate of those superstitious merry-makings was familiar in England, as thus :

Two hazel nuts I threw into the flame,
 And to each nut I gave a sweetheart's name.
 This with the loudest bounce me sore amazed,
 That with a flame of brightest colour blazed.
 As blazed the nut, so may thy passion grow ;
 For 'twas thy nut that did so brightly glow.

Nor can this association of a nut with the beloved be regarded in any way as lyrically mean, seeing that Shakespeare shrank not from actually symbolising under a nut one of his most exquisite creations ; as where Touchstone says, in *As You Like It* :

Sweetest nut hath sourest rind,
 Such a nut is Rosalind.

As I ramble on through the Kentish woodlands, stuffing my wallet fuller and fuller with filberts of all kinds, cob, frizzled, red, white, thin-shelled, what-not, I cannot help fancying that half the enjoyment one has in nutting comes from a secret sense that it is in some sort purloining.

Has not Leigh Hunt sung of the fairies robbing an apple-orchard ?

But the fruit were scarce worth peeling
 Were it not for stealing, stealing !

And, oddly enough, as if to confirm my whimsical impression as to the almost sinful delight one has in nutting, there comes back to me a recollection of the opprobrious meaning attached to the very weapon with the aid of which the nutter carries on his depredations.

"If you run the nut-hook's humour on me," quoth Nym, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* ; as though he had said in plain English, "If you call me thief !"

"Nut-hook, nut-hook, you lie !" cries Doll Tearsheet to the beadle in *Henry the Fourth, Part Two*, thereby virtually apostrophising that functionary, in so many words, as a rogue and vagabond.

A nutter returns, in fact, from a successful excursion into a filbert coppice, there can be no doubt whatever of this, with something of the self-congratulatory air of a freebooter, whose foray has laden him, at the cost of a few rents and scratches, with spoil well worth the gathering.

A STREET SCENE IN FOOCHOW.

THE street in which we are, like all Chinese streets, is very narrow, very dirty, and very crowded with people, and this crowd of people is also very dirty. From the window of a foreign tea hong, or house, four shops can be seen on the other side of the street-way, and in each of these a perpetual business appears to be going on. The first is a shop where ropes and sails for the fishing junks are made—these latter deftly manufactured out of dried leaves and bamboo network, which same material, when conjoined, serves also for door and window shades, to keep away the too impressive rays of the too hot sun. Bundles of thick, knotted, tangled coir fibre are lying on the floor, waiting their turn to be tossed about in so penetrating a manner that scarcely one single thread will remain sticking to another, and a boy may now be seen, with two sticks in his hands, picking up, in hay-making fashion, and tossing the rude fibre in the air, and beating it upwards and downwards and sideways, like a magician with his trickery balls, until it reaches the floor again, clean and tidy. Previous to this, however, the rude material has been dragged and then pulled over the teeth of a formidable-looking iron comb, by which means it has been cleansed and relieved of stray atoms of leaf, bark, knots, and fragments of wood. The difference in its colour, in its first and last stages, in its transition from savageness to civilisation, is very great ; a dirty saffron-red, with darker splashes of oil in its original, becoming, after the beating-in-the-air process, a colour which would not be despised by a burlesque actress of the nineteenth century to tint her locks with. After its tossing, it is picked, with the ends as nearly as possible, where there are so many long and short, all lying in one direction, and then is placed upon a table in front of another artisan, who has a kind of wooden wheel in his hand. This, in a most happy manner, combines twisting the fibre into rope, and, at the same time, by means of a peculiar twist given to it by the worker, rolls the rope when thus made into a coil and ready for packing. With one part of the wheel pressed against his thigh, he turns it round with one hand, producing the above results, while with the other hand he feeds the end of the embryo rope from the bundle of fibre lying on the table in front of him. Then,

in the same shop, but in an adjoining room, a network of thin bamboo rattans is lying on the floor, and on it rows of leaves are being placed—large, thick leaves, which have already been soaked into a soft and pliable condition. A fair thickness of these being established, another network of the bamboo is fastened on the top, the leaves being treated like the meat in a sandwich, and the piece rolled up. This is used chiefly for awnings on boats, and over the windows and doorways of houses, its thickness being such as to keep the heat and glare from successfully penetrating through it. The same network, covered only with ordinary matting, serves as sails for the junks and smaller sailing craft, and its hard resisting texture catching the wind impels the boat along. They look very stately these native-fashioned junks as they sail along, with gongs and tom-tom beating invocation to the joss, and the brightly painted prow gleaming in the sun—a vessel

With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,
Court'd by all the winds that hold them play.

At the entrance—or, rather, in front, for the whole width of front of a Chinese house is open during the daytime—sits a very ancient specimen of a very ancient people. Plaiting away with the tapes of split bamboo, with never a glance to right or left, most unwoman-like in her non-inquisitiveness or appreciation of what is passing around, there she sits—an old woman, a mere human machine. Her head is bent down upon her breast, a head over which some seventy odd summers have bloomed and winters have died, working, still working in her old age, and seeming happy in her labour. Her work requires no thought, nor even watching from the eye; it is purely mechanical labour in which the fingers, trained by long custom, fulfil their needed work. Does she think at all? Her face is the stolid, indifferent-looking face peculiar to her tribe, with no animated speculation, or discernible dreams of enterprise or glints of remembered passion lighting it up. But are there no thoughts of a past, no wonderings as to a future, as the life edges to the last scene of all?

The present—the living just now—is without emotion, without interest, save that a little maiden is bringing her a bowl of rice, and a morsel of tasty fish, with a dash of soy thrown over it. But even this can scarcely be expected to create a fire of sur-

prise or animation to her almost lifeless frame, with its almost death-like face, for has not the same monotonous repast, with scarcely even a difference in the flavouring given to the flat uninteresting taste of the plain boiled rice, been set before her each and every day for some three score years and ten that have passed away? The same monotonous meal has been set before her children and her children's children, and with no variations, save when, perhaps, on high days and holy days, a red-hot pepper-corn, as hot to the taste as it is red to the vision, or a fragment of root-ginger, has been added by way of a treat! There sits the ancient dame speaking to nobody, and appearing to see no world except that made by the mystic moving of her fingers as they weave the rattans together; if, in such a world, there lives even thought or fancy. There she sits in a silent solemn mood on her three-legged stool, with her crushed-up feet, like a pair of human drumsticks, crossed over one another, and bound in the tightly-tied bandages which have kept them in their stunted growth.

Here is a shop—all the houses in a Chinese street are shops of one kind or other—where lead-working is carried on; where canisters for holding tea are produced; where lamps for burning oil lights are turned out in highly ornamental and embellished style.

Naked, save with a girth around the loins, are the workmen here. One sits over a fire made of charcoal, on which is a cauldron of molten lead. Some thin sheets of lead are wanted, so upon a square block of thick pressed paper, a spoonful of the white metal is run. Upon the top of this again, another block of paper is placed, and on this the workman, constituting himself a weight, stands. This seems a poor, primitive, and rude style of doing such business, but mark the result: the top pad is taken off, and a thin sheet of lead lies before you, perfect, save for being uneven at the edges, and the paper-pad seems to be barely scorched!

Workman number two, with gigantic scissors, cuts this sheet into the desired patterns, fits and refits the pieces, a file bringing them down to the exact dimensions required, while, in a big box, with a wheel before him, like an English street knife-grinder, sits number three, with his lathe, turning corners and embellishing devices.

The work when thus completed is washed with water and scrubbed with sand, and soon shines with the brightness of freshness and novelty.

The most remarkable feature about this shop is the fact that, while from sunrise to sunset these metallic operations are conceived, prosecuted, and accomplished, and the stock thus keeps increasing, nobody is ever seen to enter the premises and buy the wares, nor even to go the length of stopping to enquire their cost.

For many hours on many days we watched the place, got intimate with its inner life and being, and though bronzed sailors bought, on one side, blocks for their ship's tackle, and odd ends of rope vanished, and rolls of leaf-matting were conjured from the other side—nay, though the lead-merchant himself bought fish from the itinerant vendor, and his workmen revelled in luscious-looking squash, made from the arbutus berry—still no one seemed to think the lead-ware worth a cash!

But still they ate, and laughed, and loved, and lived. Perhaps, like their venerable neighbour, they may go on eating and laughing, loving and living, till old age, like hers, steps in and forbids more gaiety; may still, when the moil and toil of the day is over, read their fairy lore to one another, till the long evening comes,

When the last reader reads no more.

That very old gentleman, with the very white moustache (for, being a grandfather, he is entitled to wear one) and the minutest of minute pig-tails, composed of about ten grey hairs to a dozen threads of silk, is evidently the owner of the next shop, which deals in manufactures appertaining to ships. His shop is conveniently situated, for about a hundred yards further down the street flows the river Min. This old Methusaleh has a fine round face, pink as that of a new-born baby, and yet wrinkled with age. And all the day long he sits, the most active worker in his establishment, chiselling out holes in small oblong blocks of wood, into which small wheels are pinned, for the ropes to run over and along.

He is sitting on the floor of his shop, his legs crossed, tailor like, under him, surrounded with the chips and shavings of his work; and hammer, hammer, goes his chisel in the wood. But he and his staff work not a whit too hard, for rigging-blocks seem to be in great demand

just now. Every purchaser has a kindly word to give to the old grandfather, and a joke to crack with the workmen, for these Chinamen seem to be always brim-full of saucy anecdote. Sometimes a little grandchild totters along, and the old grandfather's face grows pinker than ever, as with that devotion to childhood so observably paid by old age among this people, he takes the youngster on his knee, and ceasing from his work, dips into some stirring tale of some grand and great rebellion.

But what good came of it at last?
Quoth little Peterkin.
Why that I cannot tell, said he;
But 'twas a famous victory.

Such a thing as hurry or bustle is unknown in the life and doings of a Chinaman, so ere the fisherman gets back to his boat, he will have gossiped away a good hour, and laughed himself red in the face. Perchance, too, he may have missed the tide, and so will not leave till morning—leave as a seemingly decent, honest, hard-working fisherman, until he gets out to sea, when he turns pirate until he has amassed as much plunder as will satisfy his present needs, when he will again be metamorphosed into a harmless fisherman, and will return peacefully to harbour, as if he had never heard of piracy, and as if throat-cutting and ship-scuttling had never come into his day's work.

Occasionally Methusaleh rises from his sitting posture to stretch his limbs. Then he shuffles in his clogs to the entrance, and has a chat with his immediate neighbour. Is he a good liver, this aged hero of across-the-way, and does he relish a good dinner? The fishmonger stops at his house, and produces a basket of most ancient-looking fish, which look most uninviting and mighty salt. Our friend examines these one by one, as housewives handle fish in Scotland, makes remarks concerning them, no doubt eliciting a full, true, and particular history of the life and death of each fish. Were he really to ask for this, he would get it, for the street-hawkers of China are wonderful adepts at fable-weaving, and clever at giving marvellously attractive discourses on their goods.

It is an extremely active and busy street, yet no confusion in its life seems to put its inhabitants out of humour. You see coming in one direction a pair of coolies supporting on their shoulders a huge log of wood, under the ponderous weight of

which they stagger as they move along. Facing these, and coming in an opposite direction, approach a string of chairs borne by coolies, and carried at that rapid pace peculiar to Eastern chair-bearers. These contain tea-merchants and brokers on their way to see how much profit they can squeeze out of the barbarian foreigner, through selling him a "chop" of the newly-arrived new-season's tea. How are these chairs in this narrow street to pass the log of wood, and the fruit-seller, and the old dame tottering insecurely with her miniature feet cased in her more than miniature shoes, and the ordinary passer-by besides? Yet these will pass and re-pass without a hitch, and with scarcely a jostle. How? Did you ever see a conjuror do the trick with the rings? He joins them to each other, and severs them again; and you never discover the secret of the split in the one you never touch, and the permanent interlacing of the others. See, the rings are joined and clink and clink together; he takes them asunder and apart before your very eyes, but how, you cannot tell. So is it with the crowds in the narrow streets of the Chinese cities: they pass and re-pass with an ease you cannot understand.

Coolies are hurrying to and fro with towers of empty boxes, a huge pile in front and a huge pile behind them, balanced on a pole, and they keep singing a kind of time-keeping chant, which is supposed, as in the case of sailors singing at their work at sea, to have the effect of adding rhythm, and thus ease, to their labours.

This singing during the process of work is strenuously engaged in by the natives of the celestial land, more especially by those occupied in pile-driving, the preparatory process of forming the foundations of a house. The pile is in the ground, with a wooden stage or scaffolding reared around and above it, and on this stage is a heavy weight, with a rope and pulley attached to it. The head workman sings a verse of a song, and then, at a given and understood word in the chorus, the other workmen let the weight fall on the pile with a gigantic thud, then haul it up, keeping it suspended until the next verse is over, and the chorus again prompts them to strike. Thus, by a combined effort of time and song, the pile is driven home to mother earth. Upon the principle that they are paid their wages for each day's work, and that all work and no play might

make them dull, the song of these workmen is a very long one, with only occasional choruses, and these brief enough to allow of only one attack upon the pile at a singing.

Women from the country are vending their vegetables from door to door in our street, and the lazy priest is strutting along; while these awful-looking specimens of tortured humanity, the filthy Chinese beggars, look almost more repulsive-looking in their tattered and dirty garments, than if they wore no dress at all, but exhibited in full vision their emaciated frames of bodies. These idle villains appear to be very successful in gaining alms, for they stand, or crouch, or lie—lie in a double sense—and, chanting a dreary and monotonous dirge, almost compel people to take pity on them, to get rid of them and their howls. Truly the Chinese beggar is somewhat akin to the dirty street he lives from and on, "the rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended nostril."

But one of the block-makers is urgent in conversation with the itinerant barber, an occupation deemed of a somewhat degraded nature in China. He has evidently made up his mind to have a complete and clean shave, and the cost, considering all that is implied in that expression, is not excessive. He sits down upon one of the barber's stools—the other, which acts as a balance in the carrying, being headed with a brass basin filled with water, a lilliputian towel, and, underneath, a series of drawers with all the paraphernalia of the trade—and has his queue unplaited. His hair reaches down nearly to his waist, but in its dressed condition it almost touches the ground—a little matter of authorised deception easily arranged by the addition, in the plaiting, of long black-coloured silk threads, of which material the greater part of an ordinary Chinaman's pig-tail is composed. When in mourning, the colour of this silk is changed to white or light blue. The hair being well combed out (during which process the operated upon closes his eyes, as if, in a kind of trance, he was enjoying the soothing influence caused by the friction on his scalp) the barber sharpens his razor, which is a big lump of metal in shape like a butcher's chopper, and in size not very much smaller than that weapon. Yet with its keenly sharpened edge he takes off the shortest hairs on the head, around the ear, and on the eyebrow. The Chinaman gets

a "clean shave," that is, the whole of his face is traversed by the razor, and his head is shaved, save at the crown, on which a small circular patch is left, constituting the foundation for a pig-tail. And the ears are shaved inside and outside, a delicately shaped little lancet style of blade being inserted, and cunningly and dexterously twisted round and round, removing all hairs, but producing the common effect of deafness so proverbial among Chinese, as well as among their neighbours, the Japanese, who indulge in a similar harmful treatment to the ear. The shaving being over, the hair is replaited, and being paid a few cash, off struts the merry little barber to tell his last good story to someone else. And while all this has been going on, Methusaleh has been ruminating as to whether or not he will have one of the salt fish for his supper. He has detained the seller so long, has got such a fund of anecdote out of him, and handled the fish so often that he resolves to make a purchase. The fish is weighed, Methusaleh gets a string of cash, and counts off the requisite number. Some of these coins are very old and worn, so, perhaps, the buyer would not object to pay the debt in nice clean coins? There is no objection to this on the part of the buyer, who feels that he is paying for his song as well as his supper, and so the old cash are restrung, and new ones taken off. The next domestic bill to be paid by these now rejected tokens will be to someone who is not so particular and fanciful, and who does not throw in cheery little jokes and stories in the bargain. The man at the lathe-shop stops his wheel to purchase a pear from the fruit-seller passing by. The pear is peeled by the merchant, who uses a knife, the proportions of which are not unlike the razor of the Chinese barber and the chopper of the British butcher.

The first shop we peeped into is still busy making its leaf awnings, and the edges will have to be finished off with a split bamboo, and the ends of this hard wood will have to be burned and twisted. But how? Out in the street, amongst the feet of the passers-by, a bunch of shavings and chips is kindled into flame, and in the blue flame the ends of the bamboo are laid, and, with a little heating, become soft and pliable, and easily bent. Looking down upon all this, yet seemingly heedless of it, the old lady is still weaving at her cane-work, and, as the evening closes in,

the inhabitants of across-the-way pause in their work, till early dawn rouses them again. So run their lives away.

THE ONE EWE LAMB.

WHAT bitter words were said to-night
Beside my hearthstone desolate!
What maddening sorrow brake the gloom
Of this for-ever-haunted room
When solemn twilight fell,
And I, new-robb'd of my delight,
Came homeward, all at war with Fate,
And deafened by her funeral knell!

Before the daisied sods were placed
Upon her grave, my one-year wife,
Before the blossoms, fresh and fair,
Were hidden from the outer air
Upon her coffin-lid,
A stranger claimed with awful haste
The right to weep for that spent life,
Nor could I those hot tears forbid.

He came from far-off land of gold,
Whose shores the Southern waters lave;
He came to scatter at her feet
World's wealth and love's, to make complete
Their lives with perfect end;
To claim her promise given of old,
And found the silence of a grave,
Without the right that grave to tend.

And I, to whom they gave her hand,
With full assurance of her heart,
I, who a year ago laid down
The dream of fame that was to crown
The scholar's round of toil,
And lived to guard my wife; I stand
Aghast, confounded at the part
I played, my darling's life to spoil.

I thought to make her so content,
I thought that love must answer love,
I spent the wealth that God had given
As freely as the dews of heaven,
To beautify her lot;
I fenced with love the way she went,
I hung love's canopy above,
But now I know she heeded not.

She was my wife, she wore my ring,
My jewels shone upon her breast,
And while I thought that time would be
A friend to my young wife and me,
And bind us soul to soul,
Like wandering dove upon the wing,
Her wounded spirit found no rest,
I had no power to make her whole.

One year she went upon her way,
The mistress of mine ancient halls,
One year she blessed my quiet life,
One year—one little year—my wife,
And now the tale is told;
I laid her in her grave to-day,
But on that grave the shadow falls
Of one she loved in days of old.

"My one ewe lamb!" he said to me.
This evening when the twilight fell,
"The poor ewe lamb her owners sold
To thee for shameful greed of gold,
My lamb that thou hast slain;
For it was death to link to thee
The beating heart that loved me well,
And she hath perished of her pain."

And then he cursed me in his grief:
Oh God! I could find curses too,
To think of all my wasted cares,
My love, my longings, and my prayers,
For one weak woman's heart:
But bitter words bring no relief
For love so old, for grief so new;
No curse hath healing for a smart.

She was my wife, she wore my ring,
But now I know she was my slave,
I know each tender look and smile
Came from a heart that ached the while
For love of one away ;
I could not win that blessed thing,
Her girlish love—the gift she gave
Another in a far-off day.

He, coming home to claim his wife,
Lies prone upon the churchyard soil,
And I would gladly die to win
The peace my wife lies folded in.
My wife ! my wife ! said I ?
Ah, Heaven ! the riddle of this life
Is hard to read. She is with God,
Nor can I claim her though I die.

She was my wife, but was not mine.
I bought her, as he said, with gold,
But in my heart of hearts I am
Clean from all hurt of his ewe lamb ;
I did not steal a wife,
But had no instinct to divine
Between a heart free-given or sold ;
And so I wrecked my darling's life.

A LEICESTER OCTOBER CHEESE-FAIR.

THE Leicester Cheese-Fair is held down on the flat roadway stones.

Cheeses are studded thickly in every quarter of the wide market-place ; are close up to the kerbs and crossings ; lie heaped and sturdy, choking the very centre square. Cheeses are arriving still, from cart and waggon, from trolley and truck, and barrow. Cheeses are being thrown about in all directions, as if the flat old Leicester city were a scene for a living pantomime, as if a cheese were a fit missile, and every member of the company had taken to hurling them in a mad gay game.

Over night, and when it had been yet only grey and early morning, it was a different scene. All had been sluggish then ; had been done as if under mystery or gloom. A waggon had dragged itself slowly in ; when the evening had only just set in, when there was not yet so much dusk, but that the horses could be seen phantom-like, the carter and his helpers, ghostly.

"Have you cheeses here ? Has the pitch begun ?"

No answer. At least, no answer that had any result.

Another waggon came ; with slow clatter, with a little whip-cracking, with somewhat of muttered exclamation, with a low and prolonged roll.

"There are cheeses here, then, surely ?"

Yes. Not that the men bestowed any information, but that the waggon stayed, the clatter ceased, so did the whip-cracking, and the low rumbling roll. And the men, with solemn silence, let themselves down

from unseen places, or appeared upon the dusk from unsuspected doors, and surrounded the waggon, and unpinned the back of it, and dragged out a heavy tarpaulin, and cleared the way to strew straw down upon the stones. After which the men handed out a cheese, and handed out a cheese (quoit-like, as if the pastime were to be enjoyed by giants), and the men went on handing out a cheese, and handing out a cheese, till the pavement seemed likely to be encroached upon, and it was best to go a step or two beyond.

And as the dusk went, as the night stole up, as the gas gave better light, it could be discerned that certain spaces on the market stones had been appropriated. There were great surnames sprawled upon the kerb, in huge schoolboy text and schoolboy capitals, in assertive thick white chalk. There were broad divisions chalked straight out from these, showing the silent carters, as they kept driving up through the deep blue night, till it was dawn, the precise spots where their masters or consignees expected to find them, where they were to "pitch" their cheeses into the dark silence and solemnity, till their freight had been all delivered, and they could lead their emptied waggons away. Also it could be seen that straw had surrounded the cheeses, above and under, as they had been brought along ; that a tarpaulin, spread wide and heavily, had closed them safely in ; that as they were pitched out—two hundred of them, two hundred and fifty, from a dray—they were deposited on straw strewn on the stones again, were built up in sturdy piles to match the piles in which the cart had held them, were spread over on the top once more with a coat of straw, and had the tarpaulin relaid straight and smooth upon them, making a compact mound, or tumulus, of each cart's load. It could be seen, moreover, that each cheese-mound lay there as solidly and snugly as if the cart itself had sunk to the wheel-tops through the market-stones ; had sunk down till horses, men, and all were engulfed, till only the cheeses were left, neatly packed there, without disturbance, on each cart's floor.

In a short time, too, the motive for all this could be seen. The dusk had quite departed, the night had grown to be profound ; but these silent men had the cheese in charge, and in this close packing was the cheese's best security, and the men's best help. There is a mound of cheese to each man ; and all through this Cheese-

Fair Eve—through the long hours of it and the small—these men had to patrol there: sentinels to keep the cheeses safe. By their mounds, therefore, they paced about, or they stood still; by their mounds they passed a word to the fellow-man next, or they kept to that silence that threatened to become their law; on their mounds they sat and smoked (each man finding a seat on the edge of his tarpaulin, a solid cheese-stool); or they stretched themselves full-length for a snatch at a doze, to get rid of some of their fatigue. And in this way it had been their duty to see the moon rise, and the stars; it had been their custom to give the pleasure-fair folks a jest, as these, on the finish of their rollicking, passed by them home; it had been their method to keep to their guardianship and their patrol, whilst the slim old Tudor dwellings round the market-place were fading into repose; whilst the rest of the flat old Leicester city seemed sinking into more flatness still, as it shrank down into quietude, and there was no sound left at last, or movement, but only the hush of sleep.

The morning is here now, though, and the vigil is at an end. It is chilly still; it is grey, for it is October, and not much past six o'clock, but yet there is a suspicion of a stir, languid as it may be. It is shown first in the cheese-watchers themselves. These are shaking themselves out of their silent sloth; these are shrugging their shoulders, and passing their hands through their flatted hair; they are hitting their great-coated chests, and flinging their arms out to give a good hit again; they are looking up at the grey sky, to make forecasts of the weather, judging whether rain will splash down upon the cheeses, and beat them near to pulp, or whether the sun will soon be shining, to make the fair a day to be enjoyed; they are looking critically at the distant mounds of cheeses, calculating whether enough have been quietly laid upon the stones during the darkness of the night to make this year's "pitch" reach the average, or whether so many spaces are yet unfilled that they can prognosticate for certain that business will be "dull." There comes next their attention to their cheeses. They drag from off of them their sheltering tarpaulins. These hitch and hang, and want a heavy haul. They sweep away from them the straw the tarpaulin has been hiding, and that hides the piles of cheese in turn. They see their cheese-piles clear for sale at last, and

are looking warily at comfortable men they know to be cheese-factors, and who, they are aware, will be drawing near soon to taste. In which way, the stir having once begun—for all that it began, as was said, with languor—there is arousal, and arousal, till, hither and thither, in every corner and quarter, there is a lively tide.

"How is it going?" is a question put.

A shrug is the answer, a push-up of the eyebrows and the lips. What it means becomes apparent as the moments pass. It is, that things are to feel their way. It is that, for the present, scope is to be allowed for mystic "fluctuation," for that happy hope of a "rise" to the seller, of a "fall" to the buyer, that will find quotable shape in to-morrow's local paper, where the "spongy and loose" quality of some of the cheeses will get notification, where "exceptionally good lots commanding extreme rates" will be serenely praised; where such technicalities as "middling things, untrue in flavour," will exist, side by side, with "rough bad-coated cold" specimens, "got rid of at cull price;" and when a dairy-like and agricultural knowledge and experience will seem to be acquired by a royal road, as the oracular phrases succeed one another, and are simply read.

Now, however, this is not comprehended. We know nothing now of technicalities. Our business now is to study the manners of the fair; and puzzling enough they are, some of them. There is the mystery of an offer—a "bid." This is done furtively, with a whisper in the seller's ear, with a momentary colloquy only, as if it were a password tendered and returned, of which there need be no further heed. In which way somehow there is brought about this mirage, this glamour of "fluctuation."

"It's no use talking to you just at present," mutters one who wants to buy to one who wants to sell; when he, the desiring buyer, merely glances at the seller's outspread piles of seemingly cheeses, and is passing by.

The seller makes as though he would stop him.

"I don't know," he says, like a passing whirr. Meaning, mystically: "Try me. Name your price. I will see."

It makes the buyer hesitate a moment, and throw another secret half-glance at cheese pile and cheese pile, taking their colour, their quantity, and their apparent quality in. But his thought is that if he suggests one hundred and five shillings, say

(prices going per hundredweight; and a hundredweight weighing, by cheese custom, one hundred and twenty pounds), the market may "fluctuate" down to one hundred and one; that if he suggests one hundred and one shillings, he may lose it because some other factor may think well to give one hundred and five. Silence is golden, therefore; and, like a shadow vanishing, he is gone.

There is another factor soon observed. This new one goes deeper into the purchase matter, as far as action is concerned; though, vocally, he is as near to inaudibility as his predecessor. Let his manner of procedure be noted; for, when this October morning is an hour older, it is seen to be a manner that everywhere prevails.

He is going to taste. He takes his rounds with a cheese-taster; and he thrusts this into a cheese he selects, he twists it professionally out again, he smells it from top to point, he breaks a piece off, and puts it in his mouth. As he lets it linger, thoughtfully, on his tongue, he returns the little cheese-roll to the place whence he had drawn it; he removes the evidence that it had been drawn, by a deft pressure of his thumb about the rind, by a scatter of the tell-tale crumbs; and then he wipes his cheese-taster dry with a wisp of the market-straw, he spits away the cheese he has been tasting upon the stones.

This seems to put him in a condition to deal. This enables him to say, shortly, obscurely:

"Ninety-six."

The seller is as obscurely amazed.

"I lowered it to your governor, I think it is, just now," he whispers, in sotto voce expostulation; "I couldn't do more. I lowered it to ninety-eight."

So, perhaps, he did; but ninety-eight is not going to be given. And this the mysterious young cheese-factor, according to his mysterious cheese-fair method, makes known.

"Don't talk to me like that," his whispered words are. "It shows me it's no use to bid. It's just too soon."

"It's late enough," insinuates the seller, in the moment that is afforded him.

But the young buyer, though he hovers about, thinking the cheeses too good to lose, thinking the chances of fluctuation leave something to be gained, names no other "figure," and no bargain is struck.

Bargains are being struck, though, elsewhere. Betimes as it still is, there are

drays, hither and thither upon the market-place, which have only just, hot upon the moment, been unloaded, and which are being, just as hotly, loaded full again. It is that the price offered for their whole freight of cheese has been accepted; that, as a young Leicester man expresses it, a cheese-maker "means to take his money home;" after which the cheeses are always carried straightway to be scaled.

There are arrangements for this. Two big booths are erected in the market-place, run up there by the rival railway-companies that benefit the town; and in either of them, according to the station to which the cheeses are to be conveyed, cheeses may be weighed gratis.

When this is done, the number of hundredweights and odd pounds over to be paid for will be known. Then invoices can be made out to match; then invoices can be forthwith settled ("credit" not being much the custom); and then farmers may become spectators, or buyers of fairings or ordinary market wares, or visitors to the shows and Grantham jumball-stalls behind, or sojourners at an inn, or friendly gossip-mongers in little hearty groups, as business or characteristics allow.

And in order to get the day's business as far forward as this, with as little ruffling and impatience as may be, the cheese-hurling is rapid and incessant, the men in charge of the cheese-scales are working like machines.

"Two, one, six!" calls out one of these, when six cheeses have been flung from man to man, and piled on to the giant balance by which he is standing.

He means that there are weights counting two hundred and sixteen pounds heaped up on the weights' side; he means that a clerk has to take the sum down.

"Right!" he cries to his attendants.

It is a cue that they may hurl out, from hand to hand, the six weighed cheeses; that they may hurl in, from hand to hand, six cheeses more.

"Two, one, six," he announces to the clerk again, when this has been done. And, after a second change of cheeses, "Two, one, seven;" and, next, "Two, one four;" and, next, "Two, one, eleven;" and, next, "Stop a bit, there!" for he finds he is wrong in his addition, and he cons over the rough iron weights, lifting them aside and aside, and hooking up the little ones out of their rusty topsy-turveydom to be more sure.

"Right!" he cries, when he has corrected his arithmetic. And then "Two, one, four," and "Two, one, two," and "Two, one, ten," and so on, as fast as his helpers can change the cheeses for him, till one man's purchases seem to be done.

There comes a bit of verbal hurricane then, that if it had lasted, and if it could penetrate, might turn some of the cheeses sour.

"I say," blurts out a thick-bodied blustering little purchaser, thrusting himself to the front, "this won't do, you know! This isn't fair!"

"Bless me, sir!" cries the weigher slowly, pushing back his billycock-hat and hair in his surprised and momentary stay.

"It's not going to be," declares the angry little man. "I won't allow it! Take those cheeses out! It's my turn now."

"Why—bless—me—sir," repeats the big weigher in the breadth of his innocence and his amaze, "they're all off the same dray, sir! Look!"

"They're all off the same dray," echo several of the bystanders in more or less vigour of testimony and justification.

Upon which the blustering little personage has to subside into "I see!" and to drop his unnecessary bluster, and to recede.

Over there, at the other end, past that group of hampers labelled, "From Dunton Bassett to Leicester Faire," there is another instance.

A farmer's wife (one whose own hands have veritably pressed the cheese-curd; whose own intelligence is the best her husband has at the skimmers, the skeels, the milk-pails, the cheese-tubs, the vats, the moulds, and fillets, and skimming-dishes) is the seller and the centre figure, standing, in a womanlike way, with her own pencil and book in her hand, being mistrustful of the clerk's accuracy, and womanfully reliant on her own.

"Right," her silence says contentedly; and "Right," and "Right," as her cheeses are put in and weighed, and she gives her best consent to the tally by quietly taking the duplicate note of it, and by doing nothing more. But at a certain moment she demurs.

"A hundred and seventy-five?" she says as a mild question.

"A hundred and seventy-five," reiterates the weigher sturdily, his eyes up to the booth-top, his hands to his sides in flat and purposeful disregard of the imputation.

The woman is somewhat cowed—she is only a woman—she is in the midst of

twenty, thirty, forty cheese-fair folk of all sorts, some of them boys, at the booth-mouth; some farmers and factors eager for their turn; some lifters, draymen, railway-officials, clerks, fellow farm-wives, various lookers-on. She is, mayhap, not so certain of her Table of Compound Weights and Measures as if she had earned honours at Girton; and it comes, amidst such scrutiny and overlooking, as a real hard effort to lift an opposing voice. Yet was it to be expected that the woman in her, the womanly recollection of milk milked, of cream creamed, of curd "come," of "sponge" waited for, and watched, and humoured, could allow her to lose the price of a pound or two of cheese; to lose the grocery she could buy for so much good money; to lose exactly that much of additional honour to her dairy? Not easily. So she blushes, and she stops; she puts out her pencil and points with it to the scales; she resolves, and uses precisely the words she had used before.

"A hundred and seventy-five?" put as a mild question.

"A hundred and seventy-five," reiterates the sturdy weigher sturdily.

And then something, best known to his cheese-fair experiences, something revealing to him the pulse of cheese-fair surroundings, makes him look down from the booth-top to the booth-floor, from the booth-floor to his scales, examine the weights lying in their heavy heap.

"Fifty-six," he says, counting, and putting one aside. "And fifty-six again; and twenty-eight; and fourteen; and fourteen; and four; and one."

"A hundred and seventy-three," put in the woman with a quick breath as he stops.

"Yes, a hundred and seventy-three," cry the bystanders, emphasising their cry with "Certainly, certainly," in resolute tones.

At once a sparkle rushes into the woman's eyes, a flush mounts upon her earnest cheeks, at which the weigher rubs his hat queerly up and down his head; at which a queer smile plays up and down his mouth; and, as the woman is in the glory of triumph, she may be left.

Emerging from the booth, there is capital and pleasant introduction to the other half of this October fair. For this has to be noted: The cheeses that have hitherto been looked at as being bought and sold by the hundredweight, as being pitched from dray to ground, from ground to scale, from scale

to ground, and from ground to dray once more, have been, technically, flat cheeses; cheeses of the ordinary sort; ottoman-shaped; a foot or so across; of the make that could stand this incessant handling and hurl and whirl. But the woman's cheeses had been the delicate Stilton; at the woman's side all the cheeses were the delicate Stilton; the product of small farms in such parts of the country as Thorpe Trussels, Ashby Folville, Whadborough Hill; in such parts, on the "By" side, as Sysonby, Saxelby, Wartnaby, Gaddesby, Rearsby, Rotherby, Shoby, Dalby, Dolby, and many more; and here, amidst these cheeses, amidst those who bring, and those who buy, amidst those who taste, and those who only saunter past, there are features observable of quite another sort. Not men, but women, are the sellers, as a rule. And the cheeses have not been brought in over night under patrol; they have been arriving since five and six o'clock, and they are arriving now, and even yet they are arriving, in little farm-carts, holding, perhaps, a couple of score, and holding also the farm-wives who arrive with them; and here it is in evidence that the farm-wives have purpose in arriving, and hold the situation, and have their way.

"They should coom arle out," says one; and they "arle" are taken out; silently, and without argument or hesitation.

"He waants it at eight and a haalf," says another, with a "haalf" closed eye that shows she is not meaning to let him have it.

"He says I aask too mooch; that they aren't haalf ripe," says a third; whilst the confidante to whom she says it buttresses her up with the comfortable recommendation, "You keep 'em; and keep 'em waarm, and they'll soon ripen, I'm shoo-er."

"I were a-going to aask him to get a bit of bread," cries a fourth, indignant. "He bored into all this haamperful, and into that; and he shouldn't ha' tooched wan or th' oother, if I'd known! It's just that there are some people as never can afford to tooch a bit o' cheese, unless it be at Leicester Fay-er!"

There are the jests of the men with the women; those jests that are far older than the men, or than the women either, or than the ages of both coupled together.

"The bootter o' this has been to market," is one; "Ye cream yer milk," is another; or, "Ye let it stand twelve hours, and then ye draaw for yer cheese from the bottom,

and that ain't the same as creaming, is it?" "Taste it?" is yet another piece of rural wit. "No; tain't good coolour enough for me! Unless I took it with small beer!"

There are the wisacre's remarks containing a host of sage philosophy.

"Ye may have them too dry, and you may have them too wet; ye may have them too old, and ye may have them too green. Soom are good at a moonth old, soom at more. If ye've too mooch wind, it'll crack 'em; if ye've too mooch sun, it'll be nigh as bad, anoother way. They may be too sweet for them as likes 'em sour; they may be too sour for them as likes 'em sweet. If ye force them with too much heat, to get 'em ready for the maarket, ye make yer cheeses bad; if ye put too much salt in 'em, ye make yer cheeses haard. Soom years I may ha' seen moore; some years I may ha' seen less. It's haard to say!"

There are the little bits of talk among the women themselves. They have been up and about early; they may be hours before they effect a sale; and they sit on their cheeses, or on their emptied "haampers;" or on chairs they have knowingly brought — folding-chairs, rocking-chairs, Windsor chairs—or they sit on three-legged stools, or they stand. It is all the same in the matter of talk, which comes in a fluent stream. This belongs perhaps to their agricultural life: "How many acres did he faarm? Only twenty? Why, he moight ha' done well at that!" This belongs to their life as mistresses: "Aah, I've had her three years, and she's in her fourth, and I mean to keep her; for she'll get oop o' mornings, and it ain't every ghell as ye can get oop o' mornings; though in the general roon, ye're right; for if they're bad 'uns, ye may keep 'em, and if they're good 'uns they'll marry straight off!"

There are the broad and general and foreground details; to be noted, severally, from the market stone steps, with the whole of the stirring market-place seen there in one wide view. These are men with double-pronged pitchforks over their shoulders; and men with wide white wooden rakes; they are market-servants to clear the ground of the farm straw, and collect it in a shed near by. These are ladies, buying one Stilton of a farm-wife quietly, and hiring a boy to walk behind them and carry it away. These are men with a Stilton under each arm; are cheese-buyers, finished buying, and putting their cheese-tasters back into what seem to be

spectacle-cases, preparatory to going home; these are men with leather-leggings; men with note-books, writing down their sales; men wheeling hand-trucks full of cheeses, and crying "Way up!" to get a road, with evident relish of the stir; these are men strewing the sold cheese-mounds with straw, till they can be drayed away; these are men pitching down fresh-come cheeses on the well-placed spot from which other cheeses have that instant been removed; these are men in charge of a large tripod scale, weighing small purchases of cheeses, Stilton and flat both, and charging two-pence for the accommodation. Around, and athwart, and in the midst, is the great gilt statue of the county duke; the weighing booths; a few booths with fruit and cakes, cheap fluery and cheap glass; the waggons, carts, trucks, and drays; a blind beggar; a beggar with a wooden leg; some clowns selling whips; some country lasses, striving so much to be in the mode, that they have passed right out of it; some hints of the everyday trade of the town, in boys carrying yarn, in women carrying bundles of stockings they have sewn; some hints of rustic villages enlivened by the fair, by a rustic youth who buys a penny coral necklace gleefully, and takes happy pains to fold it where it is not likely to get lost. And around, and athwart, and in the midst, are the great town clocks tolling noon; and tolling it at different times, too, even as the market-place tells of different times, with the Tudor houses pointing to Bosworth battle-field, and King Dickon sleeping in this city on his way there; and with the school-boys tumbling out of school, almost at the minute, pointing to to-day unmistakably, as they swoop amongst buyers and sellers both, as they draw out their wooden ball-bats to rap at everything, as they bolt at each covered up cheese-mound, burying themselves in the straw of it, or vaulting on it, heels under head.

Finally, there shoots into the mind, in a bright moment, the bright conviction that there has not been an ounce of cheese seen, as cheese is ordinarily seen, in this Cheese Fair at all. It has been an unintermittent contemplation of cheese-rind. In place of the deep smooth facings of amber curd that are familiar; of the fair inviting walls and wedges that are golden, and red, and primrose, and ochre, and cream; bringing appetite and (if legend is true) the digestion that ought to wait upon it; there has been the cold grey ugly cheese-coat, like

clay, like putty, like coarse oatmeal, like tubes of queer dough, like drab tin canisters, like rolls of bran, like sickly-baked loaves. Neither have all the cheeses (Stiltons) been upright and straight. Some might have been clay models of shabby hats, hit on the crown, and sunk. Some might have been sections of collapsed zinc pipes. Some are lop-sided and top-heavy, and bulge-backed; and comic, queer, noddling-looking erections, battered all askew. And so we take our leave of these unfamiliar cheese forms, and of the pleasant old-world Leicester Fair.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

CHAPTER XXXIV. PLEASANT PLACES.

WHEN the two good women who took so deep and practical an interest in the welfare of Helen Rhodes held their final conference about her, Mrs. Masters expressed to Madame Morrison a hope that their protégée might get a chance of marrying. They were both sensible matter-of-fact persons, and if either had been so deficient in knowledge of human nature and experience of life as to regard the state of Helen's mind at that time as one likely to be everlasting, or even durable, the change that had passed over her before Mrs. Masters joined her at Chesney would have corrected the impression. But they took just such a change for granted, and they discussed Helen's future on that basis. Madame Morrison agreed with Mrs. Masters in thinking that a suitable marriage would be the happiest lot for Helen, but she had misgivings, founded on knowledge of her character, that Helen would consider her past history a bar to her acceptance of any other love, no matter how entirely she might reciprocate it. She had studied Helen closely, and discovered a good deal in her which had grown and developed rapidly. Her simplicity was of the frank and generous, not the weak kind, and the resilience natural to her youth was not accompanied by any levity of conscience. When Helen had attained the thorough knowledge of her wrong-doing, she did not dally with conviction and repentance, and the more far-seeing of her two friends felt sure that she would bear all her life what she would take to be the penalty of it. She did not enter into this view of the subject with Mrs. Masters.

It would have been difficult to impart it to her, she had come upon the scene of events too late to understand the whole of their details and bearings, and she was associated with so complete and fortunate a change in Helen's destiny that it was natural she should not quite realise what had been the moulding influence of the past upon the girl's spirit.

"She shall be nominally our children's governess," Mrs. Masters had said, "so that any sense of dependence and obligation should be removed, but neither Colonel Masters nor I will ever regard her otherwise than as an adopted daughter. I can answer for him in this matter with perfect confidence; all that I do will have his entire approval. If I go out to India again—and I may have to go, unless my husband leaves the service, when the children are old enough to go to school—I shall take her with me. She will be certain to marry there."

Madame Morrison repeated this to her niece, and awaited her comment upon it with some curiosity. But Jane shook her head doubtfully and said:

"I do not think Helen will ever marry. She might find a man who would forgive her easily enough, but she will never forgive herself. No, aunt; our pretty Helen will be an old maid; a happy and contented one, please God, but still an old maid."

"I think so too," assented Madame Morrison, "and I am sorry for it, the more so as she will be a poor old maid. However, we will not think of that just now, but of her present happy fortune. There's a good old Irish saying that tells us, 'It is time enough to bid the Devil good-morrow when you meet him.'"

And so her best friends parted with her, and missed her, yet felt happy about her, and settled back into their old ways without her. She wrote frequently to Jane, and her letters were so full of the peace and serenity, the cheerful occupations and the kindly security of her life at Chesney Manor, that it became difficult for Madame Morrison and Jane to realise the painful and mysterious incidents in which she and they had been concerned. The story was only a few months old, and it already seemed like a dream to them. And yet, there had not been an utter lack of the unexpected, either, for Helen's discovery that Mr. Warrender's next neighbour was the brother of Mrs. Townley Gore, and that she and Mr. Townley Gore were

actually staying at Horndean, had been duly communicated to Jane. Helen also told her of the precautions she had taken in consequence, and it was therefore an anxious time for her friends when they were expecting her narrative of the arrival of Mrs. Masters at Chesney Manor, and the subsequent explanation with the Horndean people.

When Helen's letter reached them, it announced the adjournment of that explanation to an indefinite period, and related the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Townley Gore, adding that it was only to announce their immediate departure, and so she had escaped for the present. The prospect for the winter was a delightful one, Helen wrote, and Mr. Warrender said she was an admirable private secretary. She was becoming quite an adept in "making references," and enjoyed very much all the copying she could induce him to let her do; for Mr. Warrender was an author, but that was a secret, and, for all that, she was not a bit afraid of him. Mrs. Masters was very much better, able to drive out, though not yet to walk, and in wonderfully good spirits—considering. The weather was lovely; the children and she had a long walk every morning, when Mr. Warrender went out with them, and that was his little nieces' best lesson-time, for he knew everything, all about the trees, and the animals, the birds, the insects, and the history of the place, and he told them things in such an interesting way. The children were very fond of their uncle. He seemed to have a great deal of business to transact in reference to the estate. Helen had never understood before that there was anything to be done about a fine house and a big place except to enjoy them, but she was learning every day she lived at Chesney Manor. The quick and just perception that had enabled her to apprehend Mrs. Townley Gore's character with correctness which that lady little suspected, was no less quick and just now that it had such opposite employment. The tender and grateful heart that had been so ruthlessly crushed, having risen like strong sweet herbage when the trampling foot was removed, gave out its fragrant strength of love and gratitude.

Jane Merrick was very thoughtful over this particular letter of Helen's. She read it aloud to her aunt, then read it again to herself, folded it up slowly, and said, after a long pause:

"I am trying to remember what Mr.

Warrender is like. I hardly looked at him that day he came here and saw Helen in Miss Smith's wedding finery. How old is he, aunt?"

"About forty, I should think. Perhaps a little more."

"Not at all handsome, is he?"

"Well, no, perhaps not," said Madame Morrison reflectively. "He is one of those rare persons about whom one never thinks whether they are handsome or not—the matter of their looks is so unimportant. I could not describe Mr. Warrender's features, except the bright blue eyes, for I never thought of them; but the impression his face gives of intellectual power, thorough goodness, and serene sweet temper, is very striking. I remember thinking, the first time I saw him, 'That is the most fearless face I ever looked at.'"

"He seems to be a most devoted brother."

"He is indeed, and his sister is much attached to him. She said to me, when she propounded her views about Helen, that her brother was the best man in the world."

"And yet she did not tell him all."

"No; but that was not for her own sake. It was entirely for Helen's. She had not the least fear that if he had known all, he would have opposed her doing what she did."

"I almost wish Mrs. Masters had told him. I think it would have been safer."

"Safer?"

Mrs. Morrison laid her work on her knee, and looked up at Jane in surprise.

"Yes, safer. Helen is in a false position towards Mr. Warrender."

"Yes, to a certain extent; but I cannot see that it matters. And it would have been so very awkward."

"True, true," said Jane. "Perhaps it is all for the best. No doubt Mrs. Masters was the person to decide."

"Certainly, my dear. It would not have become me to offer an objection, even if one had occurred to me."

Here the conversation dropped. But Jane read Helen's letter again that night, and said to herself:

"However awkward it might have made the position, I am sure it would have been safer to tell him."

Time—so happy and so peaceful, that when she looked back at it afterwards its hours seemed to Helen to have been winged—was going by, and the chief

characteristic of life at Chesney Manor would have appeared to outsiders to be a cheerful and occupied monotony. The stranger within the gates had as entirely ceased to be a stranger in her own feelings as her friends could desire, and when she thought of the past, so recent and yet so immeasurably distant, it was with the trustful thankfulness of a creature who after shipwreck is in a safe haven.

Her views of what would constitute happiness, if happiness had indeed that existence in which she once believed, were changed beyond all recognition, and she found herself thinking of herself—she was too young to turn from that unprofitable subject—as having got all her storms over early betimes, and with them also the noontide glory. The evening had come to her very soon and suddenly; but it was clear and tranquil. The pensiveness of her mind was free from sickly melancholy, because she was sincere and unaffected; but the seal of sedateness had been set upon her demeanour by sorrow, and there was no hand to lift it evermore.

Helen was entirely unconscious of the attractiveness of the composed and considerate mien, the low and gentle voice, the soft movements, the smile that came but rarely and broke slowly over the fair candid face, the ready but quiet obligingness, and the unflinching observant care for others in everything, that were all characteristic of herself. From any perception and sense of her own beauty she would shrink with a sharp pang and put them from her with aversion, for was it not that which had betrayed her?

He had cared for that only, and so little and so briefly, and she had taken the foolish feeling for love! Of its ignobleness Helen had not the most distant notion. She had only learned its insufficiency, its futility, and she shunned the idea that she was beautiful, because there was a humiliation in it. That was all the man whom she had loved and trusted, and who had forsaken her, had ever known about her, or cared to know. She remembered this now; she remembered the constant praises that had then sounded so sweet and were now sickening to her memory, and she would avoid the sight of her own face in a looking-glass for days together. This, however, would be when she suffered slight relapses into the malady of introspection; her mood was generally more healthy, her liberty of spirit greater.

And, as if it were her destiny to be placed at the opposite poles of experience, Helen began to stand in some little danger of being spoiled at Chesney Manor.

Mrs. Masters, who had become exceedingly weary of the female companions to whose society she was restricted at Chundrapore, and of whom Mrs. Stephenson was an above-the-average sample, was quite fascinated by her young protégée. It added to the pleasure with which she once more found herself in the ample and luxurious home of her early years, that she could make this girl, who had suffered so much, feel that it offered to her a free, heartfelt, and unembarrassing welcome. She consulted Helen as if she had been a daughter, she occupied herself with her, she delighted in her presence, she made her a resource and a pleasure, and enjoyed to the utmost the satisfaction of having gone far beyond the intentions towards Herbert Rhodes's child with which she had left India. No mother, she flattered herself, would have been more solicitous, more keen-sighted for a daughter than was she for Helen; and yet there was one fact, nearly concerning her, of which Mrs. Masters was entirely unobservant.

This fact was that Mr. Warrender had fallen in love with her beautiful young friend, in as decided and expeditious a manner as if he were not a middle-aged gentleman who had had losses in his time, and outlived them without very grave difficulty.

That his sister should not have found him out was less remarkable than Mr. Warrender considered it to be. She was several years his junior; but so accustomed to regard herself as an old married woman, with all the fancies and the coquetries of life delightfully far away from her, and all its precious bonds and sacred charities close about her, that she classed her brother quite among the elders, and looked upon him, too, as beyond any stormy vicissitudes of feeling. She had never formulated the belief, but she entertained it, that to be her husband's brother-in-law, her own brother, the uncle of Maggie and Maud, and Mr. Warrender of Chesney Manor to boot, was all John ought to desire in this world. And he had got it all; he was a perfectly happy, and contented man.

Of his one love-story she had not known much; it had been told after her marriage and during her absence from England. It was a very simple story; there are hundreds like it happening every year.

Mr. Warrender had lost his betrothed by the English plague—consumption. The girl was marked down by the fell disease before he had ever seen her; she died a few weeks before the time fixed for their marriage; he had passed several months in hopeless attendance upon her, while she had never ceased to hope, and to assure him that she should soon be quite well.

He had borne it all very quietly, and having narrated it simply to his absent sister, had henceforth held his peace and gone his way, for a long time wearily, but always bravely and well. The story was an old one; the grave in Notley churchyard had been kept green for ten years when Helen Rhodes came to Chesney Manor, and Mr. Warrender had not in the interval been known to be more than politely conscious of the existence of any woman.

We have seen how Mrs. Townley Gore regarded such indifference; to his sister it appeared the most natural state of things, especially as she was not included in its conditions. That it ceased to exist surprisingly soon after the accidental intrusion of Mr. Warrender upon the "rehearsal" in Madame Morrison's show-room, and was speedily replaced by a love as true and devoted as ever woman won, for the girl whom his sister had befriended, she had not the least suspicion.

Her brother's "ways" were those of a thoroughly domestic man; he was with herself and Helen at all times when he was not imperatively obliged to attend to some business elsewhere; he was evidently happy in their society, and never "put out" by the children. Chesney Manor was certainly not a lively place of sojourn, but he never seemed to want to go away from it, and his attention to the two ladies surpassed that which might be expected from a model brother and host by the most sanguine. That these were symptoms never occurred to Mrs. Masters; she had always known her brother to be the kindest, the gentlest, the bravest of men, but she had been long unfamiliar with his habits, and saw nothing to wonder at in his home-loving ways. Formerly there were only his books for him to care about, now there were herself and the children, and Helen. He was so happy with them all that she could not bear to allude to that possible prospect of her returning to India, and taking Helen with her.

And Helen; was she, as the wintry days

crept on, and the pleasant prospect of congenial society and favourite occupations realised itself, equally unconscious of the feelings with which Mr. Warrender regarded her? Did she suspect that he loved her, with a love that the noblest of women might have been proud to win, and which, could she but have held herself free to accept it, would have made her enviable among the happiest? Had she any notion that this accomplished scholar, this man of weight and importance in the land, this unknown poet, this perfect gentleman, was torn and tossed with conflicting hope and fear which had her for their object. The hope that he might win her bright beauty and her innocent girlish heart; the fear that in her eyes he could never be other than a grave elderly man, a kind protector, to be regarded with grateful and respectful liking, which would be intolerable to him; a stone on which his teeth should be broken, while he was craving for the bread of life?

As the wintry days crept on, Helen began to dread that something was coming to trouble her new-found peace, to disturb the lines that had been laid in such pleasant places. She would not have been, at that stage of her life, capable of understanding the full meaning of being loved by such a man as Mr. Warrender, but she had listened to words and received looks of love, and no woman to whom those have come can fail to recognise the feeling that they interpret even before it has taken their form. She recognised it, with profound amazement, with a wild attempt at incredulity, and with a deep-seated, despairing dread. Was she a creature accursed of fate, that she should bring misery to those whom she loved, and who had so nobly befriended her? It was no impulse of vanity that moved her to this desolate cry of the soul; she knew that love unrequited, love disappointed, however unworthy the object, or wasted the passion, means suffering that seems, for the time at least, to be unbearable. That such a man as he whose life and character she had been studying with the delight that might have been inspired by a revelation, should love her, was simply amazing, but she did not dwell on this, she thought only that he would have to suffer through her agency. When he should know the truth about her, what pain he would have to undergo! Helen did not wonder at all at her own keensightedness, nor did she trifle with the serious thoughts which her discovery

brought with it by any sentimental rebuking of herself for presumptuous fancy; she was too sincere for that. However great the wonder that Mr. Warrender should love her, she knew he did, and that was the fact which she had to deal with. It changed the whole aspect of her life, it destroyed her peace, disturbed her security, endangered the recently formed relations that were so precious to her; in every rational sense it was a terrible evil, and yet—she fought with herself, she blushed for herself, but down-deep in her heart there was exultation. In vain she reminded herself that when he should know the truth about her he would cease to love her, that he was cherishing a delusion and would renounce when he detected it; she did not believe her own argument; something—it was not hope; that had no place with her—told her that he would love her still.

And then, amid all the confusion, the apprehension, and the misery that had suddenly arisen and encircled her with a bewildering cloud, Helen knew one thing quite clearly, and knew that the strength of its consolation could never fail; that she was happy because he loved her, happy in spite of everything, notwithstanding the inevitable parting that awaited her, happy let what might come. What was she to do? Must she wait until he had spoken the words to her that would force her to separate herself for ever from him, and the home that was so dear to her, or were there any means by which she might avert that blow? Could she venture to anticipate it, and entreat Mrs. Masters to tell all the truth concerning her to Mr. Warrender.

Helen's ignorance of the world, and her natural simplicity, rendered her, happily for herself, unconscious of the many-sided objections which might fairly be raised against the step which something subtler and stronger than reason told her Mr. Warrender contemplated, and therefore, none of the misgivings that would have beset a more worldly-wise person came to turn her from contemplating this course. Mrs. Masters was to her all that she had imagined a mother might be; she would certainly have taken such a trouble as this to her own mother; she would take it to Mrs. Masters. And, when Mr. Warrender should have learned from his sister that love and marriage were closed chapters in the story of Helen's life, he would forgive her the pain she had made him suffer, and they

should be friends—in so far as with her insignificance she could be the friend of so great-souled a man—always. Thus did Helen, with the beautiful facility and pertinacity of youth in finding a way out of its difficulties without paying the toll, arrange a solution which merely lacked, to render it possible, the taking into account of human nature.

It was after one of the morning walks, in which Mr. Warrender joined the children and their governess, that Helen had found herself face to face with this new trouble.

Christmas was near; the weather was bright and frosty; the great logs burned briskly with a pleasant crackling sound on the wide hearth of the library; the spacious room looked very comfortable in the winter evenings. When the little party of three occupied it. On the evening of that same day, Mrs. Masters being called away by the nurse, Helen found herself again tête-à-tête with Mr. Warrender, and, with a novel sense of nervousness and confusion, she began to talk of the book she had been reading. It was on the subject of popular superstitions, and Mr. Warrender took it up and read a page or two.

"It must be difficult to avoid unlucky incidents in some countries, according to their notions," said Mr. Warrender; "and betrothed lovers should be provided with a pocket code for their instruction. I see they must not exchange gifts of knives, scissors, hair, or prayer-books; a bridegroom must not see his bride's wedding-gown before she wears it at the altar, and a bride must not have the wedding-ring in her possession beforehand. And here are cautions for mere aspirants: an unbetrothed girl who puts on the wedding-veil of a bride will never be married; a betrothed girl who puts on the cap of a new-made widow will be a widow herself. How absurd!"

He threw down the book and looked at Helen. The trouble in her face struck him, and at the same instant he remembered how he had seen her first, and knew that she too remembered it.

With a desperate effort Helen seized the chance that had offered itself.

"The omen will not be belied by me,"

she said; "the first time I ever saw you I wore the wedding-veil of a bride, and I shall most certainly never be married."

"Helen! What do you mean! Is this——"

She put up her hand imploringly and stopped him.

"Do not ask me any questions, Mr. Warrender; and never, never let us speak of this again. You are so good to me, I am glad you should know I have had a disappointment, and I shall never be the wife of any man."

"You—so young!" His voice was almost inarticulate.

"Yes, I was very young. But it is so; and——" She was unable to say more, and fell back in her chair, covering her face and trembling.

Very quietly he approached her, and drew down her hands, holding them firmly while he spoke:

"I know why you have told me this, and it was nobly done. Have no fear, either for yourself or me."

He dropped her hands and resumed his seat as Mrs. Masters re-entered the room.

"There's nothing really wrong with Maggie," she said gaily, "and I have brought you some news. Look up from your books, both of you. There's a wedding afoot!"

"Indeed," said Mr. Warrender. "Whose? Nurse's, perhaps."

"Mr. Horndean's. I wonder how Mrs. Townley Gore will like it? It seems that Mr. Horndean is going to marry a Miss Chevenix, a great beauty by all accounts. She was down here in September, and caused quite a sensation."

"I have seen Miss Chevenix," said Helen; "she is a great favourite with Mrs. Townley Gore."

"Did you like her? Is she nice?"

"I should not have dared to like her; she did not take any notice of me. She is very beautiful."

"When are they to be married?" asked Mr. Warrender.

"Shortly after Christmas; and they are coming direct to Horndean. I heard all the news from nurse, who heard it from Dixon, who heard it at the post-office."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER II. THE FIRST DAYS.

THAT inn-door at which the cab stopped was no common inn-door. For well nigh the first time in her life she felt something to seem just what it really was. She knew it to be the gate of the real world, outside which she had stood and waited so long for something to happen. That she believed the real world to be a reflection of cheap romance, has nothing to do with the matter; the door was not the less a real door for happening to lead into nothing better than a common coffee-room, instead of among people whom one could tell at a glance to be heroes and heroines.

How her father managed to disarm the natural curiosity of the manager of the hotel as to the sudden arrival of a young woman, not too well dressed, and with no luggage worth mentioning, was a detail of business that did not come in her way. She had been running out of one mood into another for hours past; and her present mood was that, although it was of course a proud delight to have turned out a real lady, even without the additional salt of a title, still that it would be a relief to wake up and find herself in her own bed at home. Home had never felt like home before. Happily, for her self-respect, she never guessed the real cause of this new experience. She had eaten nothing to speak of since breakfast, and had come away without her tea.

In one thing, however, men, however stupid they may be in general, are seldom quite so stupid as to forget that women

cannot live by tea alone. He himself, late as it now was, had not dined, and was perfectly able to see a ghost now and then without losing his appetite. It seemed to Phoebe that the meal was a gorgeous banquet—as indeed it was, after those slipshod meals of home, for which she had herself been only too answerable. It made her feel shy; but even shyness failed to conquer healthy hunger. Her father seemed shy too: but she was too tired out with noticing things to notice any more, and the meal passed in silence, that did not prove the usual awkward burden. In short, Phoebe ate a very good dinner, and felt very much better when she had done. I would have said so at once; but it is not a nice thing to say of a professed heroine, who, at such an accusation, must have felt compelled to lay down her knife and fork and go to bed hungry. For here was she, eating with a good appetite, though she scarcely yet knew her own name; though she was torn from the home of her childhood; and though her lover must, if he had the heart to smoke at all, be smoking the cigarette of suspense and anxiety too terrible to be borne.

"I suppose," said her father at last, "you must be wanting to know what sort of a life ours is to be. I hear you have made no friends or connections of your own—that's well; better than I could have hoped for. What your, what people call education has been, I don't care a straw. The less a woman, or a man, has of that stuff, the better for her and him. Nor do I care another straw whether you're a good house-keeper. I want a daughter; neither a cook nor a chambermaid. I don't care for many comforts; and those I want I can hire or buy. I'm going to take lodgings

while I look out for a house. I've made up my mind to take a house somewhere in London; for I sha'n't go back to India, and one can sleep better in London than anywhere in the world, and be less bothered with people. Of course you won't want balls and parties, or any of that nonsense, as you've never been used to them; and I'm glad to say I've got no more acquaintances than you. I think—I hope, Phœbe, we shall get on very well. Only one thing you must promise me. If any of the Nelsons try to communicate with you, in any sort of way, or see you, or if you see them, let me know it instantly."

Her latest mood, thanks to satisfied hunger, had been almost rose-coloured. But a blank fell over the tint of promise at the words which opened out such a vista of nothingness to a girl of quick instincts if of nothing more. What was the good of suddenly finding herself something like what she had always expected if she was to make no friends and never go to a ball? That was not life—so much of the truth even her romances had been able to teach her. Why, when she used to picture herself as a princess, it had always been as a brilliant dancing princess, with partners sighing round her; never as a royal nun. She might just as well have been left alone with her bay-tree.

"Yes," she said doubtfully. "No, I have never seen a ball."

"And you mean to say you would like to?" asked her father, with a rather quick frown considering his slow and heavy ways.

It frightened her for a moment, for it reminded her of Phil, also slow and heavy, and with uncomfortable views about the lives of girls.

"Oh no, I don't mean that, of course," she said weakly; "only what am I to do with myself all day long?"

"Do with yourself?" he asked, a little puzzled; "oh, there's always something to do. What have you always done? Come, I ought to know something about my own daughter."

"Nothing; I've never done anything," said she, with a slight flush, however; for was it nothing to have engaged herself only yesterday to Stanislas Adrianski? "I mean, only darned the boys' stockings, and walked in the garden, and got breakfast and tea."

"Nothing more?"

"Nothing, only I've read a great deal."

"Oh, then you have read, have you;

and what books? I shouldn't have thought the admiral kept much of a library."

"No, but they kept one just round the corner. I've read all the books they've got, nearly. I've read Lady Ethylene, and Denzil Wargrave; or, the Mystery of Mordred Mill, and Thad——"

She stopped; that ground was too near the estate in her heart of Stanislas Adrianski.

"I mean——"

"Thaddeus of Warsaw. Well?"

"And The Haunted Grange, one of the best of all."

But she stopped again, and not unwillingly, for this uncomfortable father of hers was listening no more. And she would have been amazed indeed could she have seen into his mind just then, and read there that this big, stern, cold man, who talked as a matter of course of shutting up his only child in a hopeless nunnery of one, had himself written that thrilling, nay, gushing, romance of The Haunted Grange, by way of desperate hack-work, in a garret, for not quite a farthing a line.

"You—has any living creature read The Haunted Grange?" asked he. "Then you have read the most idiotic drivel that ever was penned. And I suppose the others are much the same. Well, we can change that, anyhow. I'm glad I know."

Doyle, as he smoked his last cheroot of the day in refreshing solitude, could not, somehow, manage to congratulate himself thus far on the prospects of the results of his impulse to adopt a daughter. He did not regret the first step of the experiment, but he felt he had played his part ill, and that Phœbe required a little more educating than he expected to become his daughter indeed. Of selfishness in the matter he had no consciousness at all. A sense of duty, as usual, served as a cloak for all other things. And yet, even as things were, he might have found cause to tell himself that he had really done—for himself, at least—well. He had somebody else to think of, and to think of somebody else with discomfort and misgiving was something to the man who had never had anybody but himself to think of since his ghost was laid. Before he slept that ghost came back to him once more.

As for Phœbe, she fell asleep at once, and dreamed neither of father nor of lover. She dreamed of nothing at all. And so ended her first day as Jack Doyle's daughter.

It is lucky that strong impulses mean

blindness to details, or they would never be followed. Whatever the temptation might have been, it is impossible to imagine for an instant that a man to whom women had become creatures of another world would have dared to face the sight of the unknown world, through which he must travel in order that he might give her the outward varnish of her new position. If possible, he knew even less of her outer requirements than of her inner needs, though of course he had a general idea that, leaving home in such a hurry, she must want a good many things. After turning the matter over in his mind, he could only come to the conclusion that she must get them for herself, and that all he could expect himself to do was to pay. And he had got into the habit of not being fond of paying, and called to mind the terrible stories he had heard, and maybe known of at second hand, out in India, of milliners' bills.

"If I knew of only one woman with daughters, I declare I'd eat my own principles, and ask her to help me," thought he. "I suppose Mrs. Urquhart isn't worse than other men's wives; and she'd be priceless just now. She'd combine experience with economy. I wonder if she'd show me the door again, if I let her know I'm not the poor devil she took me for, with designs on her husband's purse and morals. However, it's too late for Mrs. Urquhart now. I wonder if men think of the chances of daughters when they marry. Not, I should say."

The result was that Phoebe, who had hitherto been clothed like the lilies, in so far as she did not know how, but very unlike them in the matters of taste and sufficiency, found herself under general orders to go to any shop she liked, and to buy whatever she wanted in the way of bonnets and gowns (so he profanely called what women wear), and all toilette trappings, so long as she left jewellery alone. He knew he was running a terrible financial risk, but his ignorance was too profound for giving her any sort of advice with detail, and he could only comfort himself with the reflection, "In for a penny, in for a pound—she'd better get her whole outfit ones for all, and have done." But he need not have been afraid. With all the best will to clothe herself gorgeously, Phoebe felt like a little boy who, for the first time in his life, is taken into a pastrycook's by some really generous patron, and ordered: "There—eat as much as you can of

everything you like that you see." The difficulty is not in want of appetite, but in knowing how and where to begin; so that he becomes credited with a temperance and modesty beyond his years and nature. Phoebe's one practical idea was the draper's where she had been in the habit of dealing, and of leaving anybody who liked—who had liked had been poor Phil's secret—to pay. But she knew that the draper's shop would not do any more, and yet could not think of grander shops without an almost religious awe. She had often looked through windows, but with no more thought of entering, even in her dreams, than of writing one of the books in which she read of the people whom she saw going in. This was a reality; and it therefore found her unprepared.

"Do you mean I must go—all by myself?" she asked. "I—I don't know these streets; and I don't know what people buy—you know we have always been very poor."

"And so you don't want much? All the better. Yes, shopping must be a nuisance; but I suppose it has got to be done. By the way, though, I have an idea. We'll find some big place together, and I'll put you altogether into the hands of some head woman there, and ask her to do for you. She won't ask questions, and if she does, we needn't answer them. Everybody will see I'm from India, and they'll take for granted you've come from there too, and everybody here fancies that anything odd is natural in an Indian. We'll do that first, and then go on a house hunt. So be ready in half an hour."

Doyle must really have had a long purse, considering the manner in which, when he fairly faced them, he managed to make the smaller wheels of life go as if they were well oiled. At first Phoebe had really no time to feel herself alone, or the hours empty, seeing how well the lady who undertook to do for her professionally contrived to fill them. What the latter thought is no matter. Middle-aged gentlemen do now and then have daughters whose outfit for life, owing to various circumstances, has been too long neglected, and who show signs of having had a mother of social position inferior to the father's. And, for that matter, Phoebe, in spite of every adverse circumstance, had not acquired any of the tricks of speech or manner, by which a modiste knows better than anyone else to distinguish a "young person" from a lady. There was more

about Phoebe than her face that went towards fitting her for the stage.

Phoebe had even failed to find the time for writing that note to Stanislas, and the duty kept putting it off so constantly, and the period of neglect had grown to seem so much longer than it really was, that it became, daily, doubly difficult to do. When she had been dressing, and her father house-hunting, for a week that seemed as full as ten, she had reached the stage when something that has been delayed so long, can just as well be delayed another day without signifying. She did once write half the note, but she could not please herself, and tore it up again, carefully burning the remains in a candle. The fragment had been disgracefully cold; and so perhaps she thought it wanted warming.

Though father and daughter were as far from knowing one another as ever, still they had become better acquaintances, if not better friends. When shyness sinks very deep, it often becomes invisible. Neither had got what he or she had wanted. But Phoebe was too busy to miss anything as yet, and had her entanglement on her mind, and Doyle thought himself engaged in a study of the character which he had determined, now that he had apparently given up all other business, to form. So one day, when the dressing business was nearly over, he said:

"I don't know what sort of things you like best yet, Phoebe. It can't be books, because nobody could care for that trash, you told me of, except born fools. You've never learned a note of music, thank goodness, and I can't make out that you've got any tastes at all. I want your life to be happy. If you could do just what you liked for a week, what would it be? Never mind what it is, only tell me honestly, whatever it might be."

She had ceased to stare at any of his questions by this time; and she had also learned that he was not to be denied a really full and honest answer. And, for once, about a full and honest answer, there happened to be no difficulty at all.

"I have never been to a theatre in my life," she said; "and I should like to see a real play, more than anything in the world."

"A play!" He started; it was the last thing he looked for. And Stella had been the last actress he had seen on the stage! "What on earth can have put that into your head, Phoebe? A play?"

"Oughtn't I to want to see a play? I

thought the greatest ladies went to plays, and I've always thought it would be so grand and beautiful to see all the things one thinks of, to see them with one's very eyes. It would be like living in a book—not like reading one."

She did not often have the chance of speaking her mind out, and she was apt to lose the chance when it came. But she did not lose it now. She had always felt a dumb hunger for every sort of dreamland in which her eyes and ears might out-do her fancy; and the prospect of real life seemed likely to prove so woefully inferior to printed dreams that her hunger had been growing for living ones.

He did not notice how unlike her usual words her last were. For once there was something like a point in them, and more than merely reflected feeling.

"A play," said he again. "No," he thought, "I have not lived so long in my own way to change it now, which means—which means I am a coward and a weak fool, who has not outlived and forgotten, and am afraid of finding out what an impostor I am. That will never do. . . . I have forgotten, and I am not afraid. What have I taken this poor child into my life for but to begin a new life, as if the past had never been? As long as I dare not face one least single memory, I have not conquered; and conquer I will. It sha'n't be put on my tombstone, 'Here lies a man who was such a fool that he couldn't forget a girl, and who was afraid to go to a play for fear he should see the ghost of her ghost there.' I ought, by rights, to avoid the play of life, because she was a living woman once upon a time. . . . Phoebe, I will—I mean you shall—see a play."

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

A WOMAN'S KNIFE.

FROM time to time, for a dozen years past, I have made a desultory hunt for this souvenir of my Bornean travels. Upon such occasions I nearly always found some forgotten object which distracted me; but the knife, so well remembered, would not appear. Its haft was a slender rod of ebony, curved back to fit the bended wrist, as is the lazy, graceful fashion of hand-tools in the East. The length was six inches, and five silver bands encircled the polished wood, which at either end was fitted with a socket of repoussé work in silver. The blade, two inches long, broad

at the base, tapered sharply to a needle-point; the cross-markings discernible at the wider end, showed it had been hammered from a fragment of English file. The exportation of such instruments from Sheffield must have roused curiosity sometimes amongst our more thoughtful manufacturers, for it is greater by a thousand-fold than would be required for the legitimate uses to which a file is put. The fact is that people in that stage of barbarism where a man's life daily hangs upon the excellence of his weapon, entertain a wise contempt for our swords and knives. They buy them as tools, cheap if not lasting. They buy them also as "material" partly finished, to be re-manufactured. But files are the only steel goods which they work up directly, and the only iron goods are the ribands of metal which surround bales of cloth. But this is a digression that would lead me into a discourse on the hardware trade.

A few days ago, upon the top of a book-shelf, I found a roll of ancient bills and odd documents connected with my Mexican wanderings; wrapped up in the midst of them was my long-lost knife, very rusty and tarnished.

It was given me by a woman of Kuching, from whom I bought a kain bandhara of Siamese silk that would actually stand upright, so solid was it, and so thick with gold. The thing cost forty dollars, less than the value of the bullion, I should think, but the vendor agreed to sell me another, which she was wearing at the time, for twenty-four. I remember very well the design of that: a Malay tartan, the large squares black, embroidered profusely in silver, with lines of various breadth and tone of red upon a silver ground. Of this bargain, however, she repented, and one day, when I sent my servant to demand the article, she forwarded the knife as a peace-offering.

This woman lived in a neat house of the Chinese bazaar, close by the fort. Photographs given me by the present rajah display the change that has taken place in this neighbourhood, where not a beam nor a tile remains to show what the most prosperous quarter of the capital was like eighteen years since, so greatly is it improved. The dwelling she inhabited had a wide verandah looking on the street, where she sat all day. They called her Dayang Something or other; let us say, Dayang Sirik.

Two or three years before, she had

arrived in Sarawak from Brunei, possessed of means to live in comfort, and many fine robes, articles of jewellery, and knick-knacks. The police thought it necessary to investigate her rather mysterious existence, and they ascertained the facts here set down. My memory is doubtless inaccurate upon many points of detail, but I can trust it in regard to the main events. They give a horrid picture of the state of things that ruled in Brunei twenty-five or thirty years ago, but I should be not less surprised than glad to credit that it no longer represents the truth. In speaking of the habits of the late sultan, and the condition of his palace, I scarcely expect to find belief, but nothing is stated for which published evidence and official reports do not give warrant.

A certain pangeran of Brunei, passing through one of his dependent villages, saw a Murut girl whom he fancied. She belonged to a family of some position, and the chief thought it prudent to use honest means. His suit was accepted, of course, but the girl did not like to quit her home, and the lover did not insist. Upon an understood condition that the bride should live with her father, the wedding took place. In course of time a daughter was born, and shortly afterwards came a summons for mother and child from the husband at Brunei. Suspecting an evil design, the father refused to let them go, pleading the stipulation mentioned. Upon this arrived a body of truculent retainers from the capital, breathing flames and slaughter. A marriage portion had been paid for the girl, of course, and this the father offered to return, if he were allowed to keep his child; then he offered to double it; and finally the husband condescended to withdraw his servants and dissolve the marriage, on receipt of three times the money he had paid.

The luckless Murut woman considered herself free once more, divorced by her scoundrel lord. After a time she accepted a suitor, perhaps a first love, amongst her own people, and they were married. When this news reached Brunei, the pangeran was furious. He swore to have the life of everyone concerned in such an insult to his noble blood, and started immediately for the village. Warned in time, father and daughter escaped, but the husband was captured, tied to a tree, and stabbed by the chief himself. It has been said that the family was not altogether inconsiderable. They appealed to the sultan for vengeance,

and for the restitution of their property sacked by the Brunei swashbucklers. The noble was summoned to justify his proceedings. Arguing by the Cheri, or sacred law, he denied that a payment of money could release a wife from the marriage bond; it was only a solatium for the loss of her society at his town house. What he had done therefore was a legitimate vindication of outraged honour. The sultan did not agree, and the chief imam condemned such an interpretation of the law. It was solemnly pronounced that the pangeran had behaved very badly. And there the matter ended.

Meantime the wife and daughter had fallen into their enemy's hands, and had been placed among his household slaves. After a while, a second daughter was born, the offspring of the murdered husband. It occurred to the noble that a present might restore him into favour with the sultan, and one day he despatched the mother and her two babies to the palace, as a tribute to the offended sovereign. I do not know whether it mollified his temper, but he accepted it. The children grew up amongst the palace slaves, but the elder being of noble blood, was treated with more consideration than others. In course of time she attracted the sultan's notice, and was promoted.

A certain change came over the fortunes of the family in consequence. The younger girl, Sirik, was appointed attendant to her sister, and the mother was freed. She left the palace, and took up her quarters in the city, living I know not how. Perhaps her Murut relations supported her; upon what secret fund of Providence do thousands of such as she sustain a respectable appearance in the thrifless tropic lands!

The harem of the Brunei sultan is no splendid abode. It reminds one rather of a barn than of Haroun Alraschid's palace. In a building some seventy feet by forty, fourscore women live—wives, concubines, and slaves. I do not know that any white person has beheld the inside of it, for his majesty carries jealous care to the verge of hypochondria. Besides, very, very few European ladies have visited his capital. Report says that the half-dozen favourites are lodged comfortably enough, and they certainly possess fine jewels and clothes. But those less favoured have a miserable existence. Their daily ration of the coarsest food is barely equal to sustaining life, and for garments they receive one set of clothes a year. Those who belong to

families at their ease may get an allowance. Others, who possess some influence with their lord, turn it to profit. But such as have neither friends nor favour, are not unlikely to pine in slow starvation.

Under such circumstances it will be credited that intrigue is busy at the palace. Malay women are at least as fond of dress and show as their sisters. Putting aside the prosaic question of securing a good meal every day, inmates of a royal harem who receive but one set of clothes a year—and those of cotton or cheapest silk—will always be plotting to get finery and cash. The house is old, constantly needing repair, and the sultan will not allow even a carpenter to go inside it. I should speak in the past tense, for of the reigning sultan, his habits and character, I know nothing. The old monarch handled tools himself, assisted by the female slaves. It was very foolish and short-sighted policy. For what these amateur carpenters secured, they knew how to loose again. Bitter and murderous enmities rose in the palace, but every soul was leagued against the master. Secure in the ready help even of foes, the royal women escaped at pleasure, and stayed abroad for days. As the building stands on posts above the water, a board quietly removed gave exit to these amphibious nymphs. The canoe in waiting lay unnoticed under a convenient shadow, and a few noiseless strokes carried them to liberty.

To return was easier still. Even a favourite, by choosing her time, might reasonably hope that an absence of some days would be kept secret from his majesty; much more one of the rank and file. It was proved in a great murder case that the daughters of the prime minister, married to the sultan, took a month's holiday once without his knowledge.

The whole life of these miserable prisoners was made up of intrigues, twisted, complicated, worked, and moulded one into another; intrigues of love, of jealous hatred, of court favour, of public and private fraud, of family and trade. They had no other interest or amusement; some, as we have seen, must intrigue to live. That they should love or respect their master was absurd. Those who treat women as animals will find themselves treated as animals are.

There was a young noble about the court, famed for his good looks, his recklessness,

and his wealth; we may call him Pangeran Momein. The ladies of Brunei were satisfied that male fascination concentrated in this youth, who seems to have been a rake as finished as the most civilised realm could show. At the time I speak of, he had lately introduced to the capital a brother, Pangeran Budruddin, who had passed his early years among the Lanuns of Tampasuk. Possibly his mother came from thence; I do not know. Earth does not contain a race more fiendish in its public acts than the Lanuns, and those of Tampasuk are worst of all, having more wrongs, as they consider, to avenge upon humanity. But these pirates have virtues at home well fitted to counteract the hereditary tendencies of a young Brunei noble. In their own village they show none of that ferocity which impels them like homicidal madness on the sea. Dignified, good-tempered, forbearing towards each other and towards their slaves, they reverence the sanctity of home. Perfectly truthful they are, to the point that a man will not only die rather than tell a falsehood; he will commit suicide for shame if induced by a moment's weakness so to err. They are generous, and deeply imbued with the spirit of the motto, noblesse oblige; the noblesse being simply Lanun blood. Though gay of mood and enterprising, they respect woman, putting her upon a footing which she occupies, I think, amongst no other people of the Far East. And she recognises that equality by taking share in all their interests and concerns. Not unfrequently a whole ship's company of freeborn girls used to cruise with their male kin in search of booty and adventure. The practice is abandoned now, as I have been informed, simply because the activity of European cruisers forbid such large vessels to be used as formerly, and the girls do not like to go in small numbers together. We might be sure, if there were not terrible evidence to hand, that these "shield-maidens," as our forefathers called such bands, were not the last at fray or plunder. To their male comrades they were sacred, regarded somewhat as our nuns by zealous Catholics. In short, the existence, the ideas, of the Lanuns, at home and abroad, are singularly like in all respects to those of our own Vikings ten centuries ago.

Pangeran Budruddin was educated amongst this manly but misguided people. At twenty years old or so he came to Brunei. Momein hastened to civilise him after the court model, but his efforts were

not appreciated. Budruddin could not feel interest in the commonplace intrigues, the struggle for favours, the oppression of helpless peasantry, which made up his brother's enjoyments. He had the Lanun ideal of woman, which I would not have the reader exaggerate, but which, at least, is very different from the Brunei. Accustomed to rajahs and chiefs, who are true leaders of men—or the Lanuns would not follow them, but swiftly run them through—he declared the Iang de per Tuan himself, the blessed sultan, a doddering old fool. Of course, this young noble did not think Momein's pleasures wrong, but they bored him.

It may be supposed that a youth of such a stamp, brother to the famed Lothario, good-looking, I imagine, certainly of strong character, did not fail to attract the eye of Brunei ladies. But he fell in love with none until malignant planets led him across the path of Dayang Madih, as I name the elder of the sultan's slaves. It was at the end of Ramazan, when his majesty, in full state, visits the tombs of his forefathers. On this occasion the dames of the harem get their new clothes. About a dozen, closely veiled, wait upon their master, sitting beneath the shadow of a yellow awning in the stern of the royal prau.

Water pageants are always effective, even in the dull and colourless occidant. Our own muddy Thames roused poets' enthusiasm and painters' ambition so long as the gala business of the capital was transacted "betwixt bridges."

Brunei is a wooden Venice, immeasurably finer in all natural aspects and effects, as more brilliant and stirring in its population. I need scarcely say that monuments and public buildings do not exist. Two large mosques there are, as ugly and as mean as they could be, and scores of fanes (djamis) like pot-works of the most miserable sort. But the lofty dwellings of the nobility crowd every stretch of shallow water, and each is a study, from the banners streaming on its roof to the gaunt piles that uphold it, prismatic with ooze and shell. The balconies, hung with brilliant cloths and silks, are filled with an eager, clamorous, motley throng. Clustered here stands the harem of a chief, white-veiled, but robed in hues of sombre richness which glow and flash with gold. They laugh and chatter in unceasing motion, passing their siri-boxes from hand to hand, smoking cigarettes of maize-

straw. There crowd the slaves, half-naked, a sheeny mass of yellow skin, topped by the gay head handkerchiefs, and skirted by the tasteful, sombre plaid of sarongs.

The water bears a thousand boats, crushing and jostling at points of vantage, scudding swiftly to and fro. Larger praus, belonging to pangerans not authorised to accompany the monarch, are decked with pennons, and their crews wear livery. Others, bearing rich merchants and sea captains, dare mount no flag, nor put their men in uniform; but they try to hide this deficiency by decking their wives and their own persons with extra splendour.

It is a daily marvel how the bankrupt state contrives to furnish such a show. Public and private revenues have been diminishing this century past with ever-increased speed, under a system of government compared with which that of Turkey is a model. But we have learned in other climes that solvency is not the condition which oftenest breeds extravagance.

In the procession itself, beside the sultan and his household, all the ministers and high officials take their part. It may be interesting to enumerate some of these, for the order of things at this capital is not less strange than excellent in theory. But I must again recall that my information dates back eighteen years. Matters had gone there unchanged for something like four centuries; but the world travels quickly nowadays, and it is possible, though improbable, that Brunei has moved.

First came the sultan's barge, streaming with flags of yellow silk, urged by fifty paddles, to the clang of gongs and beat of tomtoms. All the crew were dressed in yellow. On a platform amidships, under a great yellow umbrella, sat his majesty, in a long yellow coat of richest China silk, white satin trousers, stiff with gold almost to the knee, and head-kerchief glittering with gold-lace. His officials, gracefully robed, lay about him, not cross-legged, but kneeling with their hams upon their heels, or reclining on one hip. At the stern of the vessel, under a yellow awning, sat the wives and women. The next prau, almost as large, was that of the Datu Bandhara, minister of state for home affairs, whose flags, liveries, and umbrellas are white. Following came the Datu Degadong, chancellor of the exchequer, whose colour is black. The Datu Pamancha succeeded, in green; he is chief functionary of civil law. Then came the Datu Tomangong, war minister, all red.

These are the four grand officers of state, whose colours are attached to their respective dignities. But the sixth prau belonged to a plebeian personage, more important than they—the Orang Kaya Degadong, chief of the "tribunes of the people." Every quarter of the city elects a representative to uphold its interests with the paramount authority. Every quarter, I should add, is inhabited by a separate guild. These, in their turn, elect a head, who is invariably a man of talent and resolution. It results from the system of choice that the Orang Kaya Degadong is, in effect, that person in whom the majority of Borneans put most confidence, and this is so well recognised that the sovereign and the nobles dare not oppose his will, so long as the people stand by him. They may cajole, and they may sometimes murder, but they cannot resist.

Following the Orang Kaya was the Datu Shahbandhar, minister of commerce, whose duty it is, amongst other things, to look after foreigners and strangers. The Tuaha, the tribunes mentioned, filled several smaller praus, mixed up with inferior nobles, whose jealousy of precedence made the tail of the procession rather a jostle and a scramble. Everyone of aristocratic birth may fly a banner, but must not use colours devoted to the chiefs.

Pangeran Momein was one of the eight secretaries attached officially to the Datu Bandhara, entitled to seats in his barge, where he had obtained a place for Budruddin. It was in the bow, and as the vessels followed close, going and returning, the young man stood, only a few feet distance from the royal ladies. Many eyes invited him, no doubt, to rash attempts; many roguish words were uttered for his hearing. But he saw only Madih, who sat nearest. With a coquetry perhaps innocent, universal certainly wherever it may be practised without too much risk, the girl had shown her face for one second when she marked a handsome young noble observing her. The sudden gleam of admiration in his eyes flattered but rather alarmed her. Though an inmate of that evil palace since babyhood, Madih had borne no part in its iniquities. I do not mean to represent her as a miracle of virtue—a condition whereof she knew no more, by experience of life, than the mere name. But he who travels open-eyed in countries where passion is more frank of speech, and less controlled by habit, must learn that there are natures which cling to

purity by instinct, without understanding, or conscious affection for it—which repel evil things to the last, though taught, poor creatures, to regard them as the natural ways of man.

Madih had laughed and helped at many a deception of “the master,” and had borne her part in many an audacious trick. But, laughing still, she had refused herself to mix therein.

Even now, though Budruddin’s face pleased her, and his behaviour was such as gratified her fancy, she only laughed at the messages he contrived to send.

But the youth was in earnest. He longed to return to Tampasuk, and to carry with him this girl who had moved his heart. He went to her mother and declared himself. She might well be tempted to run certain risks, which long impunity had made almost insignificant in her eyes, for such a chance of liberty and fortune.

The old woman visited her daughter forthwith, and used all her influence, all her descriptive power, to obtain the girl’s consent. And she succeeded, at least so far as to gain the lover a hearing.

For the first time, and the last, Madih stole out of the harem, accompanied by her sister.

Budruddin put all his heart into his suit, and triumphed. It was agreed that they should fly together so soon as a Lanun boat in harbour had discharged its cargo. He urged his future wife to hide until that time with friends he could trust, not returning to the palace.

Unhappily she shrank from this course. The fear of detection influenced her to some extent—being unused to hazard it—and also she had a childish longing to bid the companions of her youth good-bye. The mother also desired, as slaves will, to secure the few bits of finery presented by the sultan. And so, after three hours’ absence, they went back.

An escapade so brief and innocent of ill-doing had seldom been indulged in by ladies of the palace, but fate was malignant. The sultan chanced to be hungry when he entered the harem, and in a bad temper also. He tried and rejected the fare awaiting him, and called for a special sambal which Sirik prepared—a sambal is a condiment peculiarly Malay, of infinite variety in material and mode of spicing. Madih then suffered for her caution and timidity. She had confided to none her design, and when the lang de per Tuan

summoned Sirik, half-a-dozen slaves went to find her, without ill-intention hunted for her up and down, made so much noise about it—really perplexed to explain her absence—that the sovereign’s notice was drawn. Ready always to suspicion, he demanded Madih; went to her chamber and found it vacant, and satisfied himself that both the girls were outside. Then he withdrew, white and tottering with passion.

The difficulty of leaving the harem, no great matter anyhow, vanished at the return. So many women passed in and out during the day, that with a slight disguise anyone could go by the purblind sentries. Landing from their boat the three women went up the steps, and through the door; but, on the other side, men seized them. The sisters, shrieking, were cast into a chamber and locked up, whilst the mother was dragged a few steps inside the salamlik (the men’s apartments). A door opened, and she was pushed in. There stood the Datu Bandhara and two of his secretaries, Momein one of them. The only furniture of the room, besides the divan, was a table, upon which lay the strangling apparatus. The woman fell on her knees at once, begging mercy in wild tones. The Datu Bandhara exhorted her to confess, but the fear of death closed her ears. She cried and raved incoherently, until one of the slaves present gagged her with her own loose hair. Then the Bandhara, a feeble old courtier, delivered his speech, which promised life if she told the name of the guilty man. Relieved of the choking mass of hair which stuffed her mouth, the old woman began her revelations. After the first words, Momein sprang forward with an imprecation, slipping off his heavy sandal, and striking her with all his force across the mouth.

“Why waste our time?” he cried. “She is guilty of offence against the sultan’s honour! Let her die!”

Heseized the machine of cords and wood, tossing it over to the executioners. Before the Datu could interfere, or the woman utter an intelligible sound, the silken string was about her neck, drawn tight by a motion of the hand, and, after one supreme struggle, wherein every muscle of the body was exerted, her head fell on one side, and all was finished.

It remains to deal with the girls. Ignorant of their mother’s fate, they boldly protested innocence, declaring they had quitted the harem to visit their family

connections, and this assertion appears to have been sustained by evidence. The Iang de per Tuan himself did not dare use torture—perhaps did not think of it. The notion is repugnant to Malay ideas. Upon one historical occasion in late times the Chief of Johore justified his doings in this respect by the “sacred books of England,” which he said had been followed strictly. A Sultan of Brunei, head of all Malay people, would not have ventured, had he been inclined, to use such means of extorting confession, though it were in the sanctity of his harem. But he could and did condemn Madih to death, and Sirik to perpetual slavery. This sentence was lightened in the former case by an organised petition of the harem. No such favourite as Madih could be found amongst all the throng of women, and they used their influence—so great in all countries where polygamy is exercised—to obtain a commutation. They succeeded of course. The sultan married her off to an old dependent, and I know nothing more of her.

Sirik returned to her old degradation, and Budruddin escaped to Tampasuk. Some years after he came back as head of his family, Momein having died in a scandalous brawl. Whether he sought out his former love, I have no information. But he obtained the freedom of Sirik, and took her into his own household, as chief duenna of the harem. Some months afterwards, under circumstances unexplained, she sought refuge aboard a Chinese junk starting for Sarawak. Such a store of handsome things she carried away, that the police took note of her as I have said. But no complaint ever reached them from Brunei, and her life at Kuching, if eccentric, was perfectly decorous. Nearly all the hours of the twenty-four she passed in the verandah, shifting with the movement of the sun. Huddled up beneath a handsome sarong, with fine silks strewn about the mats, she watched the bustle of the Kinapasar as long as daylight lasted. Then she lit two candles, and still sat, chewing betel without intermission, but very seldom speaking. The neighbours thought her mad, and treated her with kindly reverence as one afflicted by the direct interposition of the Deity. As I interpret the feeling of Orientals towards the insane, it is based upon the argument that Allah changed his mind in their special case, for reasons to be accepted with submissive respect. After creating a human frame which he endowed with consciousness, he thought proper to

withdraw the soul. A being thus exceptionally treated by Heaven must not be lightly regarded by man. And Sirik enjoyed the advantage of this most interesting and respectable sentiment.

AN IRON WELCOME.

A STORY.

“MRS. TREHEARNE is coming home to-night.” “The squire is bringing his wife home at last, and we shall see what we shall see!” “The master’s a bold man sure ’nough, and the lady ’ll need a stout heart too, if so be all that’s told about the place is true. But then, it’s a pack o’ lies, most likely; but the housemaid up yon—she’s Jane Latey’s daughter from other side of Gweep—do say that she can’t make Miss Trehearne out at all now. She never says a word, good or bad, about her brother’s wife, and goes on just as if she was to be mistress up at Trehearne all her life.”

These are a few of the remarks and conjectures that are bandied about among a group of loitering, lazy, lounging, simple minded and mannered, and withal bitterly curious villagers as they sun themselves against the railings that surround the village pond, on which are disporting languidly the village ducks and geese.

The hamlet of Polvertow has not had such a legitimate source of local excitement for many a long day as this; namely, that Mrs. Trehearne is coming home to-night. It was shaken to its centre ten years ago when the squire and his stern sister came home after many years’ absence, accompanied by foreign-looking beings who spoke strange tongues which were unintelligible to the Polverrowites. And it was much exercised in spirit two years ago when the rumour came down, through Jane Latey, that the squire had gone up to London and married a beautiful grand young lady, and that, in consequence of this feat of daring, Miss Trehearne was like a deranged person, “fit to tear her hair.”

But this news that is reported now, exceeds all that is past in thrilling interest, and Polverrow gives itself unhesitatingly to conjecture and idleness for the whole day.

There is a great deal of the dolce far niente about those who are indigenious to the soil in this beautiful far western land. They lean about in an unhesitating manner whenever there is anything to lean upon, and they look dreamily out into the great

space of sea or of moorland, as the case may be, rather to the neglect of mere details immediately around. Essentially a people who are averse to new movements, and antagonistic to new ideas. Sure, perhaps, but undoubtedly very slow.

The railway has not reached Polverrow. The moorland heights look on Polverrow, and Polverrow looks on the sea. On this sea and by this sea Polverrow chiefly lives.

Life is not very full of incident in this briny solitude. The principal events are the goings out and comings in of fishing boats and smacks. The chief topics of conversation are the mackerel-seines and the catches of the prolific pilchard; and the chief occupations of the inhabitants of this stolidly contented hamlet are the building of boats, and the making and mending of nets.

There is a little vicarage, occupied now by a bachelor locum-tenens, perched on a hill at the back of the village, and half a mile further up the valley there is Trehearne Place. Besides these there is nothing resembling a gentleman's house to be seen for many miles. And to this desolate region Mr. Trehearne, the scarcely known squire of the village, is to bring his wife to-night.

A faint hope lightens the hearts of all those around the duck-pond, that Jane Latey may come down to the village shop in the course of the day, and give them the latest news of Miss Trehearne's moods and sayings. That these latter will reveal anything that Miss Trehearne does not desire to have revealed is beyond their wildest expectations, but they feel that it is important that they should be posted up in the utterances of the only person who knows why Mr. and Mrs. Trehearne are coming home now, and why they have stayed away so long.

By-and-by, quite late in the afternoon, when the hope that she would come has waxed faint and low, Jane Latey's well-known best hat, surmounted by a blue bow and a yellow feather, appears in sight. Fashion penetrates even to Polverrow, but she behaves here in a graceless, flighty, lunatic way, that she is never guilty of in the haunts of men. Hence Jane Latey's hat and bow and feather, the work of local talent, which has been cruelly deceived and fooled by the mischievous goddess, Fashion.

At sight of Miss Latey, the group round the duck-pond brightens up. and one or

two of them address her with the cordiality people are apt to display towards the person who can gratify their heart's desire.

"Where be gwoin, Jane, in such hurry like?" one of the women says heartily, and then she goes on to tempt Jane to linger, by speaking of a certain hot loaf and cup of tea which are in her cottage hard by.

Jane halts irresolutely, and murmurs something about Miss Trehearne wanting some big nails and screws from the shop at once.

"House all ready for the new missus then?" another woman suggests encouragingly.

"Yes," Jane avows with pride, "the house is all ready, and as beautiful as anything she (Jane) has ever seen in all her born days!" which is doubtless true.

"Even to the table being laid for dinner, with spoons and forks and glasses enough for thirty, let alone they three that are going to sit down to it," Jane goes on.

"And what brings 'em home now, all of a sudden like this?"

"Miss Trehearne is close as wax, and hasn't opened her lips to living soul about the matter."

A mild-eyed affectionate-looking woman standing near timidly throws out the suggestion that "Miss Trehearne must be main glad to have her own coming back to her again," but her remark is received with derision. It is Jane Latey's opinion, founded on close observation, that Miss Trehearne would sooner have heard that her brother's wife was at the bottom of the sea than that she was coming home to-night.

"But no one knows what Miss Trehearne really means and feels but Miss Trehearne herself," Jane says, hurrying off to get the nails and screws, as a vision of Miss Trehearne in an impatient mood presents itself before her.

Meanwhile the Flying Dutchman is bringing the master of Trehearne and his wife westward rapidly.

There is nothing in her appearance as she sits in a corner of the carriage environed with scent bottles, and fans, and dust cloaks, and cheap editions of popular novels, to account for the intense interest which has been concentrated upon her during the last two years. A pretty, well-dressed woman, with hazel eyes and hair to harmonise with them, she has not much force or feeling or thought in her fair smooth face. Why should her coming or

going make a stir at Polverrow and Trehearne!

Her husband sits opposite to her: a rather sad-eyed gentleman with an irresolute mouth, and a languid delicate manner that would besit his sister better than her own. As the boundary line between Devon and Cornwall is passed he grows perceptibly nervous, and at length, as she makes no comment on the fact, though he has acquainted her with it, he says:

"Helen, look about you, dear. Tell me if you feel that you will be happy in this region which is to be your home?"

"We haven't come to the place yet," she says, looking up hastily with gay, good-humoured unconcern; "you've told me I have to drive ten miles from the last station to Trehearne, so I haven't come into 'my own countraie' yet."

"Nell, love it as your own country; be happy here for Heaven's sake! But for you I would never have come back."

"Why?" she asks, surprised a little, but not deeply interested.

"Why? Because from my childhood the home at Trehearne has been a cold and chilling home to me. I have never known love and freedom in it. I have never known peace——"

"Roland!" She is unfeignedly interested now, and directly she wakes up and throws off her air of fashionable languor, she is a charming as well as a pretty woman. "Roland! I thought your sister adored you! She is always writing to you, and always watching your interests!"

"But she does not love me, Nell," he says sorrowfully; "she has given her youth and her own hopes of happiness to my welfare, because I am the present representative of the family; but she doesn't love me, and, poor child, she'll hate you!"

"I'll pull down the hate, and build up love and confidence in its stead."

"The task is beyond you, Nell," he says despondently, and then for a few minutes he takes himself to task wearisomely and bitterly for doing or saying aught that may depress her, or give her an unfavourable impression of his old home and his own race.

"Have you no other relations, Roland? Do you two stand alone?"

"We two stand alone," he says stiffly.

"Being the only brother and sister, you ought to love each other," she says meditatively, and then she clears up, and with a bright "Well, anyway, I hope she'll like

me," Mrs. Trehearne settles to her book again, and neglects the scenery.

It is seven o'clock before they reach Trehearne. A few enterprising spirits in the villages have mooted the idea that it would be a pretty thing to meet the squire at the boundary of his estate, take the horses out, and like good and true Polverrowites as they are, draw the master and his wife home.

But the plan falls to the ground, not through being negatived by any master-spirit, but simply through the natives' inability to act with promptitude and decision when the time is limited. So the squire and his wife drive up to the entrance-doors of Trehearne in peace and comfort.

The old hall is vast and imposing, but it is badly lighted, and Mrs. Trehearne, going in with perplexed mind and bewildered vision, cannot quite discern the difference between the effigies of men-in-armor of the past and the rigid row of servants in the present. But her movements are graceful, and her voice gracious, as she says a few well-meant words, which convey no one definite idea to the minds of her hearers. And then she looks at her husband and says:

"I thought your sister lived here, Roland! She can't know we have come."

Hesitatingly, and as if he were almost afraid to do it, the master of Trehearne turns to the primmest of the grim servants and asks him:

"Where is Miss Trehearne? Will you tell her we have arrived?"

"Miss Trehearne is in her usual place, sir," the man replies gravely. And something in his foreign accent and forbidding mien gives Mrs. Trehearne the feeling that this place is very strange, and will never have the home-like charm for her.

"I will go and see Priscilla first, Nell darling," Mr. Trehearne says, "and prepare her for meeting you. She has been the mistress here for a long time," he adds apologetically; and then, fearful that he may have hurt the sensitive heart of his wife, he goes on to say something about "Priscilla little knowing how gently she will be superseded."

"I will go to my own rooms. I suppose I may do that before your sister comes," Mrs. Trehearne says in not unnaturally piqued tones, and instinctively she singles out Jane Latey, the broad honest-faced Cornish girl, to be her guide, in preference to the two or three sombre-

looking Italian women who have sedulously kept themselves apart from the natives during their long term of residence at Trehearne.

The house is grander far than Mrs. Trehearne has ever pictured it, for her husband has been strangely silent about the home of his ancestors. As, led by Jane Lacey, the mistress of the manor passes up a splendid flight of stairs and along a corridor that in length and luxurious appointments is worthy of a place in a palace, she wonders at herself for feeling so little elation.

"Are these all bedrooms?" she asks, pointing to the doors they are passing, and Jane tells her:

Yes, all of them, and there's a sight more rooms in the wings and back of the house than she (Jane) can reckon up.

She reaches her own suite of rooms at last. "Madam's apartments," they have always been called since the present master's mother passed the latter years of her life in rigid seclusion in them, "grieving about her eldest son who died abroad, they do tell," Jane adds; and pretty, bright, light-hearted Mrs. Trehearne looks with tender interest at the rooms where the sad bereft mother mourned for her son.

"Grand and beautiful—far, far grander than even I had hoped for; but they don't seem like home to me," the young wife says, as she seats herself at an open window and looks down on the whitewashed cottages and brown-tanned sails of Polverrow.

Meanwhile, Roland Trehearne seeks his sister, where he has been told he shall find her, in "her usual place."

She is a tall, large-boned person, masculine in mind and appearance, but neither coarse nor vulgar. As her slim, handsome, refined-looking brother comes into the plainly furnished "office," in which for years she has transacted all the business connected with his large estates, the idea would strike a stranger that this brother and sister had changed costume and character in jest.

Miss Trehearne throws down her pen as her brother enters, and, without rising from her chair, holds a large, capable hand out to him.

"So, Roland, you have come, in spite of my warnings and wishes!"

The words are unkind, but the way in which they are uttered is not. Nevertheless, Roland Trehearne looks pained.

"Nell pressed the point of coming home, and what excuse had I to offer for keeping her away!" he says deprecatingly.

Miss Trehearne shakes her head impatiently, and says:

"You should have told the truth, that this house is one in which she will never know happiness."

"I could not tell her the truth. I dared not do it, Priscilla, for your sake as well as my own," he pleads.

Then he sits down, buries his face in his hands, and asks:

"Is—is this burden as likely to last as when we last spoke about it?"

"It is!"

The stricken master of the house cannot repress a groan, as the brief answer falls upon his ears. The sound seems to rouse his sister to wrath.

"You helped to lay the burden upon yourself, though you were fully aware of all the responsibilities it entailed. Why come and moan to me about it, Roland? Remember it is ever present with me. I minister to all its wants; I live under the shadow of its drear depressing influence! I ask you, is it my place to do this more than yours?"

"It will kill me," he cries, rising up and speaking with a passionate vehemence. "My poor Nell, my darling girl! What a home to have brought her to! Do, if you have a spark of womanly feeling in your breast, go to her, and say words of kindness and welcome, even if you don't mean them, Priscilla. Don't let the poor girl feel the blight of this secret; she at least is innocent!"

"And you would hint to me that I am not?" Miss Trehearne says slowly. "Well, Roland, I will stand even that reproach for your honour's sake."

"For the sake of your accursed family pride, you mean."

"Perhaps I do," she says, a dull red flash mounting to her weather-beaten bronzed cheek. Then she takes a couple of keys from a box, and advancing to a door at the far end of the room, she says, as she unlocks it:

"Have you the courage to come and see our burden? Be a man, Roland; it is as hard for me to witness it as for you. Yet I have to face it hourly."

He rouses himself with an effort, and strings himself up to the cruel task of following her. Ten minutes after he comes back into the office again, with his face of such an ashen hue that his sister says:

"Take some wine before you rejoin your wife. Your blanched face tells tales, Roland. Take wine and courage."

He obeys her in this, as he has obeyed her in other things all his life, without demur. Then he goes back to "madam's apartments," and strives to make his "darling Nell" feel that nothing unkind is meant by his sister's indifference.

They meet at dinner by-and-by at a table set with massive gold and silver plate and deeply-cut antique glass, and are served with rare wines and daintily-dressed viands. The artist-hand of a French cook is plainly discernible in everything that is placed before young Mrs. Trehearne. But, for all the splendour and dainty delicacy of the feast, she has no appetite, and seems out of spirits.

The table is a round one, placed at one end of the vast dining-room or hall, and so appointed that it is difficult to discern which is the head of it, until a stately carved oak chair, with a back like a throne, is wheeled up for Miss Trehearne.

Then the spirit of the young wife rouses and asserts itself.

"I suppose I take my own place in my own home, do I not, Roland?" she asks, lightly advancing to the chair of state, and putting her hand on its arm, while Miss Trehearne frowns at her.

"If you take my seat you shall take my other duties as well," Priscilla says gruffly. "My brother will be able to tell you what they are to-night; some of them may not be pleasant to you, but your husband will share your labours, I am sure, and I will go away and have what I have not known for years—peace!"

With a shudder, Mrs. Trehearne draws back.

"While I stay here, I will never, never interfere with your sister, Roland," she says proudly; then she adds, while a sob almost chokes her utterance, "but take me away from this home where I have had such an iron welcome. Take me away before it breaks my heart!"

They do not talk much after this during dinner, nor are their tongues loosed after it in the drawing-room.

At nine o'clock Miss Trehearne takes a hard, cold leave of them for the night, and soon afterwards, tired and disheartened beyond expression, Mrs. Trehearne goes to bed.

It is broad moonlight when she wakes. She has disregarded the orders which Jane Latey tells her have been issued to the

effect that all the shutters in "madam's apartments" are to be tightly closed, and the rays stream into her room, illuminating it uninterruptedly. Looking out of the window she sees some portions of the vast mansion, of which she is the mistress, jutting out picturesque. Inviting ivy-covered corners peep at her. Dark alcoves overhung with creepers awake her curiosity. She is broad awake, and her husband is sound asleep. It would be a shame to disturb him to satisfy her curiosity respecting these nooks and corners and alcoves. And yet, why shall she not gratify it? Is she not the mistress of the house, the wife of Trehearne, of Trehearne?

Noiselessly she slips out of bed and dons her dressing-gown and slippers. In another moment she is out in the corridor, speeding along towards the staircase.

The spirit of adventure is upon her. The interior of the old house looks so weirdly grand by moonlight that she longs to see what the outside of it will look.

Down in a cloak-room leading off the entrance-hall, she finds a big fur wrap. With this around her she feels that she may go out in safety into the fresh sweetness of the moonlighted summer-night.

It is not an easy task to get out of the Trehearne mansion without the aid of the giant keys which secure it every night. But Nell Trehearne is not easily balked of her purpose to-night. Finding that exit through the doorways is impracticable she investigates the windows, and at length in the ante-room to the dining-hall she finds shutters that she can unbolt, and a window that she can unclasp.

In a few minutes she is standing in a grass-grown court, a dim secluded place into which even the moonbeams find it hard to penetrate.

"How Roland will laugh at me when I tell him of my restlessness and uncanny ramble," she says to herself, and she goes on to construct a prettily-coloured little sketch of her nocturnal adventure for the benefit of the breakfast-table the next morning.

Trehearne is curiously built. Odd-looking towers spring up in unexpected places, and there are open air spaces left in an apparently aimless manner that makes Mrs. Trehearne very angry with the prodigal architect of the long-past period in which the place was built. She is just beginning to retrace her steps through

some of these superfluous mazes with the serious intention in her mind of speaking to her husband in the morning on the subject of reclaiming these wasted spaces, when a light flashes into her face that does not come from the moon.

Stepping hastily back into the black shade of a projecting piece of wall, she looks up to the point from which this new light is streaming; looks up to an open window, at which stands her tall brawny sister-in-law, wrapped in a military cloak that makes her look more masculine than ever, and with her a stooping shrunken form in an indescribable garment that gives no hint as to the sex of its wearer.

In a moment all the stories she has ever read, from *Jane Eyre* to *Barbara's History*, of mad wives concealed in impossible places in their lawful husbands' houses rush into her mind. The next minute she loyally acquits Roland of any such sin as this. But her heart is sore and troubled, and the gaze that is searchingly directed to the open window is an anguished one.

Presently Miss Trehearne and her companion move away from the window back into the interior of the room, and Nell sees them no longer. But it is a matter of moment to her now to find out all she can, and she knows that she has only herself to depend upon.

So she sits down on a piece of rough stone that is in the court, and taking keen notice of its position, she learns off by heart the position of every window and piece of stone or brick-work that can be seen. Then, marking the window from which the lamplight is still streaming, she makes her way back through the window, up the stairs, and along the corridor to her own apartment.

When she finds herself safe and by his side again she cannot refrain from waking up and confiding in her husband.

Accordingly in a few moments that bewildered gentleman is listening in sore distress to the story of her wanderings.

"Who can your sister have concealed there? Roland, do you know anything of this romance of hers?"

Mr. Trehearne is silent.

"I won't believe that you can know anything about it. Tell me that it is your sister's secret and not yours, and I'll never ask another question," she says proudly, and he bends his head miserably and answers:

"My darling. I cannot lie to you: the

secret is mine as much as my sister's, and—I cannot tell it you."

The following day Polverrow is convulsed to the centre of its being, or, as it expresses itself, is "shook all of a no-how like," by the news conveyed to it in an ecstasy of emotion by Jane Latey.

"Mrs. Trehearne, the master's wife, have took herself off without un, and master be broken-hearted like, and Miss Trehearne like the Evil One himself."

The information is only too correct. The master of Trehearne has been staunch for once in refusing to obey his wife's wishes. It is in vain that she has wept, implored, entreated him to tell her what this mystery is. His sister has commanded him not to reveal it, and with the feeling that he is a craven for so doing, Mr. Trehearne has obeyed his sister.

Mrs. Trehearne, with youth, brightness, desire to please, longing to forget, and plenty of money in her favour, goes to London, where society does not accord her an iron welcome by any means. And it might be written that her end is likely to be anything but peace, were it not that soon after her arrival in London a little son smiles upon her, and the woman who fears that her boy may have to blush for his father, is resolved that he shall not have to do so for his mother.

"If I am not the legal Mrs. Trehearne, I can at least be an honourable and good woman," she tells herself, and so she lives on an embittered life, for a few weary months, during which she refuses to hold any communication with Trehearne, of Trehearne, unless he will clear up the mystery which has separated them.

By-and-by she hears that he has gone abroad again, and guesses that his sister has resumed her solitary arbitrary reign undisputedly.

But she does not guess—poor harassed, anxious woman that she is—what remorse and vain yearnings are swelling her husband's heart.

"He has a shameful secret, and I and my boy—his son—are the sufferers. We will bear our own load of sorrow alone, my son, and never make a sign."

So she says to the baby Trehearne, whom she has had christened Trehearne, in "order that he may have some right to the name," as she tells herself bitterly, when the days grow long and weary, and neither the husband nor the explanation come.

At last, after a few dreary months of waiting have nearly washed the iron welcome from her mind, Mrs. Trehearne finds that there is balm in Gilead still.

For her husband comes to her with his confession on his lips.

And his confession does not invalidate her claims. His is a story of temptation and wrong-doing, of sorrow and sin, but not of shame for her or for her boy.

It is this. That eldest son, whose loss his mother—the “madam” of Trehearne—had deplored so deeply, that elder brother and rightful heir, whom all men believed had died abroad, is dead now, after years of incarceration in the house of his fathers as a madman. And the grim sister who has devoted her life to the maintenance of the honour of her race, finds herself spoken of as a person who has been privy to the concealment of a dangerous maniac, because for the sake of her name's honour she has enclosed her hopelessly mad brother within barriers of ignorance and foreign tongues.

Verily, Priscilla Trehearne has borne a hideous burden for the sake of the honour of her race. It has been her object that the world should think the heir of Trehearne dead rather than mad, for it is a tradition of the Trehearnes that only so long as they are right in mind, body, and estate will they hold their lands.

But this bad spell is broken now, for Roland Trehearne lives at Trehearne happily with his wife, who is the mother of his son, and Aunt Priscilla looks after the dairy and poultry, and is happier and gentler than she has ever been before in her burdened life.

For the afflicted brother, who is laid to rest in Polverrow churchyard, has ceased to be either a burden or a shame, and the rooms where his broken-hearted mother wept for him, and conjured her daughter Priscilla to “save his name at any cost to herself or Roland,” are occupied by a mother now who never thanks God so fervently as when she thanks Him for the great gift of healthy reason to her son—the little Trehearne Trehearne, of Trehearne.

IN A WEST INDIA ISLAND.

OPENING “Who's Who and What's What in Jamaica,” a little portable bit of a volume designed to be ever on the ledge of a commercial desk, or in the most accessible

pocket of a commercial coat—a directory, register, commentary, price-list, time-table, almanac, history-digest, ready-reckoner, guide, philosopher, and friend, all rolled into one—it is hard to keep away the thought that it is compiled on behalf of a phantasmagoria, that it will quickly be resolved into a successful jest.

This shall be proved. There are instructions, after this manner, in the division headed Agricultural Calendar: “Dig in your seed-yams to get heads. Hurry on and finish your crop of arrowroot. Get on with your ginger-scraping. Sugar estates busy taking off their crop; labourers look aleek and fat as mud. Look after your hogs. Feed them on plantain-leaves, root-cocoa head, sour corn-meal, cane tops.” After which there appears, like the transformation-scene, all pearly light, and gracious form and glitter: “Fruits ripe are oranges, sweet-cups, granadillos, shad-docks, star-apples, bread-fruit, tamarinds; cotton in pod; the blood-wood, the mountain mahoe, mangoes, pimento, rose-apple, calabash, in blossom. In the hedges are brilliant convolvuluses, the bright velvety sweet-pea; flowers to look for are roses, marvel of Peru, plumbago, Barbadoes pride, geranium.”

Does this sound like January? Does it sound like January, when, let it be a green Christmas, let it be a white Christmas, there are bared branches in England here for the wind to rattle through, when there is a bitter locking-up of bud and grain, and blade and dew-drop, the country's face having no change except from sweeps of clinging mire to the ring and bite of frost and icicle?

Let the West India Island be visited again, when the calendar has turned to February.

“Cut down your guinea-grass to feed your stock. Feed your poultry with cocoa-nut and boiled bread-fruit; rob your bees; melt down the wax; bleach it in the open air and night dew; then sell it along with your crop of honey to the merchant. Tame your hogs now, that they may not run wild during the mango season. Dust your yams well with white lime, especially where they are bruised.” With the alluring addendum, as in the previous month, “cherry-trees, plum-trees, wild coffee, guava, in blossom. Sweet-limes ripe, custard-apples, naseberries. Lapwings and partridges fat and plentiful.”

Take March, as well. “Begin to break and pick pimento. Pines in season;” the

way to plant these being given minutely. It is in rows four feet apart; it is at distances of two feet and a half; it is by taking the young plants (suckers) and ramming them down well with a wooden rammer. "Trees in full bloom are pomegranates, pears, damask-roses, balsam. European population extremely healthy; Creoles suffering from epidemic of catarrh." In April we are to "Plant cock-stones, chow-chow, roncevales, pumpkins, water-melons. The mocking-bird is about; the rice-bunting, the goat-sucker, the whip-Tom-Kelly or Sweet-John-tu-whit." In May, "Gravel your cocoa-fingers before they begin to sprout. Young plums should now be put in salt-water as olives." "Turtle in season and very fat; black crabs caught at night by torch-light." Take June, July, August, the months that follow. "Harbour bare of ships. Barbadoes blackbirds roost on the mangroves by the sea-shore, making an uproarious noise with their repeated 'cling-cling-cling.' Yellow-tails, grunts, and some other fishes, are now deliciously fat. The brown owl, from the dead limb of a tree in some savanna, makes circuits after fire-flies. Teals and gallings come in with the northern squalls. Petcharies may be shot very early in the morning. Ortolans, or the butter-bird, a delicious food, in season." Here also is something about prices in this favoured land: "Bread-fruits and young cocoa-nuts, a halfpenny each; two plantains for the same money. Corn, six shillings, and over, a bushel; seed-yams, five shillings per hundredweight. Usual price of pork, sevenpence-halfpenny per pound, but sixpence is quite enough. Mutton is ninepence. Reckon to take a dozen dry cocoa-nuts to make a bottle of oil, and reckon seventeen months for the young ones to grow, get dry, and drop from the tree. Bottle-off your annual supply of shrub and orange-wine."

There is a vast deal more to add, too, to make up the picture of our West India Island. The palisadoes, as a landed improvement, are said to be just recently planted with senna; there is a cinchona plantation; there is a preserved turtle factory, for the export of turtle tablets and turtle green-fat and yellow-fat, and turtle-eggs in bottle; there are the Creole saw-mills; there is "Ye Modele Grocerie" (aestheticism having made a sea-voyage, or having had birth at a West India Island, and only had copying elsewhere); there is taxation on houses that

are floored, and a lower rate of taxation on houses that are not floored; there is a payment of fifty pounds on every private bill introduced into the Legislature; there is a stamp duty of fifteen shillings on each kettubah, or Jews' marriage-contract; there are import duties on such odd commodities as Wallaba shingles, pickled ale-wives, Boston chips, shooks, sub-soda, calavances (a pea eaten by the negroes), cocus-wood, bolt of oznaburgh, camwood, dripstones, jointers. There are persons following the trades, or occupations, of lumber-measurers, revenue-runners, ginger-growers, logwood dealers, copyists, catechists, astronomers, trimmers, parochial treasurers, pound-keepers, jar-makers, buggy-repairers, cashiers—one firm being announced as putters-up of green turtle-fat, calipee, and calipash, dealers in dulce and pip-pip. There are places in and about the island called Anchovy Valley, Bog Walk, Golden Spring, Betty's Hope, Milk River, Black River, Good Length, Four Paths, Half-Way Tree, Roaring River, Rum Lane.

Turning to the Almanac, bound in as accompaniment to all these wonders, there are many items that force a little stop to be made again. There is a Jewish Kalendar, telling of the Fast of Tebet, the Fast of Esther, the Fast of Tamuz, the Fast of Ab; telling of Laylanot, Purim, Sebuot, Kipur, Hosaana Raba, Hanuca. There are some extra public holidays to be faithfully kept, viz., the Great Earthquake Day, the Great Storm Day. Events being set by the side of the days of the month, in proper almanac fashion; these events are such as: Forty Maroons surrendered, 1796; Sir John Grant left Jamaica, 1874; thirty sugar-mills established, 1655; coolies first introduced into Jamaica, 1845; conspiracy among negroes at St. Mary's, 1823; Rev. H. Bleby tarred and feathered, 1832; first spelling-bee in Jamaica, 1876; mutiny of the Second West India Regiment on parade, 1808; bill passed for registration of slaves, 1815; rebel negroes in flight before troops, 1865; not forgetting such pertinent little hints and reminders as Valentine's Day, Go and see So-and-So's valentines; as, half-year's subscription due to Such-a-Journal; subscriptions due to all magazines. After tables of money-conversions from pounds, shillings, and pence into dollars and cents; after phases of the moon and other information thought de rigueur in an almanac, alike in the Colonies as in the Mother

Country, there comes, for one item, the enumeration of lighthouse dues. These are threepence per ton (calculated on the registered tonnage) on every ship passing the Plumb Point Lighthouse, and so on; with two-thirds of a penny per ton on steamers, chargeable every month, for the reason, it may be assumed, that the passing is constantly going on. Other curiosities are that the population is put down under the three several heads of Blacks, Browns, and Whites; that at the Pedro Cays fishermen find a good supply of booby-eggs; that a monumental work well worth a visit is the statue of a lady who murdered five husbands, an object of interest only to be matched, evidently, by a marble slab to a Scotch settler of the last century, possessing "an unnatural detestation of the human race, which could be gratified only by the sight of blood and the contemplation of human agony," and who was not punished for his gratifications until his victims had numbered as many as forty-seven. Only at a West India Island, likewise—only at some part of the tropics or the semi-tropics—could there be mention of the coffee-trees in bloom and in berry; the bloom like a fall of snow, it lies so thick and white, the berries, like brilliant coral, being plucked at by all hands, with much noise and laughter; could there be equally beautiful mention of cotton-trees, the pods fresh burst, and all the gossamer-like flue, or fluff, being blown before the wind, and covering the hills and the savannas as with a fresh hoar-frost.

Business of a more severe kind, however, is not omitted at a West India Island. There is a Leper's Home, with its medical attendant, its superintendent, and its matron. There is a quarantine board; there is a Jewish almshouse; there is the site of a theatre in St. Catherine (though the theatre perished in a hurricane half-a-century ago) where Monk Lewis, being in the island by chance, saw his own *Castle Spectre* so excellently performed, that he gave the chief actor a purse containing four doubloons; there is Temple Hall, a tobacco plantation carried on by Cubans, "who rent the land at so much per acre, and having their own cattle, ploughs, etc., produce a fine crop of one hundred and fifty hundredweight to two hundred hundredweight of cured tobacco, sold at a very high figure before it is reaped;" there is Wareika, a delicious mountain residence for invalid officers of

the navy, left for their use by the widow of Commodore Craycroft; there is Up-park Camp, for the military, where the regimental band plays to the public for an hour a week; there is the music of the church service being performed by this band; and drawing notable congregations, not only because of its musical taste and talent, but because the regiments wear the picturesque uniform of the Algerian Zouave; there is a custos, or chief magistrate, of every city; there is the theatre (not blown down) that costs only six pounds a night, that would be sure to be "bumper-filled," realising quite ninety pounds a night, if able artists, not "muffy mediocrity or spooney sticks," could but be induced to visit the city. Again, there is a boarding-house or hotel, "the headquarters of all the Literati," where there is "morning coffee followed by two ordinaries daily," where "the table presents all the tropical dishes in their season;" there are testimonials in praise of the climate of the island (to name some, at least, of all the Literati) from Canon Kingsley, Mr. Anthony Trollope, Mr. Gallenga; there are testimonials to the same effect from medical men of similar high standing; there is a delightful inclination engendered to stake faith in every word thus put down testimonially, and in many more, when a place of resort near by the boarding-house is described as being far away on the Blue Mountains, covered with Abyssinian bananas, with Australian gum trees, with luxuriant tea plants, with ferns that vary from the tiniest fairy specimens to gigantic palm-like growths as much as fifty feet high. It would be good, too, to see Wolmer's Free School, founded by John Wolmer, goldsmith, in 1729; to see the Wesleyan chapel, opened in 1823, with a carved pulpit, valued at four hundred pounds, the work exclusively of a black man, a slave then, but who contrived somehow to carry on his labours, and to make the result of them a grateful gift. It would be good to see the tomb of Admiral Benbow, and to wonder which is the fact—that he lies at Deptford, as is generally thought, or amidst plantains, figs, banyans, and upas trees, at Kingston, here. It would be good to see the lunatic asylum—excellently ordered, according to the account—where a lunatic known as "The Emperor" plays the harmonium, and leads the singing, even to grace before meat and to grace after. It would be good, being so near, to see the general peni-

tentiary or prison, chiefly, it must be said, to hear, in its proper place, the story (so manifestly popular) of an old master of it who used to roar out, "Here, boatswain! Take this man; put him in the scales; take down his natural weight; then put upon him the dress of this immaculate institution, and thrust him into the cells where the worms will destroy his body!" It would be good, keeping still to old matters and to memories of things gone by, to see the spots once desecrated by being slave markets, where poor souls had their prices affixed on tickets (an inviting looking woman would be labelled seventy pounds); once desecrated by being Vendue Marta, the difference being that, at these, slaves had been seized by distraint, to cover their masters' debts, and were sold by auction, as the readiest means to ascertain how much they were worth. It would be good to see (happily now it is only in the museum) "an iron cage, in which persons used to be encased and hung out upon trees, to perish from exposure and hunger;" to see the place of the old-time gallows, where Obi, or Three Finger Jack, a notorious highwayman, met with the fate he merited; to see Lord Rodney's statue, at rest now, it may be presumed, after a removal once, at night, from Spanish Town, eighteen miles away; to see (in the court-house) some law-documents obtained from the maw of a shark, caught off the coast of St. Domingo, in 1799—these documents having been forwarded to the Vice-Admiralty Court just in time to be evidence against a captured slave ship, the Nancy, and to lead to its instant condemnation. There being, thus, the elements of a genuine nautical drama imported into this peep at a West India Island, it may seem that all else that can be noted can only be flat and tame. That is a mistake. There is a curious use of female labour here, full of interest, that cannot be passed by. It is to be witnessed down at the wharf, when a steamer comes in, and when the Jamaica coloured women coal it. They carry the coal in baskets on their heads; they get a halfpenny (about) ordinarily for each basket so carried, but a penny if they have to work at night, or (by the exigencies of the mail service) on Sundays; they can earn from fifteen to twenty shillings a day when the fees are at this higher figure; they are ruled by a mistress or "woman boss;" each carries her number on her waist-band (or where her waist-band should be), so that it can be

read as she passes by; and every time she passes, a negro drops a corn-grain into a box, numbered as she is numbered, calling the number out for her own verification; after which this box of corn-grains becomes her tally, and she is paid by it. There must be notice, also, of the old Spanish names still found amongst the residents and the traders of this island; names that would even make a buggy-drive along the streets memorable on their account alone, as they stand here for the eyes to read, written largely above the shops. De Cordova is here, and Gonzalez, and Leon, and Lopez, and Carvalho, and Cespedes, Alvarenza, Altavella, Baquie, Carlos, De Mercado, Cardozo, Piexotto, Judah, Peynado, Mesquita, Gutierrez, Vaz. How is it? Did Don Cristofero Columbus leave the original owners of these names here, on that memorable 3rd of May, 1494, when he first hopped upon the place, coasting along Cuba, on his second voyage? No. The adventurous Spaniards who were with the great navigator on that occasion, abandoned Jamaica, as he did, when he had just looked at it, and claimed it for the Spanish monarchy, calling it St. Jago, after the patron Spanish saint. Did Don Cristofero leave these people here, then, in 1503, when, on his fourth and last voyage, he was driven into the little bay, still called Don Christopher's Bay, shipwrecked; losing two gallant ships out of his company, and obliged to stay here twelve-months till he could get relieved? It does not seem likely. For that was the time when mutiny broke out amongst his crews; his men were lounging about on their enforced stoppage, with no due work to which they could be put; they were worrying their resolute commander; they were abusing the Indians, although these had entertained them at first hospitably, giving them everything they could desire; and there is no item in this that sounds like settlement and barter, that sounds like establishing commercial relations, and laying the foundations of what is now a far-reaching and wealthy community of "firms."

The time that really ended in Spanish occupation of Jamaica was from 1509 onwards; in those days when Don Diego Columbus, Christopher's son (Christopher being just dead), was resolved to claim the rights that were honourably his. To do this, he sent Don Juan d'Esquivel to be governor as his representative. To oppose this, the crown party sent a governor of their nomination,

Alonzo d'Ojeda; and whilst the two interests jarred to the utmost, bitter feuds and hostilities raged. Spanish troops came to support royal assumption; Spanish adventurers came, Spanish emigrants. The Columbian faction stayed to occupy; the crown faction stayed to insist that for them to occupy was subversive of treaty, of prerogative, of rights legitimate and legendary—was, in short, base theft and treachery. Amidst this internal conflict, amidst these orders and counter-orders from the parent-land, it is curious that though, by means of them, Spaniards established themselves in the place so firmly that their descendants are found there still, yet, also, by means of them, the Spanish name, St. Jago, that the heroic Spanish discoverer gave, was rooted up. Zaymayca, the Isle of Springs, it was, to the native Indians; to those who had originally inhabited its beautiful mountain-sides and well-watered valleys; and Zaymayca it again became. That much implied neither navigator's rights, nor the surrender of them to royal disputants, and that much might remain. That the English found their own way of settling all this, need not be dwelt upon at length; first because it does not affect the question of Spanish names being still painted on Jamaican shop-fronts, and secondly, because it is, somehow, the English method, and may be expected. It was in 1596, the English first swept over the island; it was in 1635, they swept it again; it was in 1655, on the 3rd of May, its Columbian birthday, that it capitulated to Cromwell; it was in 1661, that Charles the Second sent out its first English governor; and since then, during great earthquake, and great storm, during hurricane and French assault, during succeeding French assaults, and fire, and slave emancipation, and mutiny, Jamaica has had its Spanish families intermixed with its English families, and there has been fair peace.

Jamaica now, too, is able to produce "Who's Who, and What's What;" the little directory that has afforded the chief materials for this sketch. And whilst noting that the volume calls for special observation because it is of native production, native printers having even set up the type for it, it must be noted also that in the author of Tom Cringle's Log, and The Cruise of the Midge—Mr. Michael Scott, of Kingston—Jamaica possesses a novelist who will make the name of the island be looked for with regard and

interest, when many other items connected with its four hundred years of civilised life shall have passed out of record, and be quite forgotten.

THE QUESTION OF GAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY.

CHAPTER XXXV. DIFFICULTIES.

WHEN Helen looked out of her window on the following morning, to find heavy rain falling, and the sky with the uniformly sullen aspect which promises a wet day, she was relieved. Among the disturbing questions that had kept her waking in the night was one concerning the early hours of the day now begun. What was she to do about the morning walk with the little girls and Mr. Warrender? Whether he would avoid it, or seek it, whether he would resume the topic of the preceding evening, or not, she could not guess. If she had but said a few more words, something that would have implied a prayer that he would never again revert to it, things might have been easier; but the interruption had prevented that, and in her trouble and confusion she was not even sure what were the exact words he had said. Something to the effect that she was not to be afraid, was all she had caught, but that did not strengthen her much, or help her; for he did not know of what she was afraid, and his ignorance was the heaviest part of her trouble. If he spoke to her again—and unless she could avoid the morning walk it was most probable that he would do so—what was she to do?

The straight fall of the rain before her windows was therefore a welcome sight; Helen felt reprieved. Mr. Warrender always breakfasted with her and the children, but they were never alone on those occasions; so that while she might be able to gather from his manner whether the subject that she dreaded was to be a closed and forbidden one, she need not at the worst be afraid of its immediate resumption.

There was a strange strife of feeling in Helen's heart. Silent chords had been struck, and there was a giving out of their old music. She wondered, she feared, she was glad and sorry, proud and perplexed, all at once. And she wondered why it was, that in all this tumult of feeling there was none of the former agony

of regret for her false and fickle lover. The time when her brain had reeled and her eyes ached, when her heart had almost broken, and her strength had failed with the protracted agony of longing for his presence, might have been lived through in another state of existence, so little was its influence upon her now. An abiding regret for her own error would be with her always, but no more of the pangs of despised love. If she could have told Mr. Warrender all the truth, she would have been infinitely relieved, but that she was not free to do. Mrs. Masters had thought it best that the circumstances should be known to herself only, and in this matter her wishes were law. But how was Helen to act towards Mrs. Masters? This was one of her chief perplexities, and she brooded over it, pale and dejected-looking, for an anxious hour, after she was dressed and ready to go downstairs. Helen had taken no heed of time that morning; she was up long before her usual hour, and yet when the children came to fetch her, according to custom, she was surprised to find that it was breakfast-time. She had not yet solved her difficulty; how was she to act towards Mrs. Masters? What was she to tell her, and how was she to tell it?

Helen loved and honoured Mrs. Masters with all her heart, and her gratitude to her was as profound as might have been expected from a grateful nature, quickened by such an experience as that of the tender mercies of Mrs. Townley Gore. She suffered intolerably from the mere idea of failing in the most absolute truthfulness towards her, but what was she to tell? Could she go to her and say: "Your brother loves me, and would marry me if I could consent; you know I cannot, and that I am helplessly condemned to make him unhappy." Mr. Warrender had not said that he loved her; he had not asked her to marry him.

To know there was a disturbing cause among them, that the peace of the household into which she had been so warmly welcomed was troubled, and by her, was terrible to Helen. If she could but see Jane, and get advice from her!

Thinking this one thought distinctly amid the confusion in her mind, she went down to breakfast, and found, not altogether to her satisfaction, that she and the children were to have that meal to themselves. The longer her first meeting with Mr. Warrender was postponed after the

events of last evening, the more awkward she would feel that meeting.

Mr. Warrender was too great a favourite with his little nieces, and too necessary to their contentment, for the children to take his absence from the breakfast-table without question. They raised a clamour immediately, and Helen was enabled to learn, without enquiry on her own part, that Mr. Warrender had invited himself to breakfast with his sister in her dressing-room.

The intelligence made Helen's heart beat quickly. What did this mean? Was he going to speak to Mrs. Masters? Was he going to tell his sister that which must make her repent of her generous kindness, and heartily wish that the orphan girl had never come across her path?

With burning cheeks and icy-cold hands Helen sat silent at the table, and forced herself to attend to the children; but she partially recovered her composure when she found that the letters from India had arrived that morning, and that they were unusually numerous. It might be only an accident, it might be merely that Mrs. Masters and her brother had to talk of family affairs.

The morning wore away; the children were cross and troublesome under the double infliction of a wet day, and the deprivation of "Uncle John." They did not like Miss Rhodes at all so much as usual, and the lessons were not a success. It was nearly twelve o'clock when Mr. Warrender came into the morning-room, and was received with shouts of delight, and an instant demand for battledore-and-shuttlecock in the hall on account of the horrid rain.

Helen gave him one fleeting glance, and by a desperate effort of her will, kept her face from changing. That his was grave she could not but see. There was no alteration in the kindly courtesy of his tone as he addressed her, said something about the batch of Indian letters, and added that Mrs. Masters would be glad if she could go to her.

Helen hurried away, dreading she knew not what. She was obliged to pause at the door of Mrs. Masters's dressing-room to summon up her courage, but with her first glance at her kind friend, she saw that she should not need any, except for her own private use.

Mrs. Masters talked to her about the weather and the children; about the budget of news from India—the letters included a

gushing epistle from Mrs. Stephenson—and about Colonel Masters's disconsolate and uncomfortable state in her absence. Mrs. Masters was always rather "low" on Indian mail days; she longed for the letters, but they fretted her when they came.

"In Mrs. Stephenson's letter," she added, "there is a great deal about yourself, and what she calls 'the romantic rencontre,' meaning my meeting with you in Paris. She heard of it from Colonel Masters, and wants to know all the particulars, for, as she very justly remarks, there is no getting 'details' out of my husband. She asks a whole string of questions about you, and wants your photograph. I never knew anybody with such a fancy for having portraits of people whom she does not know. But the oddest thing is her familiarity with the affairs of Horndean. Of course she never heard Mrs. Townley Gore's name in connection with you, but she seems to know all about her, and she is very gushing on the subject of the 'inheritance,' and the 'prodigal,' as she obligingly calls Mr. Horndean—I am sure I do not know why. She wants to know whether he has forsworn cards, sown his wild oats, turned over a new leaf, and married an heiress! She is an extraordinary woman; she writes about our next neighbour, whom I don't know by sight, as if she were his intimate acquaintance."

Mrs. Masters said this rather irritably, for Mrs. Stephenson, either in person or on paper, had an irritating effect on her, and Helen found it singularly difficult to speak. The name of Frank Lisle had rarely been mentioned since Madame Morrison had told her story to Mrs. Masters, and the incident of Mrs. Stephenson's letters to him, and the use he had made of them, was one which had not dwelt in Mrs. Masters's memory. But Helen had to speak the name.

"It would be from Mr. Lisle, that Mrs. Stephenson would hear about Mrs. Townley Gore, and her brother," she said; "she was a great friend of his, you may remember."

"I do remember, and I am very sorry I said anything about her letter, my dear child. It was thoughtless of me. Of course that was her source of information."

Mrs. Masters was vexed with herself for her forgetfulness, and also freshly struck with the strange hiddenness and yet the nearness-at-hand of the links that connect

human beings and human affairs. Mrs. Stephenson could no doubt tell them all about Frank Lisle; the man who imagined he had cut every link between himself and the victim of his heartless caprice, was within Mrs. Masters's reach, if she chose to stretch out her hand; but her only desire was to know nothing about him, to keep Helen from the risk of meeting him, to let him fade from her memory. If, when the Townley Gores returned to Horndean, and the inevitable meeting between them and Helen became imminent, she heard anything of Mr. Lisle's intending to come to Horndean, Mrs. Masters was not sure but that a quiet and timely hint might be given him that he had better stay away if he did not wish to be unmasked before his friends. This, however, was a consideration for the future; such a contingency might never arise. This passed so swiftly through her mind while she was arranging her letters, that there was hardly a perceptible pause before she said:

"My brother seems to be infected by the prevalent disease of restlessness; just as I was congratulating myself upon his being so thoroughly content and settled down here. Is it not provoking of him?"

A few minutes before, Helen's heart had been racing, now it stood still. She could not ask Mrs. Masters what she meant, but Mrs. Masters was full of her grievance, and she went on:

"John cannot beat about the bush, it is not in him; but he tried to insinuate his meaning gently just now. The fact is he means to go abroad in January."

"Abroad? Very far?"

"Very far indeed, though he talks as though it were in the next county—to Egypt. He says he wants to make some studies on the spot; that he has reached a stage of his book which requires them; that he does not like the cold—not having come like me, from a prolonged baking—and wants to escape the three worst months in the year. I think he also wants to escape my visitors, Colonel Masters's brother and his wife, who are coming next month, but he declares he does not, and so I am bound to believe him; but it really is very provoking, just as we had all settled down so happily; is it not?"

"Three months!"

"So he says; but I know what three months will mean, when John gets among mummies and hieroglyphics. I said I could only conclude that he was bored with our company, but that hurt him

very much ; so much that I do believe if I had pressed the point, and pretended to think so in sound earnest, he would have given it up. I could not do that, you know ; it would be too ungenerous."

"And so—Mr. Warrender is going away!"

"Yes. How dreadfully we shall miss him! However, I shall certainly try to fix him by a promise to the three months. John always keeps his promises."

"A great deal may happen in three months," said Helen dreamily. She was talking to herself, and her mind was busy with a resolution she had just taken.

"True ; I hope it will happen to him to grow very tired of Egypt, and to come back before his tether is pulled tight. I must say it was a most unpleasant surprise."

This communication made Helen very unhappy. It was almost more than she could bear to feel that she was the cause of this great disappointment to Mrs. Masters, whose utter unconsciousness smote her with the keenest pain. She made an excuse of headache, which her pale face confirmed, to escape to her own room, and shut herself up with her new grief. He was flying from her ; she had ruined his peace ; she was banishing him from his home, depriving his sister of the comfort and joy of his presence—she who had no right there ; she who had done a thing so wrong that no repentance might redeem it, and if she were to have the great relief of telling him the truth, it could only be in praying him to tear her from his heart. This was what had come of the noble generosity with which the sister and the brother had welcomed her. What should she do ? Implore him to remain at Chesney for his sister's sake, and beg them both to let her go ?

As she sat forlornly on the floor, leaning her head against her bed, in a childish attitude of trouble, she remembered, as another contrast in her fate, the appeal that she had made to Mr. Townley Gore, her entreaty to be allowed to fly from hatred and the house that was to her not home, but a prison.

It was from love and peace and happiness that she would fain fly now ; and whither ? How was she to do it, and on what pretext, since Mr. Warrender had not given her the right to tell the truth either to his sister or himself ?

Her thoughts were in a whirl ; she could not reduce them to order ; she only knew

that she must go—that was the one right way out of this trouble—into what ? Ah, who could tell that ? Would Madame Morrison come again, or allow Jane to come to her aid in this unexplained distress, when she would be forced to appear to act with the veriest caprice and unreason ? Again, and after how brief an interval, she was confronted with the question, what was to become of her ?

In the meantime, certain aids to the solution of that question were working towards its settlement quite independently of Helen.

It was with some surprise and interest that Delphine Moreau, on arriving at Horndean, recognised in the lady who did the honours of that grand English country house, the same person who had occupied the house in the Avenue du Bois, and whose proud and luxurious ways had so much impressed her then inexperienced mind. Delphine's intelligence was of the rapid order, and, short as the interval was, she had seen a good deal since then. She was neither to be dazzled nor awed by Mrs. Townley Gore, or anybody like her, now ; she was merely curious concerning her.

Nothing was seen or heard at Horndean of Madame Lisle. What had become of her since she returned—as Delphine never doubted—to England ? Did they know anything about her, this dinner-eating, ease-loving gentleman, and this fine lady, who was so well-preserved, except in the matter of temper ? Not a hint was to be gathered that the people at Horndean had ever heard of "Mademoiselle." Delphine felt a sort of interest in her ; she remembered her when the earrings looked especially becoming.

All this in the first two days of Beatrix's stay at Horndean, during which her maid did not chance to see Mr. Horndean and his friend Mr. Lisle ; but her curiosity was stimulated and her interest was aroused when she caught sight of those gentlemen, and, instantly recognising the monsieur of the Louvre, he who had come to the lodge of her uncle, Jules Devrient, and asked for Mrs. Townley Gore, had heard that he was Mr. Lisle.

"And Madame Lisle ?" she asked ; but the housekeeper laughed at the question. There was no Madame Lisle ; Mr. Lisle was a deal too roving in his ways, and too merry and devil-may-careish to "settle" yet awhile. Delphine, actuated by her habitual caution and secretiveness, said no more, but she gave a good deal of thought

to the matter. Her duties kept her very busy; Beatrix was an exacting mistress, and the rooms which she occupied were far removed from the gentleman's quarters; it chanced that Delphine never saw Mr. Horndean and Mr. Lisle together again until the day on which she left Horndean with Miss Chevenix, for Temple Vane. After that day she pondered more deeply than before on the subject of "Mademoiselle"—no longer thinking of her as a possible "madame" after what the house-keeper had said, and wishing that she could find an opportunity of disturbing Mrs. Townley G6re's serenity—for she detested that lady with the full force of a fine capacity for hatred—or of employing some one else to do it, with safety to herself. No such opportunity offered, however, and Delphine, who had important private affairs of her own to attend to just then, on her clever administration of which depended the chances of a modest *d6t*—prospect ever dear and absorbing to the French heart—had to reconcile herself to waiting.

The relations between Miss Chevenix and her maid were of a singular kind. Miss Chevenix had begun by treating the new maid provided for her by Mrs. Mabberley as she had treated the former one—(that Mrs. Benson who had been taken ill at the Duchess of Derwent's house, and peremptorily sent home to Glasgow, and concerning whom she had never since troubled herself to ask a question)—that is to say, with insolence and disdain. But she very soon abandoned her line of conduct, for the sound reason that it made things very unpleasant for herself. Delphine was a match for her mistress in temper, and had more coolness, because she was in a position of superior strength. The first time Beatrix was insolent to her she refused to dress her; and met the fury with which she was assailed with the quiet remark: "I take orders from mademoiselle when she gives them properly, never otherwise. Mademoiselle will please to remember that. Such are the instructions of my employer." Beatrix turned deadly pale, and shivered. If she could safely

have killed Mrs. Mabberley and Delphine, at that moment, she would have done it. But freedom did not lie that way. She rallied her spirits by thinking of the way it did lie, and said, with a forced smile of exceeding bitterness:

"You shall have your orders 'properly,' my good girl. The point of honour must be keen indeed with such as you."

Delphine walked quietly out of the room, and Beatrix had to follow her, and to beg her pardon in set terms. From that hour, the two handsome young women hated each other with intensity characteristic of both; but no outward sign of that feeling escaped either of them. In the emancipation to which Beatrix looked forward so eagerly, the getting rid of Delphine was no small item of advantage, and it gave her a spiteful pleasure to conceal her intended marriage from her maid as long as possible.

Delphine, on her side, wishing Miss Chevenix all possible ill, and possessing this advantage in her hatred of her mistress over her mistress's hatred of her, that she had it in her power to bring about not a little of that ill, while Beatrix could do her no harm at all, made certain observations respecting Mr. Ramsden with a secret pleasure. He admired this creamy-skinned, red-haired, light-eyed she-devil, and he would find it pleasant and profitable to marry her; she (Delphine) wished him all success, and she believed there were certain ways of securing it. Mrs. Mabberley would not approve perhaps, but bah! what should she care, beyond a certain point, for Mrs. Mabberley? When the time came, she would help Mr. Ramsden to his prize; for Delphine could fully trust him to avenge any injury that any one had received at the hands of a woman who should be in his power. "I know him," she would say to herself, "and he is a devil. Now a he-devil can always outwit and beat a she-devil, when she cannot get away from him. He shall have the cream-skin, and the red-head, and the shining eyes, when the time for telling comes."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

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PRICE TWOPENCE

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER III. "ONLY A FIDDLER."

"You shall go to the play," was spoken in the tone of a rather angry father towards a disobedient boy—as if Phœbe had already been ordered to go to the play, and had stubbornly refused to do any such thing. Of course it was Doyle himself whom Doyle, in spirit, had called "You;" it was one of his two selves addressing the other. But it all came practically to the same thing. His tone of command was, after all, more satisfactory than a mere cold and indifferent "Very well, then—you may go" would have been. She had never yet been commanded or ordered about with anything like authority, even by Phil; and the sensation was a little piquant and not at all disagreeable. Doyle might have fancied himself disappointed could he have seen, in spite of her having had to tumble up anyhow among boys, the amount of the natural woman that there was in Phœbe.

So soon as the matter was settled, it was he, and not she, who set about this simple business of play-going as if it were a serious affair. He did not say much about it, but any woman, without going a finger's-breadth below the surface, could see that it occupied his thoughts quite as much as house-hunting. Phœbe, as we know, was something of a clairvoyante in her way, and though, like clairvoyantes in general, she nearly always saw either wrongly or else what was not to be seen at all, she could not, when things lay very much on the surface, help seeing more or

less rightly now and then. But it did not strike her that there was anything like a childish streak in this part of her father's behaviour. On the contrary, unsympathetic as its manifestations were, it made her feel that plays are a more really important part of life even than she had supposed.

She was spared that half-hour of agony during which play-goers, in the first stage of their career, become quite convinced that the inconceivably indifferent middle-aged or elderly relation who is to take them will never have finished drinking his last lingering glass of wine; that his last two inches of cigar have grown, during the last two minutes, longer instead of shorter; that no cab will be found on the rank; and that, in short, the farce will have to begin without them. Phœbe's father proved himself a model for play-goers of his age. He was ready to the instant, as if he were a soldier on duty, and yet did not grumble at having been kept waiting by a single look or word. The cab was not late, was not exceptionally slow, and met with no delays, so that Phœbe's first experience of a theatre was one of unfilled stalls and the curtain down.

Her father, as they settled themselves in their box, had still the air of a soldier on duty. But it was with a sense rather of disappointment than of relief that he found himself by no means so affected with the pain of old memories and associations as he had expected to be. When he had been a play-goer at Helmsford he had been under a spell, which made that shabby little house a more wonderful temple of mystery to him than to the youngest child in the theatre. And it was not the place he remembered, but the spell under which the place had been. Even after the curtain

rose, and Olga was exercising all the small magic of which it was capable, the man of later middle age mentally rubbed his eyes, and wondered whether he had been dreaming in those days or if he were dreaming now. To find himself sitting after all these years, in a box at a theatre with a young girl by his side, was dream-like enough; but it was among his own once familiar ghosts that he had been dreading to find himself sitting, and not one of them was there. It is a real disappointment, even to a man of the age of reason, to find that one has been afraid of shadows which, as soon as they are faced, fly away, and do not even give one the satisfaction of a battle and a victory. So it was with Doyle. The battle-ground on which he had resolved to make the last stroke of conquest over his past turned out to be but a mere commonplace, in which no past was present to be conquered. He not only did not, but could not, see the form of Stella floating in the vapour of the footlights or feel as he had once felt during the pause contrived to give the leading lady an effective entry. So stubborn did fancy prove, that he at last caught himself trying to force up the ghosts of which he fancied himself afraid. Then at last, like a wise man, he shrugged his shoulders, left off worrying the ghosts, and—more like a middle-aged man, if less like a wise one—took for granted that in so empty a place his companion found nothing more than he could find. "There's nobody here to play Stella to her—fool," thought he. "I'm glad I came. I'm more of a dead man than I thought I was—and a good thing too." But now that his heart-ache was over he felt that it had been a sort of luxury, while it lasted, after all, and he missed the pain. "I suppose this is the first sign of growing old—the first real grey hair."

Phoebe lost no time in throwing her heart over stalls, orchestra, and footlights right into the middle of the stage. Although the inside of a theatre was not in the least like its picture in her imagination, she felt no disappointment and no disillusion. Something in the very atmosphere felt like the effect of native air, and made her feel, for the first time in her life, at home. Or rather it made her feel like one who goes home again after an absence of many years. The excitement she felt was not that of a mere foreign traveller who, after long visions of longed-for lakes and mountains, finds himself at last among

them. What she felt was the unconscious self-forgetful excitement of recognition: everything she saw and heard seemed to answer to a memory, like the caw of rooks and the scent of wallflowers in the sun. Every detail, down to the smallest and most trivial, was new, and yet not one was strange. And why should an acted phantom of unreal and impossible life, like this now forgotten Olga, be strange to a girl who had been an actress all her life, with herself for dramatic author, manager, and audience, all in one? This was her real life at last, because it was the realisation of all unreality. She threw her whole self into Olga: it was not the actress for whom the part had been written that was acting, but Phoebe Doyle. And the charm of it to her was not, as to simpler minds, that it seemed like reality, but because she knew all the time that it was only a play.

So another miscomprehension of one another, never to be explained away by words, rose between Doyle and her. He saw her through absorption, and set it down to the natural effect upon a novice of new excitements and new scenes, regarding it with the tolerant pity of hearts that imagine themselves killed at last for those that are still alive. She had no thought for him at all, but quite understood, without the trouble of thinking, why even so severe a father should have acted as if it were the first duty of man and woman to go to the play—why he had not said "you may," but "you shall." Suppose that the hours of daylight were fated to be spent like those of a cloistered nun—what then, if they were to be regarded but as intervals of rest before the Gas shed her beams over the world, and the Curtain rolled away, and "the light which never is on sea or land," save on those which are made of canvas and timber, arose? I suppose Phoebe was as mere a heathen as a savage who does not know even so much of Christian civilisation as the taste of its fire-water. But who believes like the savage in the reality of an ideal world? Phoebe had not only found hers, but had seen it with her eyes.

And then, just when nothing was less in her thoughts, her eyes turned, and met the fixed stare of Stanislas Adrianski.

No wonder she started, and turned crimson, and wondered what such a chance could mean, and wished—though in other words—that the author of her romance had not made so uncomfortable a blunder as to bring his hero face to face with his

heroine just there and just then. The sight of Stanislas made her conscious that the house had an audience as well as a stage; and her hero, with the gas-light full upon his upturned face, did not look so supremely fascinating as when he had paced his back yard in a London twilight, and had no comparisons to fear. She knew her sudden flush was of startled guilt towards her neglected, and, as he had every right to believe, forsaken, lover, and she read sternly—just upbraiding in his stony stare, and the effects of a heart half broken in his sallow cheeks and melancholy length of hair. It was as if he were pointing her out to the whole house as a woman who, for the sake of wealth, had thrown over the lover to whom she had bound herself while poor and unknown because he was poor and unknown still. It was not, it could not, be true; for what could be a greater sin? She brought her fan well into play, taught by instinct that it had other uses than those it was made for, and managed to glance at her father over her right shoulder. Fortunately, he was not looking towards the orchestra just now; but he might, at any moment, and what would happen then?

Happily, he did not; or, if he did, saw nothing remarkable in a fiddler's exercise of his right to stare in any direction he liked when his eyes were off duty. But Phœbe's complete enjoyment of her first play was gone. It was a relief when Stanislas was obliged to take his part in the lively music to which the curtain next rose. But it was only a relief from the fear that something might instantly happen, as in books and plays; the strain of the situation still remained. She left the stage, stepped into the orchestra, and put herself in the place of Stanislas Adrianski. She became, now, the poor proud noble, compelled by poetical injustice to make use of his genius for daily bread while his sword was waiting for better times. She had not known, of course, that music was one of her lover's gifts, but it was quite part of the nature of things that it should be so, seeing that romance never fails to be the gainer when it obliges hero or heroine to fight ill-fortune with brush, bow, or pen. She saw his mind filled with justly indignant thoughts of her, while, by a picturesque contrast, his fingers had to bend themselves to trivial tunes that meant nothing, instead of extemporising Titanic symphonies of Love, Wrath, and Despair. She knew quite enough of music

to know what the magic of romance enables its musicians, and its musicians alone, to do. Have we not known them, by sheer force of natural genius, take up a hitherto unpractised instrument, and, without a moment's thought, put the most finished performers nowhere by making it perfectly express the most delicate lights and the deepest shades of their souls' tragedies? She could hear, without the help of her everyday ears, that one particular fiddle singling itself out from the rest and playing unwritten passages for her alone. Would it be quite impossible to ask her father for his pencil, scrawl a few words upon the back of her play-bill, fold the bill up, address it to Count Stanislas Adrianski, and let it flutter down accidentally into the orchestra? Quite impossible—although, being quite according to the rule of romance, it did not strike her as cunning or mean. Spanish ladies, she had always understood on the best authorities, can say more with a flutter of the fan than other women can with their tongues. But none of her authorities had supported their assertion by showing how it is done; and besides, her injured lover's eyes were not in the long black hair which—otherwise happily—was all of him that he could turn towards her while he was playing. That was especially fortunate, because the musicians have to remain at their desks throughout the last act of Olga.

Her father, without any of the awkwardness that his old friends would have expected from the archdeacon when trying to do the duties of a cavalier in waiting, helped her on with her cloak, and was not too moved by the ancient association of his heavy hands with another scarlet cloak upon another pair of shoulders to notice a bright glow upon his daughter's face that made him pleased to think she could so easily be made childishly happy. Phœbe—how do all girls, as if they were dumb creatures and free from the blindness of reason, understand all such things without experience or teaching?—was conscious of a certain solemn tenderness in the way in which her father covered her shoulders before leaving the box; and it touched her with a new sense of being protected and cared for. What was her precise relation to Stanislas? She wished she knew. How would it be, if that very night, she could conquer her growing awe for the father of whom even yet she knew that she understood absolutely nothing by telling him her whole story? But there should be

little need to set out the army of instincts, doubts, shames, and shynesses which kept a girl who had never made a confidence since she was born recoil from bringing herself to tell the eventless story of a first romance to one who would obviously prove so unsympathetic as he. She would not have known even how to tell it to a sister, if only for want of knowing how to begin; and the language did not exist, except in her books, wherein so shadowy a story could be told. And then, thus far, she would have to tell it to her own shame; and—but one can more easily imagine a moth's taking an elderly elephant into her confidence about the vague attractions of a candle. Phœbe could not quite forget how Phil had taken the affair of Stanislas; and her father was a great deal more awful in his deference and tenderness than Phil had been with all his rough and jealous ill-humour.

The corridor was rather crowded, so that it took them several minutes to pass from their box to the head of the stairs. She saw Lawrence speak to her father, and heard herself, for the first time, introduced to a stranger by her full new style of Miss Phœbe Doyle. It was true that Miss Phœbe Doyle was being introduced to Mr. Lawrence. But it would be strange if she did not feel confused as to which of her many selves happened just then to be the real one, for, at the same instant, Phœbe Burden recognised the presence of Stanislas Adrianski not a dozen yards away. It is impossible to conceive any situation more completely like the confusion of a dream in which we are at the same time ourselves and not ourselves, and carry on with ease two distinct and inconsistent lives, unprepared, in one of our persons, for whatever may happen to us in the other. It seemed as if Phœbe Burden had nothing to do with Phœbe Doyle, and that if Phœbe Doyle confessed, as her own, the guilty experiences of Phœbe Burden, her confession would not be true. Of course, when thus doubled, we know perfectly well that only one of us can be the actress, and only one the real woman. But which is the actress and which the real woman? Phœbe Burden or Phœbe Doyle? Phœbe, apart from the puzzle of surnames, was no conjuror, and therefore did not know. Phœbe Doyle passed through her first introduction to a stranger with becoming dignity. It was Phœbe Burden whose eyes did not dare to meet those of her lover—Phœbe Burden's lover,

and not Phœbe Doyle's at all. Why should Phœbe Doyle tell tales of Phœbe Burden? That would be really mean.

I do not know with how much or with how little ease a fiddler, when his duty is over, may transport himself into the corridors from his unknown regions underneath the stage. But were it ten times as hard as it can possibly be, and though the road be barred as high as the chin with fines and orders, I have a certain faith in the creed that love will find out the way from anywhere to anywhere—at any rate, if helped by hunger. Poor and unheroic indeed were the soul of that struggling genius who, having gained a girl whom he thought might turn out to be worth a little, should let her go without a stroke so soon as he could see her to be probably worth a great deal more. What might be the relation of his Phœbe of the back-yard to the big man with the big beard who had taken her to the play in the style of a fine lady? There was nothing in the appearance of things to alarm his moral sense. Perhaps love's instinct could trust her purity; perhaps his moral sense was large and unfettered; perhaps (for heroes are privileged in such things) he had no particular moral sense at all. But, not being blind, he could read in her disorder of face and bearing when she met his first gaze of surprise a hundred proofs that, if he chose to lose his influence over her, he would be a fool. He did, after all, read, if he failed to comprehend, the language of her fan. It signalled him to her side; and, without losing a moment, he was there. "Miss Phœbe Doyle." It was a name which, spoken loudly and clearly, was quite easy for the most foreign of ears to catch and remember. So she was clearly a rich man's daughter, and her name was Phœbe Doyle.

Would he speak to her? thought Phœbe. Would he make a scene? Could she prevent such a chance by any sort of warning or imploring sign? If he had known her through and through, he could not have acted more wisely. He had to thank Nature for having given him a pair of eyes that always, and not only when they had reason, seemed at once to appeal like a woman's, and to command like a man's. But it was a touch of real inspiration that brought him to the door of the cab, into which Phœbe was just about to be helped by her father. It was not by accident—unless by one of the accidents which never happen except to those who know

how to grasp them, and how to win by them. He forestalled a professional copper-hunter and opened the door, throwing upon Phoebe a look that concentrated all tragedy, without the help of a word. How could she have suspected so complete a gentleman of being capable of making a scene? His delicacy smote her with new shame. He did not so much as raise his hat, or bow; he only took care that her dress should not be soiled.

"Sixteen, Harland Terrace," was reward enough for his trouble.

"Come, out of the way, my man," said Doyle, who only saw a pale plastered face and a very bad hat, and was completely insensible to the signs that show nobility down at heel to be nobility still. "Oh, you want something, I suppose, for doing nothing. There, then."

He dropped a copper or two into what he took for the hand of a runner for cabs; not many, for he never threw away small things. To his surprise, they were scornfully tossed under the cab-wheels.

Staniaslas, being poor, threw away small things freely, and not merely when they happened to be sprats to catch mackerel.

"Why, what the deuce are you?" asked Doyle, remembering the ways of Bohemia.

"I am only a fiddler," said Staniaslas, with a magnificent manner and a magnificent bow, that went to the depth of Phoebe's soul; not that the depth may be thought very far. "Doyle, Sixteen, Harland Terrace," thought he, and then, the departing cab having left them uncovered, picked up the pence, and put them into his pocket, after all.

THE WOODEN MIDSHIPMAN.

GOING down Leadenhall Street only a few days ago, I paused, as is my wont, at the door of The Wooden Midshipman, and thought of the changes he has seen since the days of *Dombey and Son*.

I found the Midshipman looking precisely the same as he has looked ever since I have known him, and as he looked, I imagine, many years before I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance: "With his quadrant at his round black knob of an eye, and its figure in the old attitude of indomitable alacrity, the midshipman displayed his elfin small clothes to the best advantage, and, absorbed in scientific pursuits, had no sympathy with worldly concerns. He was so far the

creature of circumstances that a dry day covered him with dust, and a misty day peppered him with little bits of soot, and a wet day brightened up his tarnished uniform for a moment, and a very hot day blistered him; but otherwise he was a callous, obdurate, conceited midshipman, intent on his own discoveries, and caring as little for what went on about him, terrestrially, as Archimedes at the taking of Syracuse." Changes have taken place, and are taking place, under his very nose. Gigantic alterations, disregard of old customs and upheavals of old neighbourhoods, waivings of ancient rights and discontinuance of time-honoured privileges, have come to pass in his immediate vicinity, and yet the Little Man is unmoved. He still stands high and dry at his post of observation, and lets the stream of progress and what the world calls enlightenment and improvement sweep beneath his feet unheeded.

With the London of Charles Dickens I have been familiar from my youth. When I first began "to take notice" and "to run alone," the greater part of it existed intact, and one of my greatest pleasures was to wander about the localities he had described with such photographic exactness and such rich pictorial effect, and live his stories over again with their real scenery.

And after all, there was no portion of the whole of London so prolific in Dickensian reminiscences as the City. They came at every turn, in the ancient churches, hemmed in on all sides by gigantic warehouses, in their melancholy deserted graveyards, with their ragged graves, their blackened trees, and neglected gravestones. In the odd boarding-houses and unaccountable ruins that had buried themselves up strange courts, and lurked, half hidden, in unaccountable alleys, and presented themselves in quiet behind the-age squares. In the spacious halls of opulent companies, which showed but an old-fashioned porch in a narrow quiet lane, but which presented to those who were permitted to enter their portals a superb range of apartments teeming, mayhap, with old furniture and valuable pictures, and doubtless giving on a quiet garden, worth no one knows what a square foot for building purposes, but preserved from the ravages of Buggins, the builder, merely to gladden the eyes of the plump City sparrows, and of the master, the wardens, and the clerk of these most worshipful corporations.

You might find countless reminders of the works of the Great Novelist in the curious old banking-houses, in the mouldy old counting-houses where so much money was made; in the difficult to find but cosy chop-houses where you could get a chop or a steak—and such a chop or a steak—hissing hot from the gridiron; in the methodical old clerks, the astonishing octogenarian housekeepers, the corpulent beadles in their splendid gaberdines, and the “characters” who kept stalls at the street corners and sold anything you please from fruit in season to dolls’ coal-scuttles; in the ticket porters, the bankers’-clerks chained to their pocket-books, the porters, the dockmen, the carters, the carriers, the brokers, the brokers’ men, and the brokers’ boys, who touched their hats, who hurried along, who laboured, who smacked their whips, who loaded and unloaded, who sampled, who noted, and who scampered, who grew prematurely grey, who became quickly furrowed, and who grew old long before their time in the everlasting struggle for so much per cent. from year’s-end to year’s-end.

Down by the waterside, along Thames Street, through the narrow lanes and passages leading thereto, you continually saw some spot, some character or incident that recalled something in one of the stories you knew so well. In the picturesque old wharves, with their gigantic cranes, their odd-shaped cabin-like counting-houses, their unaccountable sheds, their vast beams and supports, their gigantic scales and weighing machines, their glimpses of the river, with its red-funnelled steamers, its picturesque billy-boys, its forests of masts, and elaborate tracery of rigging. As you listened to the whirr of the crane, the “Yeo-yeo” of the sailors, the clink-clank of the windlass over and over again, some well-remembered passage would be sure to recur to you.

There were also many ancient shops, which had existed in exactly the same places, with apparently the same goods in the window and the same shopman behind the counter ever since you could recollect, and for aught you knew ever since your grandfather could recollect. I can call to mind not a few of these. There was a glove-shop—the proprietor looked as if he might have been an under-secretary in Mr. William Pitt’s cabinet; there was a chemist’s-shop up a court; there was a tea-shop; there was a button-shop; there was a law-stationer’s; there was a print-

shop; there was a fishing-tackle shop and a silversmith’s. All these were of the oldest of old fashions; their proprietors were the most old-fashioned of old-fashioned people and they all did business in an old-fashioned way. All these shops had a sort of quaint Dickens flavour about them, but most of them have been now swept away in order to make room for the palatial buildings which are now crowding the City and gradually altering its entire character.

Time after time in visiting the City have I grieved to find one after another of these shops removed and other quaint corners and ancient landmarks swept away altogether. One, however, always remained, and that had perhaps the most distinct connexion and association with the novelist of any spot in the City—my old friend the Wooden Midshipman in Leadenhall Street. Everyone knows the Wooden Midshipman, and everyone knows the important figure it makes in *Dombey and Son*. To myself this shop is especially interesting. When I was a boy, the very first book of Dickens’s that I read was *Dombey and Son*. Passing down Leadenhall Street shortly afterwards, I noted the Wooden Midshipman, and at once “spotted” it as the original of Sol Gills’s residence. The description is so vivid and exact that it is unmistakable. It was many years after that I knew, for an actual fact, that this was really the shop that was so graphically sketched in the novel.

Passing down the street only the other day, I paused once more at the door of The Wooden Midshipman. I looked in at the window. Everything looked pretty much as usual. But stay! I see a white placard in a prominent position, which startles me as if I had seen a ghost. The placard is to the effect that the business is being removed to One Hundred and Fifty-six, Minories, on account of the premises being pulled down for improvement. “He was a callous, obdurate, conceited midshipman, intent on his own discoveries, and caring as little for what went on about him, terrestrially, as Archimedes at the taking of Syracuse.” He is “a callous, obdurate, conceited midshipman,” for despite this unlooked-for catastrophe, this terrible calamity, he stands at the door looking as blithe and gay and contented as he has looked, any time, I suppose, during the past century. Men may come and men may go, but he observes for ever.

He has outlived most of his compeers,

and he has seen many changes in Leadenhall Street. Long before the palatial mansion of John Company, over the way, was disestablished and pulled down, he was a veteran in the service. I have no doubt that he often gazed upon Charles Lamb, who generally came to his office in the India House very late in the morning, but, as he pointed out in reply to the expostulations of an indignant chief, made up for it by leaving very early. I have no doubt that the gentle Elia often exchanged winks with the Midshipman when the former was "leaving early," in order to enjoy a ramble at Islington or a merry dinner at some rare old City tavern with congenial companions. I wonder whether William Hogarth ever noted the little man, and made a sketch of him. He must have passed by the shop-door many times.

This quaint old-fashioned shop is about the very first of a number of quaint old-fashioned buildings which, but a few years ago abounded in Leadenhall Street, especially on this side of the way. It has but little changed in appearance since it was first established in 1773, only six years after the publication of the first nautical almanac. It was established by Mr. William Heather as a "sea chart, map, and mathematical instrument warehouse," "where may be had," we are informed, "Hadley's Quadrants and Sextants of all Sizes, neatly mounted with two Parallel Glasses, accurately divided by the Patent Machines, and warranted good; Gunter's Scales, Sliding Scales, Sectors, Cases of Instruments, and Compasses of all Sorts; Sea Telescopes from One to Three Feet long, with Four or Six Glasses, etc." Mr. Heather was succeeded by Mr. J. W. Norie in 1814, who was joined by Mr. George Wilson in 1834. Hence the firm of Norie and Wilson, under which style the business is still carried on by Mr. Charles Wilson and his sons.

The Wooden Midshipman has probably seen more of the various phases of business during the past century than most people. When he first commenced taking his observations there were plenty of people remaining who remembered acutely the losses they had sustained during the South Sea Bubble. Change Alley and Garraway's Coffee House were very nearly as picturesque an aspect as they present in the late Edward Matthew Ward's famous picture. In those days the City merchant was a man of considerable importance and not a little sense. He

"lived over the shop," he and his wife and family resided at the place of business; they patronised the City shops and the City markets, and on Sunday they might be found filling a gigantic black oaken pew in one of the fine old City churches.

Clubs were then unknown in the City; but there were grand old taverns and cosy coffee-houses, where the City merchant could smoke his "pipe of Virginia," discuss the news of the day, and crack a bottle of wine of a vintage impossible to obtain in the present day. In those days there was one post a day and that not a remarkably heavy one; news travelled slowly and with uncertainty; prices remained steady from one week's end to another; and ruin or prosperity depended more on honest labour and application than on secret information, the flash of the electric current, or the juggling of the Stock Exchange. In those days commerce was not chicanery, neither was business a spasm.

When news came in those days it was generally pretty correct, and people had time to talk it over and master every detail of the information before the next budget arrived. Nowadays you may receive terrible intelligence at breakfast-time and have it contradicted long before luncheon. There has been plenty of news discussed in this ancient shop in bygone times, you may be well assured; there have been many fierce arguments across that age-polished counter, and much speculation over charts and newspapers in the little cabin-like back parlour. The place must have been a "going concern" when the news came of the Battle of Lexington, and I can imagine how the ancient captains and the young apprentices talked there by the hour together concerning the murder of Captain Cook. Indeed, I have a sort of notion that Captain Cook called at "Heather's" for some nautical instruments and charts just before starting on the disastrous expedition. During the Gordon Riots, I will be bound, Mr. William Heather trembled for his shop windows. He probably, being a prudent man, kept them closely shuttered, closed his Naval Academy, and gave his students a holiday, and doubtless the Wooden Midshipman, being a prudent midshipman, retired from his position at the door and sought shelter under the counter till the storm was over.

Within these walls there must have been considerable wrangling, too, when the independence of the United States of America was first acknowledged. How the Irish Rebellion of '98 must have been talked over and the Treaty of Amiens discussed! Cannot you imagine the sensation caused in this old-fashioned shop when "Boney" might be expected to land every day; and cannot you fancy the joy and the sorrow that pervaded this Naval Academy when news came of the Battle of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson! The place is a good deal associated with Nelson. I daresay he had been there many times himself. In the little back parlour is an excellent portrait of the hero of Trafalgar, said to have been painted for Lady Hamilton. There is also a curious cup, with the initials "H. R." upon it. Besides this, there is a very comfortable arm-chair, bearing this inscription on a brass plate: "This was Lord Nelson's favourite chair when he was Captain of the Boreas frigate. Presented by his Master, James Jamieson, to Wm. Heather, being part of the property purchased by J. W. Norris and Wilson in Leadenhall Street, London."

When the news came of the Battle of Waterloo the Midshipman must have been quite a veteran, and the establishment over which he presided as well known and as widely respected as any in the City of London. Still, I will be bound, notwithstanding the progress of the times, the gossips assembled, and though they presumably came in to buy one of Hadley's quadrants, a case of instruments, or a sea-telescope, they remained to talk. I should fancy pupils in the Naval Academy neglected plane sailing, traverse sailing, middle latitude sailing, during such times. The embryo admirals who were trying to reduce the time at ship to the time at Greenwich, to correct the observed altitude of the moon, to find the true amplitude, or the true azimuth, who were endeavouring to observe the angular distance between the sun and moon, and who were puzzling their brains over parallax, refraction, or semi-diameter, who were nearly driving themselves silly over natural sines, proportional logarithms, depression or dip of the horizon, the moon's augmentation, amplitude, and meridional parts, would quickly shunt all such uninteresting studies in favour of discussions concerning Quatre Bras, and Hougoumont, and the

conning of the latest despatches from Lord Wellington.

One can easily picture the wordy warfare in this curious old mansion during the trial of Queen Caroline, the surprise manifested when omnibuses first ran, and how people shook their heads over the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, and said the unfortunate death of Mr. Huskisson was a judgment. The Wooden Midshipman, notwithstanding all these changes, still stuck to his post, and still made his observations on the stirring events of the age. Among other things he observed were the passing of the first Reform Bill, the Abolition of Slavery, the introduction of lucifer matches, and the burning of the Houses of Parliament. He heard the cheers and joy-bells for the accession of Queen Victoria; he saw the glare of the conflagration at the Royal Exchange, and heard the ancient clock fall into the flames, playing, "There is no luck about the house." He noted the introduction of the penny postage, the imposition of the Income Tax, and the repeal of the Corn Laws. He has been at his post from the time people clamoured for free trade till the period when some of them have doubted whether it wasn't a mistake. He has been there through at least four notable French revolutions. He was a witness of the mourning crowd that thronged the City on the occasion of the funeral of the Duke of Wellington. He saw the people rushing down Cornhill when peace was proclaimed after the Russian War in 1855; and he heard the great bell of St. Paul's boom forth to all men at midnight the sad intelligence of the death of the Prince Consort. He has existed from the old days of lanterns and oil lamps to the days of gas and electricity, from the time of the ancient and decrepit "Charlies" to the time of the police force. He has seen the navy become well-nigh perfect as a sailing fleet, and seamanship and navigation brought to the highest point of excellence. He has remained to see the sailing ships knocked out of time by steamers, and the line-of-battle ship almost superseded by the steam ram. He has seen the whole system of commerce utterly changed by the introduction of the penny-post, railways, steam-ships, and the electric telegraph.

A more popular little officer in his own domain than our friend it would be difficult to find. He is reverentially regarded and carefully looked after by all. Fifty years ago the street-boys did not treat him with

respect; they jeered at him and gave him sly taps as they passed by. Old Sam, an eccentric shopman—there have been a good many extraordinary characters connected with this place, notably an old-fashioned manager, who it is said bore an extraordinary resemblance to Sol Gills—was always lying in wait for these rascals (as Betsy Trotwood did for the donkey-boys), and many a time has he chased them down Cornhill with a good stout cane, and soundly be-larrupped them over against Saint Michael's Alley. At one time the Little Man used to get his knuckles severely abraded by passing porters carrying loads, and was continually being sent into dock to have a fresh set of knuckles provided. But still, except for these accidents and his going to get a new coat, he was always at his post all day long. If he were absent the enquiries would be frequent. Old pupils, who had become distinguished naval officers—and the academy has turned out not a few in its time—would pop in to enquire what had become of the genius of the place, and many have been the offers to buy him outright and remove him. Several Americans have been in lately and have offered his proprietors very large sums if they might be allowed to purchase him and take him to New York. It is furthermore on record that King William the Fourth on passing through Leadenhall Street to the Trinity House raised his hat to him as he passed by.

All these details are of very great interest, but they pale before the romantic charm that has been thrown over the quaint little figure and its surroundings in *Dombey and Son*. It is with a sad heart that I accept the courteous invitation of Mr. Wilson to take a last look at the premises, and listen to much curious gossip about the old shop and its frequenters by Mr. J. W. Appleton, who for many years has been the principal hydrographer to the establishment. The interior of the shop, with its curious desks and its broad counter—under which it may be remembered Rob the Grinder used to make his bed—is fully as old-fashioned as its exterior. There, it may be remembered, Mr. Brogley, the broker, waited during the consultation between Sol Gills, Walter, and Captain Cuttle. Here, it may be remembered, the aforesaid broker filled up the time by whistling softly among the stock, "rattling weather-glasses, shaking compasses as if they were physic, catching up keys with loadstones, looking through telescopes, en-

deavouring to make himself acquainted with the use of the globes, setting parallel rulers astride on to his nose, and amusing himself with other philosophical transactions." Here the Chickens waited and amused himself by chewing straw, and gave Rob the Grinder the unspeakable satisfaction of staring for half an hour at the conqueror of the Nobby Shropshire One. Here it was also, when Captain Cuttle had the management of the business, a customer came and enquired for some especial nautical instrument. "Brother," says the Captain, "will you take an observation round the shop?" "Well," says the man, "I've done it." "Do you see wot you want?" says the Captain. "No, I don't," says the man. "Do you know it wen you do see it?" says the Captain. "No, I don't," says the man. "Why, then, I tell you wot, my lad," says the Captain, "you'd better go back and ask wot it's like outside, for no more don't I!" The entire shop, with its odd corners, its quaint cupboards, its glass cases, and its chart drawers, seem as familiar to me as if I had served a long apprenticeship to Sol Gills.

I pass from the shop up a panelled staircase with a massive hand-rail and spiral balusters to the upper rooms. I look in at Walter's chamber, with its comprehensive view of the parapets and chimney-pots, and see the place in the roof where Rob the Grinder kept his pigeons. I spend some time in a cheerful panelled apartment, which at one time was the bed-chamber of Sol Gills, but which was occupied by Florence when she fled from her father and took refuge with Captain Cuttle. Do not you recollect what trouble the good-hearted old captain had to make this room fit to receive its guest? Cannot you call to mind how he "converted the little drawing-table into a species of altar, on which he set forth two silver teaspoons, a flower-pot, a telescope, his celebrated watch, a pocket-comb, and a song-book, as a small collection of rarities that made a choice appearance?" Do not you remember with what loving care and tenderness he greeted and watched over her? How often he tramped up and down that ancient staircase to make enquiries, and how, on the night of Walter's return, he shouted gleefully through the keyhole, "Drowned, a'n't he, pretty?" as some relief to his feelings. Two more faithful friends than Florence had in her loneliness than Captain Cuttle and her dog Diogenes, it would be difficult

for any woman to have. "Captain Cuttle," we read, "with a perfect awe of her youth and beauty, and her sorrow, raised her head, and adjusted the coat that covered her, when it had fallen off, and darkened the window a little more that she might sleep on, and crept out again and took his post of watch upon the stairs. All this with a touch as light as Florence's own."

Half expecting to meet the good old captain on the way, I creep slowly down the quaint old staircase. I gain the shop once more, and pass down a dark narrow flight of steps. Do you know what I come down here for? I come down to see the cellar where the two last bottles of old Madeira were kept. One of them was drunk when Walter first went to the house of "Dombey and Son"—to Dombey, Son, and Daughter; and the other, a bottle that has been long excluded from the light of day, and is hoary with dust and cobwebs, has been brought into the sunshine, and the golden wine within sheds a lustre on the table, many years after, to Walter and his wife. "Other buried wine grows older as the old Madeira did in its time, and dirt and cobwebs thicken on the bottles." I find I am mumbling this to myself, as I once more emerge in the daylight, and sit down to rest in the cabin-like back parlour in Lord Nelson's favourite armchair.

It is well-nigh impossible for me to catalogue the scenes, the pictures, and the characters that flit across my brain as I gaze through the skylight overhead, or cast my eyes round the walls of this quaint little room. Here was Florence brought as a little child when she was found by Walter, and here she came with Susan Nipper to take leave of him before he went on his voyage. It was in this identical room that the famous conference concerning the loss of the Son and Heir was held, at which Sol Gills, Captain Cuttle, Susan Nipper, Florence, and Jack Bunsby were present. It was on that occasion that the great commander of the Cautious Clara delivered his famous oracular opinion, "Whereby, why not? If so, what odds? Can any man say otherwise? No. Avast then!" This strikes one as being very much more original than Nelson's "England expects every man will do his duty," or Wellington's "Up, Guards, and at 'em." Here it was too that Captain Cuttle, after the disappearance of Sol Gills, took possession; here that worthy had a service every Sunday night for the benefit of that snivelling young hypocrite Rob. Here did the captain

interview Mr. Foote on sundry and various occasions; here in presence of the immortal Bunsby did he read the last will and testament of Solomon Gills, and the letter to Ned Cuttle; and here was he discovered, after many weeks' hiding, by Mrs. Mac Sturges and her demonstrative children, Alexander, Juliana, and Chowley.

To this odd-shaped, snug, queer little panelled parlour came poor Florence and her faithful Diogenes, when she fled from her brutal father in the grim cold house. Here did the captain cook that marvellous little dinner, which makes you quite hungry to read about. "Basting the fowl from time to time as it turned on a string before the fire," "making hot gravy in a second little saucepan, boiling a handful of potatoes in a third, never forgetting the egg-sauce in the first, and making an impartial round of boiling and stirring with the most useful of spoons every minute. Besides these cares, the captain had to keep an eye on a diminutive frying-pan, in which some sausages were hissing and bubbling in a most musical manner; and there never was such a radiant cook as the captain looked in the height and heat of these functions; it being impossible to say whether his face or his glazed hat shone the brighter." Hither, too, did Walter Gay return so unexpectedly. Hither did a certain weather-beaten pea-coat, and a no less weather-beaten cap and comforter come bundling in one night, and to the great delight of everybody turned out to be the old instrument-maker, after all. And it was from this room that Florence and Walter departed to be married in the ancient City church not far distant. It was here that—

But stay! It is impossible to chronicle one quarter of the fun, the pathos, the humour, the charity that haunt the four irregular walls of this ship-shape little chamber. I arise and pass out into the din of Leadenhall Street. I find the Wooden Midshipman still standing at the door, "callous, obdurate, and conceited" as ever, observing the omnibuses and the hansom cabs as casually as he did the hackney coaches aforetime, and apparently quite oblivious that his century of observations in Leadenhall Street is drawing to a close.

Since the above was written the Midshipman has been removed from his post. The shutters have been closed. The place has been placarded with bills and scored with numbers in rough whitewash. The

excellent building materials have been sold and have been distributed to the four winds. As I write the pick of the demolisher is slowly and surely bringing the house down. Daylight is let into unaccustomed places. A choky atmosphere of powdered mortar pervades the whole place. A stalwart navy is tearing down the panelling in Florence's room, whistling as he does so Over the Garden Wall; heavy boots tramp and clatter in the sacred precincts of the little back parlour. In a few days the skylight will be removed, the walls will be demolished, and the place will be one mass of rubbish and broken bricks. In a few weeks' time The Wooden Midshipman in Leadenhall Street will only exist in the pages of *Dombey and Son*.

MINE.

Not much of earth belongs to me,
A few short feet of mossy ground,
Soon measured o'er, in sheltered nook,
A little lowly grass-clothed mound.
Not much—for all I have lies here—
A maiden young, and fresh, and fair;
A very flower in early spring,
She seemed to scent the vacant air.

But Death, with never-idle scythe,
Cut short my darling's little life;
And buried with her are the dreams
Of when we should be man and wife.
Not much of earth belongs to me,
Yet is that little dearer far
Than any gem on monarch's brow,
Than light is to the evening star.

Not much of earth belongs to me,
But in yon heaven of sapphire blue,
One treasure stored is all my own,
A maiden lovely, sweet, and true.
Death may not hold the fragile flowers;
They die, but every springtide brings
A new and bright awakening
Of all earth's pleasant sleeping things.

So doth my flower bloom again
In yonder blissful deathless home;
An angel wears her at his breast
Until her long-lost lover come.
And as I sit beside her grave,
Shining in tender spring sunshine,
It seems to me as though all earth
And all the heaven were wholly mine.

AMONG THE MINES AND MINERS.

"EE go by the Main Virgin, and ee must be right. There's no missin'."

"The Main Virgin?"

"A-ah. We calls her virgin acause she's hidle; they ain't a workin' of her."

That explained it clearly. A main was a mine. The square grey towers that had been so puzzling, on this hand, and on that, as the miles had been trodden on, and the more puzzling because they proved to be

only towers, with no side structures to give use or help their meaning, were not notable village churches. They had been thought to be this, for a fleeting moment; as each had arisen into sight, with trees hiding the desolation it stood amongst, and with a patch only of its high and rugged masonry left fairly visible; and though this thought was quickly gone, as close inspection showed the ruin around, the mournful isolation, and the desertion of despair, it was only now that their true history was revealed. They were emptied mine-shafts. They were the insignia of abandoned mines; let to lie there, not worth the battering to pieces and the cartage, now the engines they had held had been scooped out for re-erection elsewhere, and every other portion of their past life had been slit away or otherwise obliterated. They were mines where the ore was out, or where so little ore had ever been in, that the cost of getting at it proved more than it would fetch when made presentable for the market. And as for their significant or insignificant purpose now, they were merely landmarks; with a fine chance of being landmarks till stress of weather, bringing over-much of crumbling and disintegration, should be followed by complete and entire abasement.

And with this understanding of things, there comes placid satisfaction. It was good to have espied this veteran hedger and ditcher; and to have accosted him in his solitary and tremulous day labour, in this lane ebonised with ripe blackberries, and fringed with hart's-tongue ferns. What he has explained pieces in famously with what is pressing on the senses all around. For this far end, or call it the tail, of Cornwall, is a mining district so unmistakably, that as the miles are still being trodden on, mines and mining can never be for a moment driven from the mind.

There are the whole of the water-places of the country—pond, and ditch, and meadow, drainage-spout, and side brooklet, and sogging river. They are stained a thick orange colour by the washings that have yielded tin and copper. The whole sweep of the country, is ugly with mining machinery; with poor sheds built up close to the machinery; with cold, moist, clayey cuttings; with deep slush and litter. The bright sky-view, or air-expanse, of the country is marred by the recurrent thin tall engine-houses—not ruined, but shooting up, pillar-like and

stiff, utterly straight and utilitarian. It is marred by the ropes and pulleys and plank-projections hung out of these; by the clay-soaked wooden troughs or gutters that slope from them down to the river-levels, carrying the pumped-up water, and letting it splash and drip over their messed sides sloppily.

Coming, too, to villages, or to other collections of abodes, that the district is a mining district is evident as unmistakably still. There is not a group of dwellings, large or less, that does not contain miners' cottages, abandoned just as the forlorn mine-shafts have been abandoned, and productive of the same sense of exhaustion and disappointment, of neglect and failure. Here are house-walls with great gaps in them; here are the stones that formed these walls fallen in and fallen out, in unsightly heaps; here are roofs, rattled by the weather into mere timber skeletons; here are these old homesteads, open to thief or vagrant, or child at play (open to enquiring tourist, manifestly; to determined pedestrian), from room to room, right to the rusting hearth; here are panelless doors and shattered windows, and little garden-grounds, and pig-sties, and out-places, rotting and deserted, and over-run with weeds.

Oddly, too, there is the conviction that this decay does not mean, from all aspects, poverty. It arises from one sort of riches. Cornish miners are desirable workmen all over the world; are at a premium in every part. Their especial skill, their experience and endurance, will bring them fabulous wages, let it be in California, South America, Australia—anywhere where new mining-grounds are found. They get the offer of this high pay; it is affluence, it is prosperous emigration; and they move off, their wives, their families, their little possessions; and Cornwall, in the form of miners, sees them no more. This decay is the result. There are no new comers wanting to hire the vacated cottages, such new comers being as scarce as speculators wanting to hire vacated mines. There is no profit, either, or very little profit, in pulling down old buildings when it is desired to build new (stone being so plentiful all over the country), and an empty quarter turns into an empty year; empty years thread themselves together into a long string, and mortar yields, and iron rusts, and slates are loosened by sea-storms, and with some little lapse here, and some little lapse there, there is at last general surrender.

There are many other signs that the district is a mining district, unmistakably. Observe the miners, and their inevitable companions, the mineresses. They are serious and slow-moving; they are stooping and toiling; they intensify the feeling of chill, of melancholy. Some of their labour, as far as it can be seen above-ground, comprises crushing the ore into small pieces (called "stamping"); comprises grinding these small pieces into powder; comprises washing this powder, to sift and separate the metal from the soil. It is an operation that must be dirty, that must be laborious, that must be carried on with the help (more or less) of a constant pour of water, making the ground, for acres, pasty, and sticky, and muddy—a misery. Yet this is where women pass their working days. The ground being as is described, no wheeled barrows or other wheeled conveyances can run upon it in such a manner as to make running profitably available; and so, as the metal-powder must be carried to carts, that it may be carted away to the smelting furnaces, women become the carriers.

Those barrows are brought into service that are without wheels, and that are lifted on four long handles, or bearers; and one woman catches hold of the two handles in the front of the barrow, a second woman catches hold of the two handles at the back, and in this expensive mode of two women to a vehicle instead of one woman and a wheel, off they carry their load, after the fashion of a small palanquin or sedan. That they are solemn and sedate is inevitable; that they contrive to keep themselves so beautifully neat (except, of course, as to foot-gear) with their long-curtained cotton bonnets dazzlingly white in the dazzling sun, is a marvel.

As for the miners pure—those of them that are plying their implements down below—could they be seen when there, they are still less likely to be bright and nimble. Here they are, poor fellows, for inspection, before they entrust themselves to this daily descent of theirs into the earth's bowels. They are passing into this shed to make themselves ready for their monotonous and perilous toil. They enter to take off their home-clothes and put on miners' suits; and they emerge, clay-coloured from hat to shoe, their "billy-cocks" heavy with a lump of actual clay itself, stuck centre-wise over the front brim to make a primitive candlestick. Into the middle of each lump a thumb has

driven a hole ; in each hole has been thrust a short candle ; and this will be lighted presently to take light, fathoms down, and fathoms down again, as the bearer lowers himself, or is lowered, and as he passes the dreary hours of his working-time or "cora." Could there be anything but depression and gloom in presenting oneself to labour far down in the darkness, in the chillness, among drip and ooze ? In trudging along a road ending away from the invigorating air, away from the shining sun, away from the low green grass, and this sweet scent that is caught, ever and again, of flowers ? Habit, it may be true, makes people think very lightly of the gravest dangers if they are always meeting (and escaping) them ; but it is also true that the habit of passing a working lifetime in discomfort, in faint light, in cold, in awe, causes coldness and awe and faint light and discomfort to be reflected in the spirits, causes joyousness to be banished, causes severity, solemnity, hopelessness to leave its impression, and to be the impression the most unflinchingly observed.

Let notice be taken also of other features of this narrow neck of Cornish land where mining is carried on, and where miners live.

"It's not pretty, you see," says a Cornishman in a little opportune talk, "because of the egggers and egggers of sand here."

True, it is not pretty. The acres are not all sand, however ; nor nearly all. Here are acres, and many acres, that are furze, and heath, and moss, and stones ; all mingled in, unbeautifully ; making flat moor and sloping hill-side a mere waste. Here, on this hand, it can be confessed, is a long stretch of low dry "towans," as sand-hills get called in Cornwall (which they well may ; "twyn" being the Welsh for a hillock still) ; here, on this other hand, is another long stretch of low dry towans, burrowed, both of them, in and out, and through and through, sponge-like almost, by the active work of innumerable friendly and scampering rabbits ; but in the tapering miles of firm land lying between these two loose and unstable shores, there are acres and acres occupied with a great deal more. Here and there is a mean village. It is in the track and has to be trodden through ; and it is found full of pigs, full of smells, full of gaping listlessness and the last century's unsanitary methods and appliances. Here and there, not on the road, but in the blue distance, is a group

of dwellings, whitewashed right up to the eaves, on every inch of roof-top, and straight over the squat brick chimneys, looking thereby as pale as snow amongst settings of plentiful foliage, and this foreground of straight fern-grown wall.

Now, too, that the sea is beating up on both sides nearer and nearer, so that the firm land has grown to be nothing but a strip, so that another mile or two will bring the veritable Land's End, there is not a sight to be seen of sand at all. It is not here, sparkling and golden with the tide that moistens it, nor silvery with drought and breeze and the pour of the unshaded and refracted sun. The waves have lapped over it for a thousand years ; the waves have blotted it out and hidden it, yielding none of it back at ebb or flow, except for the barest edge of it at a rare interval, sheer down there, when there is courage to creep to a peeping-place that reveals a tiny bay. It is rock, all round. It is the Logan Rock here (Logan, again, being a Cornish term that brings no wonderment, Clogwyn remaining the right Welsh for a sturdy rock-piece ; and Cornishmen—in philological greediness—making use of the word and the meaning of the word simultaneously), it is other rocks there ; it is still other rocks ahead, and toppling high, and strewn at the feet ; it is rock—holding back the thundering and spraying sea. To end it, the ground even has turned to rock, with never a tree to be seen on it, east or west ; with never a fern to be picked, with never a field, or a garden, or a flower ; with only the fierce wind tearing and swearing wildly ; with only the fierce wind beating the feet back from the death-edge, or threatening to give a swift hurl into the horrid death below ; with the rain splashing passionately, with the rock-road, green with thin weak grasses, churned into an ankle-depth of water, and the whole scene, surely, not to be exceeded anywhere for desolation, and utter and drear solemnity.

"The First and the Last." The words meet the eye aptly, written there, a short furlong away. It is a good phrase. There seems deep significance in it, as the wind continues to tear round about it angrily, and the heavy rain pours down on a white-washed roof. Of course, it is merely the sign of a small inn. The unadorned little habitation has been boldly placed in the midst of all these terrors, and its name, to the landlord, has very simple meaning. His little

house of entertainment shall be the first to welcome voyagers to England who shall land at its base from the direction of Scilly Isles; it shall be the last to shelter travellers who shall come upon it in another fashion, through the kindred district devoted to mines and mining. That it affords harbourage, from either side, is the pleasant matter now, however; and harbourage is asked for; for, at this moment, to be beneath a roof, to be within a door, is—put in the faintest way—acceptable.

How is it though? Are things changing, now there is warmth, and calm, and rest? No; facts remain facts, and what has been written, is written, and shall stay. But shelter is giving play to memory, that is all. The battle with the weather having (temporarily) ended, recollections are stealing in of recent scenes where weather brought no struggle; where there had been sunny walkings through Goldzithney, Perranuthno, Gwithian, St. Erth, Lelant, Towednack, Ludgvan; where the little light-house island of Godevry had shone in the sea like a set pearl; where the Saxon crosses set up at the corners of roads, and all lost to use, lost even to recognition, made yet their touching appeal, and had their poetry of reverence and history; where lovely southern flowering-shrubs gave many a surprise, and where an orchestra of hiding grasshoppers broke into a little chorussing, never ceasing their "Fidgie-fidgie-fidgie," one foot-stretch of the way. Recollections come, also, that there has been found (and enjoyed) a silver side to the sorrowful surface observable in this faraway Cornish people. They have been ignorant—witness the road-side schoolmaster, in a dilapidated cottage, with rent floor, with tumbling desks, with a useless grate, with shreds of school-books, with puzzled question drawn from some faint rumour, "What's the black-board system?" with sharp enquiry, all eager, "Do you want any honey?" They have been comic—witness the woman bobbing about after squealing pigs, and wanting dog and stick, and fire and ox, all, before she could get them successfully across the road. Witness, again, the farm-man offering a ride aloft on his house-high pile of hay, as though it would be quite easy work to mount up there. But whenever there has been occasion to go up to men, or women, or children, to knock at cottage doors, to cause work to be put aside, there has always been the utmost civility, there has never been a

cross look, there has been a polite "Please you?" when a question has been too far from the dialect, and there has been a failure to understand. And a recollection is not long in getting itself uppermost of a simple Wesleyan Sunday evening service, come upon at the end of a sunny sea-side walk. An old miner, one Sam Rotherham (he shall be called), was to be the preacher; he trudged ten miles out, to do his preaching, one or two of his flock with him; he pointed, when he was asked, to the little low dark room where the preaching was to be done, without a proud announcement that it was his voice that was going to be heard there; and he entered as modestly as any of the rest.

Under the thatched roof of the tiny greystone hut, amidst the rough wooden benches in it, the creaking pulpit, and the harmonium that could produce little but a wheeze, Sam Rotherham let his untaught soul go, though, and was listened to as if he were an inspired divine.

"Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool," is my text," he said; and then came his expounding. "What a pretty footstool!" he cried. "What a pretty footstool! Think of the blue sky for it, of the green grass, of the ripe grain! Think, too, of the Lion of Judah! The lion! Such a pretty word! Oh, Paul, I thank thee for that pretty word! The lion is a king! the king of beasts! the king of forests! Who would not serve him?" And he proceeded to relate how there was "a great warrior once, Sir Cully Campbell," he called him, who had done his service faithfully, and how all should imitate him. "Sir Cully," he said, "was wanted to go to Inder to put down the rebellion, and our little Queen she sent for un. He walked into the palace, he did, and he sat hisself on the sofa, making up his mind he would not go to Inder, for he didn't want to. But the little Queen she come in and sat herself beside un on the sofa, and she says, 'Sir Cully,' she says, 'won't ye go to Inder fur me?' and he bust inter tears, and said, 'I will!' and he did go; and he put down that rebellion, and he come home again, and he died, and they buried un in a grand sellupker."

Absurd as it was, unapproachable from any side but ridicule, it showed a Cornish miner's treatment, and it certainly would be a help, and not a hindrance, to Cornish civility. Another instance of this last came up at the moment the singular service had ended.

"It's getting dark, and ee've far to go," said a young woman, rising from the form, close, and knowing, somehow, every item about it. "And so's Mr. Rotherham far to go, and it's the same. Why don't ee go and speak to un, and then he'd walk home with ee well? And whether or other, what do they call ee, please, if I may be so boold?"

To think of which, in this snug haven of The First and The Last, has an interest not easily to be overthrown. With the sight of the sea calming down, too, with the last gold of day dying out, and the lovely stars beginning their long night sparkle, it is excellent to remember how, when the winds beat up again and the waves foam, the Cornish folks here are always alert at the cry of distress. Gentle and simple—the gentle leading, and the simple working under their command—there have been nights, again and again, when blankets have been taken down to the shore, and brandy, and coffee, and lanterns; and when poor wretched sailors have been looked for, and fed, and restored, and carried gently into shelter.

So, even among mining and miners, the tints to be used in a sketch must not all be grey. The canvas must be shot with some lights, if only to help the shadows.

KULDJA.

How near to war Russia and China were last year no one knows who has not read the preface to that wonderfully interesting work, Colonel Gordon in Central Africa.

When Gordon threw up his secretaryship to Lord Ripon, finding, as he says, that "in his irresponsible position he could do nothing to the purpose in the face of the vested interests, his views being diametrically opposed to those of the official classes," he, of course, meant to come home the quickest way.

But the Chinese were wild for war. Russia had outwitted their ambassador; her demands were monstrous; the war party included both the dowager queens, and was all-powerful in the palace. So the peace party and the English merchants telegraphed to a London agent, "Send out Gordon," and the agent telegraphed to Bombay just in time to stop the colonel and turn his course eastward. The ex-head of "the ever-victorious army" was soon among his old friends, Prince Kung and Li Hung Chang. Gordon's lieutenant in the Taemin

War, and he was so far able to strengthen their hands, by showing how certain was the success of Russia, and how cruelly a war would cripple Chinese trade, that peaceful counsels at last prevailed, and a priceless service was rendered to the world by the self-denying hero—for he is a hero—who almost broke his heart amid the swamps of the Upper Nile trying to force Egypt to act honestly about the slave trade.

Had not Gordon been able and willing to go, war would most likely have been declared, and the Russian fleet, which was waiting for the purpose, would have pounced down on the Chinese ports and blockaded the whole coast from Canton to the mouths of the Pei-ho. This would have been a bad thing for the trade of the world, just as the march through Kuldja on to Peking and Hangkow would have been bad for an empire which had not yet recovered from the assaults of English and French and Taepings.

But why were these two great powers so near to war? Because Russia saw a chance of doing what for centuries she has been aiming at. "Scratch your Russian," says the proverb (it is older than Napoleon, to whom it is attributed), "and you find a Tartar underneath." Naturally, therefore, the Tartar wants to do what other Tartars have done—get a footing in the Flowery Land. And Kuldja just gave them the footing they wanted. It pierces like a wedge into China, and is well watered and therefore luxuriant in vegetation. And the Chinese themselves had put it into Russia's hands, for in 1862, when Yakoub Khan had founded a Mussulman empire at Kashgar, and in Yunan and Dzungaria, and everywhere on the western frontier the Mahometans had risen against the Chinese, the Czar said to his imperial brother: "You can't manage all these worrying little rebels, brother though you are of sun and moon. Let me hold Kuldja for you, lest Yakoub should snap it up; and then, when the troubles are over, you shall have it back again."

Of course the Chinese, hard pushed, were very glad; and Russia, who dreaded above all things a strong Mahometan power which might stop her game in Turkestan, was glad also. But when the time came for giving it back to the Chinese, she demanded not only a huge money payment, but the cession of all the best strategic points in Kuldja. His Excellency Chung-How was sent to

St. Petersburg to arrange terms ; and there, no one knows how, he was persuaded to make the very concessions which the Russians wanted. His countrymen were so indignant, that, the moment he got back, he was tried for treason and condemned to death and confiscation of goods. His property, just equivalent to the sum demanded by Russia, was seized ; and, while he lay in prison, waiting, after the Chinese fashion, an auspicious day for execution, the cry for war with Russia grew stronger and stronger.

Just then, happily, Gordon came on the scene, and said : " Don't fight ; you're no match for them, though you have on paper more than half a million of men. Why, even of your Imperial Pekin Guard of seventeen thousand, two out of the six battalions still have nothing but matchlocks. You have a few gun-boats, but not a single armour-plated ship—a want which forced you to knock under to Japan about the Loochoo Isles. No doubt Tso Tsung Tang is a glorious hero ; he has beaten the rebel Panthays, but he has taken a very long time about it, and he will find the Russians quite another sort of enemy—worse even than the English and French, because more used to country like yours."

And then as, in spite of his advice, war at one time seemed inevitable, he sketched out a plan of the campaign.

" Never meet the Russians in the field ; you can't stand against them ; but if you can hold out long enough, you will beat in the end. Harass your enemy night and day ; cut off his communications ; capture his food convoys. You ought to outnumber him ten to one ; so you can easily keep him on the alert night and day till he is worn out. Fortify your strong places ; but if a breach is made, never wait for the assault—run away. Don't worry, moreover, about big guns or long-range muskets. Muskets that will fire fast and carry a thousand yards are the best for you. And as for torpedoes, go in for many common ones in preference to a few of superior construction. Above all, remember you can never do well in such a war as this will be so long as Pekin is your capital. It is too near the sea. The queen should be in the centre of the hive."

That was Gordon's programme in case the war, on which Russia, now much more than China, was bent, should break out. Fortunately for the Chinese, and for tea-drinkers and wearers of silk all the world

over, the Tekke Turcomans gave more trouble than had been anticipated ; Skobelloff's expedition turned out something very different from a military parade ; and so Russia gave it to be understood that she might grant better terms. Distrusting the cleverness of her ambassadors, fearing her envoy might again be circumvented by Russian craft, China stood out a long while for Pekin as the seat of the negotiations. But Russia insisted on St. Petersburg ; and, at last, Marquis Tseng was sent to do the best he could for his country, with the stipulation that nothing was to be signed until the Court of Pekin had first given its assent.

One thing deserves notice. Russia's first demand was that the ex-ambassador, Chung How, should be pardoned and set at liberty. To this the Chinese agreed ; and an imperial proclamation was issued, setting forth how " Chung-How, having overstepped his powers as ambassador, and acted in defiance of his instructions, and accepted impossible terms, was, after due deliberation, condemned to be beheaded. But now it appears that many outsiders consider this sentence an insult to Russia, with whom for two hundred years China has been at peace. Chung-How was quite wrong ; he had thoughtlessly assented to what China cannot fulfil, and his punishment was what any Chinese ambassador would have suffered in a like case. But our motives in punishing him are likely to be misrepresented at a distance. Therefore, we remit the capital sentence ; but order him to be kept in prison till we hear from Marquis Tseng, who will take care to explain to the Russian Government that our clemency is a clear proof of our desire that the two countries should be friends."

Marquis Tseng's terms, though better than those which Chung-How was cajoled into accepting, were hard enough. Nine million roubles for having taken care of Kuldja were asked ; to that China made no objection ; she is always ready to pay. Then, instead of the " strategic points," i.e., the passes which would have laid China open to her northern enemy, one valley on the river Ili was demanded, as a refuge for such Mahometans as might feel alarmed when the Russian army of occupation was withdrawn. They would be many ; for past experience had shown that the Chinese are not forgiving to rebels. This, too, as it touched the honour of Russia, was readily conceded. The hardest fight was over the stipulation for

an open way from the Siberian frontier to Hangkow, a great town on the Yang-tse, of which the trade is already almost wholly in Russian hands. The Chinese had to give way on this point too; and now Russians have much greater freedom of movement in China than any other people; they can come in when they like, and travel about and trade just where they please. This seems very unfair; English and French each shed their blood to get the door of the Celestial Empire half open, and now there is to be no door at all for those who never fired a shot, nor spent a penny in the struggle.

So for the present there is peace; only for the present, for China has a deal of bull-dog tenacity, and will never give up the hope of getting back her valley and shutting up her side door, and if Russia uses her Pacific fleet for annexing Corea, there will be another ground for ill-feeling. The Chinese have often recovered Dzungaria before now; and they no doubt trust to Nihilism and the low state of the Russian exchequer, to give them the chance of doing it again.

China has had dealings with Dzungaria, and the neighbouring countries, for more than two thousand years. Wou-ti, "the war-like emperor," of the Han dynasty, raised a great army, some two centuries before Christ, to secure from inroad the north-western frontier. His general, Ho-Kiou-Ping, drove back the Huns (Hioug-nou), and established a cordon of border-provinces, Dzungaria among them, in which cities were built and rulers set up who were authorised to bear the title of wang (king). These subject-kings had to be again brought under early in the seventh century, and a little later China was mistress of the whole country from Kashgar to the Caspian, and was even giving kings to Persia. By-and-by, the Chinese power declined. Arab missionaries, scimitar in hand, conquered some of her outlying provinces; tribes from Thibet overran others; and then came the Mongols and Ghengis-Khan. Ghengis left Dzungaria a blood-stained desert, which, by-and-by, was settled by Kalmucks, who gradually spread over the whole north-west from Thibet to Siberia. It was not till the beginning of the last century that China was able to recover her lost ground. The war ended in the massacre or expulsion of the Kalmucks. The survivors fled to the Volga, and the land was re-peopled chiefly with Mahometans from Turkestan and else-

where. Hence the troubles which led to the Russian occupation of Kuldja. They began far away to the south, in Yunan. If you have anything like a good map of China, you will see Tali-foo marked in the north-west of Yunan, near a lake, and among some rivers whose course the map-drawer seems to have shaped for ornament. Anyhow, Tali-foo is famous for silver-lead mines, which were worked by Mussulman as well as Buddhist miners. Christianity, once widely spread (the Nestorian form of it) over China, had died out; but Mahometanism survived, though chiefly confined to the western provinces where there would be more "moral support" from co-religionists in Turkestan. Yunan in the south-west, Khansu and Shensi in the north-west corner of China, were specially Mahometan provinces. The Chinese are fairly tolerant, as becomes a people whose state religion is the decorous agnosticism of Confucius. When our religious settlements and (oftener) those of the French Roman Catholics have got into trouble, the fault has generally been due to the unbearable interference of the missionaries themselves. But the Chinese have a weakness for pork; Charles Lamb tells us at what cost they learned how to eat roast pig. To the Mussulman, who is but a Jew with a very slight difference, pork is an abomination; and the Yunan Mahometans, rough fellows, like miners all the world over, could never see a Chinaman eating a dinner of pork without calling him bad names.

In 1855 things grew worse. The Mahometans everywhere were restless; the trouble reached as far as Kashgar, and in Yunan there was the extra annoyance that they had got hold of a far richer lode than those worked by the pork-eaters. The "greased cartridge" business will remind us what a little thing may, where religious observance is in question, stir up a mighty mischief. It seemed as if all the Mahometans of the empire would soon move westward and help to secure the independence of that Kashgar which the Chinese were so loth to let slip out of their hands. So, in 1856, the governor of Yunan determined to have a St. Bartholomew's Day for all the Mussulman inhabitants. They were to be killed all the country over on the same day and hour; and where they were few in number they were killed accordingly. In some places, however, like the Jews in the book of Esther, they made head against the "trustv and resolute

men" appointed to massacre them. They seized and held Tali-foo and other places; and, at last, in 1862, Dzungaria (of which Kuldja is the western corner) rose, and the wild tribes of the mountains, between whom and the Chinese there is never any love lost, took advantage of the confusion to make raids into the plains. That Yunan governor had timed his attempt very ill. China was in the throes of the Taeping rebellion; and England and France were forcing unwelcome treaties upon her at the bayonet's point. She had to leave Yunan to itself, and its capital soon fell into the hands of the Mahometans. And now came one of those strange changes of policy not uncommon in the East, and unaccountable to us because we know nothing of the motives of the actors. Suddenly the rebel leaders sent to the local mandarins and offered peace on certain conditions, one of which was that their chief, Ma-Hsien, should be made brigadier-general in the imperial army. How was this to be managed? The mandarins, after their fashion, had been falsifying the course of events—telling the court of Peking about their brilliant successes, and how the arch-rebel, Ma-Hsien, was nearly finished up; and now they would have to obtain for this arch-rebel his commission as general. Luckily for them, Peking is a long way off; so they persuaded Ma-Hsien to change the last half of his name, and as Ma-Ju-lung he was duly gazetted. But the war did not end, though the rebel chiefs had submitted. It is not the Chinese way to accept in good faith submission of that kind. Their movement is like the tide on a sandy coast, quietly creeping on, but irresistible. Everywhere China has recovered her own, save in the one corner which she was weak enough to allow the Russians to take care of for her. Her victory has been a cruel one, bringing desolation on the provinces that she has regained; but then, her feeling was that the Mahometans, being dead, would be got rid of, and that China has plenty of spare colonists for any number of depopulated provinces. How she behaved in Kashgar, where Yakoub Khan had established the little empire which ended with his mysterious death, we must not pause to tell. In Yunan the cruelty of her troops was incredible. After the capital was taken the Mahometan warriors were slowly hacked to pieces with sabre-cuts, or buried head-downwards with their legs in the air like posts. All the old men were beheaded,

and their heads ranged along the battlements. The women were sold as slaves, a fate which at other places they avoided by leaping down the wells, after first poisoning their children with opium. Some of these women had been taking part in the war. The wife of a Mussulman general commanded a troop of horse; she and her husband were taken prisoners, but she managed to contrive his escape, which the disappointed mandarins revenged on her in the most savage manner. At last Tali-foo, the last Mussulman stronghold, was taken; their last chief dressed himself in imperial yellow, got his yellow palanquin ready, and having previously poisoned his wives and children, himself took poison, and was carried in a dying state before the conquering general. This enlightened mandarin had his captive's head embalmed and sent to Peking, and, by way of warning to Yunan-foo, despatched thither twenty-four mule-panniers full of human ears stitched in pairs.

Long after it was all over China asked for Kuldja back again; and no wonder Russia was unwilling to give it up, for it seems a delightful land, all the more delightful as the approach to it from the one side is across the grim Siberian steppe, and from the other over the howling wilderness of Gobi.

In some of our maps it is coloured as Russian, and seems to be separated from Dzungaria by mountain ranges; its river, the Ili, draining into Lake Balkhash.

It is almost the only part of Central Asia where the soil produces enough for man's sustenance—not without man's help, though, for there is very little rain; but the Chinese have covered all the land with a network of irrigation canals. Though successive wars have thrown most of these out of gear, the country is still a delightful oasis—wooded valleys, fresh streams, and meadows which a recent French traveller compares for richness with those of Normandy. Its importance to China is great; for an enemy, holding it, could threaten alike the south and the north of the empire, one high road to Kuldja leading by a succession of oases from Turfan past Karashaar and Ak-su to Kashgar, whence several passes open into the Ili valley; the other, also from Turfan, working its way past Urumsti to the Siberian district-capital Semipolatsinsk, whence the entry is by the Talki Pass.

Rich in coal and several kinds of metal, Kuldja is a very garden of Eden by reason

of its abundance of fruits—grapes, apricots, apples; while, in the low grounds, there is heat enough to grow rice and cotton. Just now it is in evil case; for the Mussulman population has mostly emigrated, leaving villages in ruins, and the blackened walls of burned farm-houses. The capital, which used to contain about a hundred thousand people, has been, during the Russian occupation, more than half empty, for the Russians sent off every human creature out of the Mantchoo city, one of the two portions into which it is divided. The Chinese are coming back, and are trading with the remaining Mahometans; and it is to be hoped that they will honestly carry out the amnesty which the Russians have forced them to pass.

Whether the peace will last or not depends on Russia's ability to undertake a costly war. She has annexed Saghalien, and made, not only the Amoor, but a big slice of the east of Mantchooria her own. If she takes Corea, she will be very near Peking; and her next step will be to annex the rest of Mantchooria, and, pushing on in both directions, from Corea in the east, and Dzungaria in the west, to occupy all the Chinese territory north of the desert of Gobi. This will, indeed, be a breaking up of China into pieces, for Mantchooria is the home of the ruling race, and the recruiting ground of the best soldiers. No wonder the Chinese are pushing colonists as fast as they can to the banks of the Amoor, hoping in this way to make the Russian advance more difficult. Russia has already begun to cry out, and to talk of forbidding the settlement of Chinese in her territory; but, though it would be dangerous to leave a Chinese population behind when they pushed on southward, the Chinese are so useful, and so rapidly improve the country in which they settle, that it is hard to say "no" to them. Every year that lack of money, and home troubles, and the Eastern Question keep Russia quiet gives China more chance. She has arsenals where Krupp and Gatling guns and Remington rifles are turned out; she has plenty of torpedoes, and knows how to use them; and every year the number of her matchlock men, and of the "braves" who use bows and arrows and make a clatter with a sword in each hand and frighten the enemy by the horrible faces painted on their shields, grows less and less. The struggle must come some time or other. Russia has a chronic greed of conquest; but China has a teeming population, which

the emigration to California and Queensland does very little to keep down. Even if, as they tell us is to be the case, all the north coast of Australia becomes Chinese (unless we first people it with Hindoos), overpopulation will still be felt in China. How if, by-and-by, these millions learn the secret of their strength, and under some really gifted leaders, push westward, streaming out through the Kuldja passes as their Mongol kinsmen did of old, no longer armed with bows and arrows, but with the weapons and the discipline of scientific warfare? Where would Europe be then? The Anglo-Saxon race is to give its speech and institutions to the world, but it is still outnumbered, five to one at least, by the Chinese. Such an invasion, remorseless, with the fixed purpose of setting up the yellow race in the place of the white, is quite possible if China has time to get still better armed and disciplined; and though it might fail in its object, it would be the most terrible inroad the world has ever seen. It might at least settle the Eastern Question by bringing Russia under tribute, as "the Golden Horde" kept her almost till yesterday.

But China is not likely ever to act in that. She has started on the road of progress, i.e., trade and manufacture, and increased comforts; and she will never think of sending out her millions as successive swarms of invaders of Europe were sent out in the old days from one part or another of "the northern hive." To this there is the twofold answer, the pursuit of trade is no security for peace. Look at Europe since that 1851, which, with its Great Exhibition, was to usher in a reign of universal peace founded on mutual self-interest. Whatever talkers may say, the fact remains, that now, as of old, by far the larger number of wars are trade wars, not the work of the aristocracy but of the merchant class. The peace, which in Walpole's time really seemed to have settled on Europe, was broken by the determination of the English traders to share in the South Sea wealth. And wars like that which was egged on by the tale of "Jenkins's ears" have been common before and since. China surely must feel this; everyone of the wars which have been so destructive to her has been a trade war. "Progress," therefore, and commercial activity, need not mean peace. If it is his interest to do so, the Chinese trader will be as keen for war as any other man. Again, what a pattern Christian

Europe, armed to the teeth, sets these Celestials! We need not expect any higher principle than self-interest to rule them, for they see that no such principle works in the enlightened West. Altogether, it is just as likely that the Chinese should, in a generation or two, swarm out in a vast invading host on Europe and Western Asia, as that the lack of domestic servants here at home should be supplied—as some have prophesied that it will be—by Chinese cooks and washermen, and house “boys.” Perhaps, in this view of things, it is just as well that Russia should push on and prevent the Celestials from getting that quick insight into the art of modern war, which will make their millions so formidable in any enterprise like that which we have been dreaming of. Chinese armies have hitherto been mobs, certainly not made up of cowards, for the men who ran from our red-coats and blue-jackets hanged themselves by scores rather than bear the shame of defeat. Give these mobs intelligent discipline and modern appliances; and their numbers, their dogged tenacity of purpose, and their way of holding together, will make them very terrible indeed.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HONY.

CHAPTER XXXVI. SMOOTH WATER.

WITH each day that passed Miss Chevenix learned to appreciate more highly the value of the expedient by which Mrs. Maberley had proposed to solve the difficulty that had seemed so formidable. She had at first suffered real pain from the impossibility of telling Mr. Horndean the truth, but when she found that the object she desired could be accomplished as successfully by telling him what was not the truth, she was almost as well pleased. After all, the other feeling was a mawkish sentiment. To succeed was the only thing of importance. Why should she care, she to whom truth and falsehood were merely words? She was consistent, and she did not care; stuff of that kind was a result of the influence of love upon weak minds; she had been only passingly touched by it. The false explanation that released her from her difficulty, and satisfied her lover, was the best thing for both.

Mr. Horndean behaved perfectly. At first he did not want to listen to the story that Beatrix begged him to hear; but she

assumed so resolute and so dignified an air that he found he must attend to this unpleasant business; and she proceeded to explain it, not very clearly, indeed, but in fair-seeming detail. She had, with Mrs. Maberley's assistance, provided herself with a note-book, and a small bundle of prospectuses, and she had, quite pat, the names of several enterprises which had been set on foot with the purest motives and the fairest prospects, but had come to grief on account of the stupidity or the malice of moneyed mankind, as displayed either by its never supporting or promptly withdrawing from them. Her lover took the note-book and the prospectuses out of her fair hands, threw them down, and begged her to spare herself and him the worry of going over such unprofitable ground. She submitted gracefully, and he assured her, with perfect sincerity, that he did not consider the matter worth a thought, and regretted it only because it had power to bring a look of care into the heaven of her face, which he would always have as cloudless as it was divine. As for Mrs. Maberley's conduct, Mr. Horndean was disposed to be very easy and apologetic in his treatment of that. Of course he discussed it as though he, himself, had always possessed a “head for business,” and had invariably employed his head in the transaction of business. That was natural and manlike, and although Beatrix had heard from Mrs. Townley Gore a good deal about Mr. Horndean, when he was Fred Lorton, at which time he would have been more conducive to the comfort of himself and other people if he had numbered prudence among his virtues, she listened with perfect gravity. Her glossy head nestled softly against his shoulder, her white hand lay confidingly in his, her thick eyelashes drooped, her lips were not stirred by the very slightest smile, and yet she was very much amused. For nothing could blunt the cynical edge of Beatrix's sense of humour; not her apprehension for herself, nor her love of her lover, which was as ardent and as strong a passion as he could desire. Indeed, it sometimes touched him with a vague uneasiness, perhaps because he had seen and experienced a good many shams, and never until now the real thing.

“We must not be hard on her, my queen,” he said with his head bent towards her nestling face; “she meant well, and no doubt she has singed her own wings pretty badly also. Nine times in ten women who dabble in speculation make an utter mess

of it; their vanity gets in the way, you know; and those promoter fellows and people of that kind flatter them with the notion that it's a deuced clever thing for a woman to understand finance—and so it is, mind you, in any other way except spending money. None of them are bad at that, and I should not like them if they were."

"No!"

"No, certainly not. Women who are always thinking of small economies are simply odious; they spoil everything for one, they take the flavour and the go out of life."

"Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would.' I never did think of small economies; but, if it were not for you, Frederick, I should have been obliged to think of them, and to practise them, too, as a result of Mrs. Mabberley's unusual faculties for business."

She flashed her bright eyes at him as she raised her head from his shoulder, and he was not sure whether the flash meant anger or amusement.

"What an idea! At all events I am indebted to Mrs. Mabberley's talents and tastes; they have made it worth my while to be Horndean of Horndean."

It was gallantly said, and Beatrix rewarded the speech with one of her rare kisses, after which her lover was not inclined to talk of money any more. Nor was Beatrix unwilling to change the subject for that inexhaustible one—the lovers' future—but, although she had got her story told more expeditiously, and more successfully, than she had anticipated, there were just two points remaining to be impressed upon Mr. Horndean's attention.

"Stay, Frederick," she said; "you must let me say something more, and then, if you wish, we may lay the subject by for ever. I don't want to blame poor Mrs. Mabberley myself; she has been too good to me, in spite of all her mistakes, for that—"

"Angel!" murmured Mr. Horndean, in a parenthesis of admiration.

"And it would pain me very much that other people should blame her. When she told me the whole sad truth, acknowledging that all my money was lost, and confessing that she had not had courage to go into the accounts, as she called it, until the near prospect of my marriage" (a second parenthesis occurred here) "made it impossible to shirk them any longer. she said one thing

which struck me very forcibly, not because of the effect it would have upon you—I knew I need not care about that—but because of the truth, the convincing truth, of it to other people—to your sister, for instance.

"And what was that truth, my queen? And what are other people, even including my sister, to you and me?"

The sentiment implied in the latter question was of the insolent and cynical kind that Beatrix shared and liked, but just at that moment it did not suit her to sympathise with it.

"Other people, and especially your sister, must always be a great deal to us; we cannot help that. What Mrs. Mabberley said was that everyone who came to know anything about my affairs, and particularly Mrs. Townley Gore, would be aware that when I accepted you I had no notion I should be a penniless bride. You must see, Frederick, that there is a satisfaction in this for me."

"I shall try very hard to see it, if you bid me do so, my beautiful darling; but I can hardly believe there are fools in the world so foolish as not to know that no riches could add to, and no poverty could take from, the treasure you gave me that day. At all events, I will answer for it that my sister is not one of those fools. Why, I first heard of you and of all your charms, from her!"

Beatrix did not smile, but she remembered that the charms of that bygone epoch included her own supposed possession of the pretty little fortune which had enabled her father to keep up a smart house in Mayfair, with everything "in a concatenation accordingly." Beatrix knew Mrs. Townley Gore a good deal better than Mr. Horndean knew her, for he had forgotten many of the experiences of Frederick Lorton; but what she did not know was the selfish hardness with which his sister had treated Frederick. If she had known this, Beatrix would have divined the secret uneasiness which constantly beset her friend, and kept her on her good behaviour towards her now important brother, and she would have thought less of Mrs. Townley Gore's probable action in any matter concerning herself. Not knowing this, she was apprehensive, for the business faculties of her lover's sister were not mythical, and the determination with which she could pursue an object was one of her strong points.

If Mrs. Townley Gore should make up her mind to sift the story of Mrs. Mabberley's unfortunate investments, she would inevitably come at the truth, or rather, at the falsehood of it, and then there would be a dangerous moment for Beatrix. To provide against the risk of this was her next move.

"Your sister has always been the kindest of friends to me," she said, "but so clever a woman as she is must necessarily blame me for being so stupid and so vague about all this horrid business. I should not like her to think me quite a dunce. She could not wish you to marry one, you know; and yet, dearest Frederick, even to avoid that I could not bear to have poor dear Mrs. Mabberley cross-examined and worried, and——"

"Why, of course not," said Mr. Horn-dean, interrupting her eagerly. "The poor woman has enough to bear, with the loss she has brought on you and herself, and the mortification of finding out that she has been a fool where she thought herself a genius. But why should anyone cross-examine or worry her, if you don't? I can't see it. Especially my sister. What business is it of hers?"

"I thought," answered Beatrix, with captivating shyness, so novel to her that it was a fresh delight to her lover to observe it, "that when you tell her of our engagement, and—our plans, she would be sure to ask all about my position and those odious 'settlements' that seem to be the chief thing when people in our world marry."

"Very likely she may want to know, and perhaps she may ask," said Mr. Horn-dean, with sternness in his face and voice which carried a pleasant assurance to Beatrix; "but it by no means follows that I shall tell her; and, in fact, I will not. Caroline and I are very good, but we are not intimate, friends, and we never shall be. Some day I will tell you why, and all about it. I am too happy, too richly blessed, to think of old grievances, or to resent old injuries, and it is only to set your dear gentle heart at rest about your friend that I refer to them even by saying that, when Caroline might have saved me from much harm by taking an interest in my affairs, she did not do so, and she shall never have a chance of meddling with them now."

"Does she know that?"

"I think she does; she is too sharp to be under any mistake about it. At all events, she shall know it when I tell

her of my happiness. If she asks me any questions I will pull her up very sharp indeed."

"But she must know about arrangements?"

"Certainly not; no one except my solicitors need know anything about them."

"I wish," said Beatrix with a smile that might have won her the fulfilment of any wish within her lover's power of granting, "I wish we could be married without any settlements at all. There's nothing now of mine to be 'tied up,' and nobody to tie it, and I would not have it tied if there were. What do we want with settlements, and a lawyer, Frederick, to vulgarise our marriage, and take your time up?"

"What, indeed, if you will trust me, my queen?"

"Trust you, when you are giving me everything! Oh, Frederick!"

"Then we will have no lawyer, and no 'business' about our marriage, dearest, and there will be a double advantage in keeping clear of everything of the kind."

"Will there? What advantage?"

"This. In addition to the fulfilment of your wish, nothing need be known of poor Mrs. Mabberley's indiscretions until we are man and wife, and then it will not be of any consequence."

"I see that; how clever and dear of you to think of it," said Beatrix, with a secret thrill of exultation at having brought him so exactly to the point she had desired, but hardly hoped to reach. She had shot the rapids, she was in safe, smooth, shining water again—all was well. Now she might be free from fear and scheming and uneasiness, and give herself up to the happiness of her love, and the brightness of her prospects. Mrs. Townley Gore could do her no harm with Frederick, and her bondage to Mrs. Mabberley would soon be a thing of the past, like a bad dream.

It was unpleasant to have to report progress to Mrs. Mabberley; but Beatrix did this with the best grace she could.

Mrs. Mabberley heard her to the end without interruption, and made this mental comment upon the little narrative:

"She has more brains than I gave her credit for; almost enough to have made it safe to trust her. She has played her game remarkably well, and mine even better."

To Beatrix she said, in her lowest, smoothest tone :

"It is fortunate that Mr. Horndean is a person so easy to deal with. His consideration for me is quite touching. When you are mistress of Horndean, and I am in Canada, my unfortunate speculations will afford a subject for gossip as harmless to both of us as it will be amusing to our friends. You may let Mr. Horndean announce his coming bliss to his sister as soon as you please now ; indeed, the sooner the better, as he is in so commendable a state of mind. And you had better consult Mrs. Townley Gore about your trousseau. That will be sisterly and nice, and judicious too, for you can order it regardless of expense, and she will not know who is to pay for it."

"I suppose you mean that Mr. Horndean will have to do that ?"

"Of course. My unlucky speculations came in conveniently there too. He is never likely to ask you whether you ordered your trousseau before or after you made that terrible discovery. You have no money, I suppose ?"

"I am as rich as I was the day you invited me to come to you," said Beatrix bitterly, "with the difference that I have lost my mother's pearls. I have just five pounds."

"You shall have some money for small expenses. Those pearls are a sad loss ; the value of them, if you had been obliged to sell them, would have more than paid all you have cost me."

"I should never have sold them," said Beatrix angrily ; "and there was no question of repaying you."

"In money ? Certainly not, my dear ; that is a correct statement, and mine was an idle remark ; only I was not sure that you were aware of the actual value of the pearls, as distinguished from their sentimental value. You will soon be indemnified for both, no doubt. Mr. Horndean will give you jewels, of course, and you will have the use of the heirlooms that Mrs. Townley Gore is so fond of talking about. They will become you, Beatrix ; you are just the style of woman to wear massive jewellery ; and, I suppose, it would be contrary to Horndean ideas to have them reset."

"I don't know," answered Beatrix with superb indifference. "Nothing has been said about them. If Mr. Horndean speaks of them to me, I shall request him to leave them alone until afterwards. I do not care about them."

"You surprise me ; I should have thought you would have cared very much about them. It will be another matter with jewels of your own—paraphernalia, I believe those are called. I hope Mr. Horndean will be liberal in that way."

"Thank you," said Beatrix coldly, "but I have told him I will not accept any other gift than this." She held out her left hand ; a splendid ring formed of diamonds and cat's-eyes adorned the third finger. "He brought it to me to-day."

Mrs. Maberley inspected the ring closely, holding the firm white hand of Beatrix in her thin yellow fingers with a strange nervous clutch. A tinge of colour rose in her whitey-brown cheek, a spark of eagerness shone in her dull grey eyes, as she pored over the five large stones.

"You're a fool," she said, "not to have a set of these while you can get them. No man is ever so generous, or has so quick an eye for the becoming, afterwards. Take my advice : change your mind, and have a set."

She relinquished Beatrix's hand as if reluctantly, and her glance followed the ring.

"No," said Beatrix ; "I shall keep to my intention. I daresay you are right about men in general ; but if I choose to believe that I have found an exception to the rule, and it's a delusion, I harm nobody but myself."

"As you please, my dear," said Mrs. Maberley ; "and now I fear I must dismiss you."

Beatrix left her and went to her own room, where she found Delphine. The success of her scheme, the pleasure of her lover's visit, the sense of approaching emancipation and safety, an undefined feeling of relief with respect to Mrs. Townley Gore, and even a natural and harmless gratification in the possession of her beautiful ring, rendered Beatrix unusually complacent, and disposed to unbend a little even towards the detested Delphine. She actually showed her the ring, and told her that she was going to be married.

It would have taken an expert physiognomist to discern, when Delphine respectfully congratulated her mistress, that she had been aware of the fact almost as soon as Beatrix herself, and that it possessed an interest for her, apart from her own apparent concern in it.

Mr. Horndean was not mistaken in his notions of how his sister would receive the intelligence of his intended marriage. She was prepared for it, and at least resigned to

it. She was also keenly alive to the difficulty of her relations with her brother, and their tendency to become "strained" at any moment or through the least imprudence on her part. She met the situation with tact and temper, reminded Frederick how she had predicted his captivation by Miss Chevenix, wished him all happiness, and remarked that nothing could be more satisfactory to herself individually, as Beatrix was the one girl in the world whom she really found companionable.

"And as for her having no relatives or connections, it does not matter," Mrs. Townley Gore went on to say, "she is so well posée in society on her own account. After all, people-in-law are generally rather a bore. Apropos, what does that neutral-tinted creature, Mrs. Maberley, say to it?"

"Much that she might be expected to say to so important an affair of the person whom she had treated like a daughter," answered Mr. Horndean in a tone which gave his sister instant warning; "that she is very glad, and thinks me very lucky."

"You can't blame me, and I am sure Beatrix won't, for saying that I think the luck is equally shared between you."

Thus did Mrs. Townley Gore retrieve her one slight blunder, and then she wanted to know the earliest hour at which Beatrix could receive her, and sent Frederick off with a charming little twisted note to her sister-in-law elect. This Beatrix justly regarded as the sign and seal of the day's success.

"I think of Morrison for most of the things. She knows what suits me," said Beatrix, addressing herself to Mrs. Townley Gore.

The scene of the interview was a room in the house in Kaiser Crescent which had come to be known as Beatrix's, and the occasion was the confidential half-hour before dressing-time. The friends were sitting close to a bright fire, each within the shelter of an embroidered screen, and Delphine was folding and putting away some lace which they had just been inspecting.

"You cannot do better. I am quite sorry I gave her up."

"Ah yes, by-the-bye, so you did. I never knew why."

"It was on account of an unpleasant affair about that Miss Rhodes whom Mr. Townley Gore took up in such an absurd way. You saw her once or twice, I think?"

"Yes, I remember her perfectly."

"Well, my dear, I don't mind telling you now, though I did not care to do so before, that the girl insisted upon leaving our house in Paris, and betaking herself to Madame Morrison's. She had been at school with a niece of hers, or a cousin, or something, and there was a romantic friendship between them. I was delighted to get rid of Miss Rhodes, but it was not pleasant to have any sort of relation with the people she was with. Mr. Townley Gore had absurdly allowed her to call herself his ward—altogether it would not have done. But there's not the least reason why you should take any notice of the transaction."

"Is Miss Rhodes with these people still?"

"I have not the slightest idea," answered Mrs. Townley Gore with unaffected apathy. "She was with them in Paris when we last heard of her, in the summer."

Delphine had been standing quite still in front of an open wardrobe, with her back to the speakers, during this dialogue, and she had listened with keen attention. When they passed away from the subject of Miss Rhodes to other talk, she noiselessly closed the wardrobe doors, and left the room unobserved.

On the following day two letters addressed to Madame Morrison were despatched from Mr. Townley Gore's house. One was Miss Chevenix's order for wedding clothes on a scale of which Mrs. Maberley would have fully approved, had she been consulted; the other was an anonymous and ill-spelt letter written in French, in the following terms:

"MADAME,—You are the friend of Madame Lisle. You ought to know something that much concerns her. They say she is in Paris with you, and I hope this is true, for so you will be able to let her know that she may hear of her husband at a place called Horndean, near Notley, in Hampshire, England. He was there a short time ago, and the writer of this letter saw him."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER IV. UNCLE RAYNER, AND THE OLD GREY MARE.

It may, not quite impossibly, be still remembered that the succession of Charley Bassett to his baronetcy and to the family estate of Cautleigh, had been both singular and unexpected. There was Sir Mordaunt Bassett—the baronet at the opening of this history—who died unmarried, and who was succeeded by his only brother, the rector of Cautleigh. But he also had found no time to marry before he died, only three weeks after Sir Mordaunt; and so, as his short tenure had not even allowed him time to make a will, and as he left not so much as an inconvenient sister to part the land from the title, both title and estate should have fallen, in the natural course of things, to a certain uncle, one Rayner Bassett, or to the heirs of the said Rayner. This was all perfectly clear and beyond question; and, if this had been all, Charley, whose father had been Rayner's next and younger brother, would have had no more chance of becoming Sir Charles than the admiral of becoming Sir Horatio.

But, to commit the sin of repetition for the last time, this had—happily or unhappily—not been all. Most families have their black sheep, and Rayner Bassett had been the black sheep of his from the first possible moment after his first birthday. Whether he was absolutely bad I do not know, and have no means of knowing. But the weak strand which must have been noticed from the beginning in the

rope of the Bassett character, plainly enough in Ralph, and as certainly if less plainly in Sir Charles, was multiplied in Rayner's case by ten. He had been an unlucky child; he had been an unlucky boy; he was an unlucky man. He took up life by the wrong end, and stuck to his hold like a bull-dog; for he was as obstinate as only a weak man can be. He had not even so much luck as to be handsome, or clever, or an agreeable companion, or to have the sort of vices the possession of which sometimes make a man liked the better—even his faults were all at the wrong end. Only once in the whole course of so much of his career as people knew did he meet with a fellow-creature who thought him worthy of a better fate than that of the dog who gets a bad name; and the expression of the thought is worth noting for more directly important reasons than that of eccentricity. It was when he was nearly eighteen years old.

"Bassett minor," said one of his masters to another, "is a sneak, and a cad, and a cur. But do you suppose it's because he likes being bullied and called names? It's because he's miserably vain, and, therefore, miserably shy. I expect when he's asleep, and maybe when he's widest awake, too, he dreams he's cock of the school. That sort of thing is wretched for a boy; but it mayn't be so bad for him when he's out of his teens. He's the stuff poets are made of—not the big ones, but those who make a trade of breaking their hearts and selling the bits for a good round sum. It's on the cards that the fellows who now send him to Coventry will some day brag of having known him at school. But if he doesn't catch the trick of rhyming—

well, if I had my way, I'd thrash him well if he didn't bring me fifty rhymes a day. I don't want to hear of his being sent to gaol for picking pockets instead of brains. His fault is that he wants to be at the top of the tree; and, as he can't jump, he has to crawl, and crawling isn't a graceful thing."

This was the best thing ever said of Rayner Bassett; and, unluckily, the knack of rhyming never came. He did not, on the other hand, meet with the ill-luck of being caught with his fingers in a pocket that was not his own, but he fell into the scarcely less unfortunate scrape of presenting at one of the county banks a cheque apparently signed by a certain most respectable farmer, who proved most conclusively that the signature was not his own. It was a terrible affair. The then baronet, Rayner's father, did all he could to cover it, but in vain. The farmer, an independent Briton who paid his rent to another landlord, was neither to be bought nor persuaded; he stuck to it that forgery was forgery, snapped his fingers at the Bassetts, and swore that if the bank shirked its duty he would do nothing of the kind. There was nothing for it but for Rayner Bassett to cut and run; and the last heard of him by his relieved relations was that he had been living, under different names and at different places, with a lady who was presumably his wife and an increasing family of small children. And then he was lost for good and all.

Of course the precise nature of his domestic relations mattered very little at the time. But when the death, first of his father, then of his brother, then of his nephew Sir Mordaunt, then of his other nephew the rector, left the baronetcy vacant, it mattered a very great deal. If living, he, the more than suspected forger, by this time a probable gaol bird, would be Sir Rayner Bassett; which was too terrible an idea. So terrible was it as to be presumably impossible. He must be dead. Such inconvenient people as he sometimes die, if they drink enough, but, while alive, they never disappear; unless indeed their friends and relations are hopelessly poor. But he might, though dead, be just as inconvenient as if he were alive. There was that woman, and there were those children. Their existence had been only too certain. And was he not only their father, but had he been married to their mother? If so, though dead, he had left an heir.

To do Charley Bassett justice he, acting under the advice of his solicitors, took all proper steps for the discovery of his missing uncle and unknown cousins. He also—as much for his own sake as for theirs—had diligent enquiry made for the fact of any possible marriage made by his uncle Rayner. It was pending the issue of these enquiries that he travelled abroad; and not till every legal presumption was satisfied of the disappearance from life of Rayner Bassett, unmarried, did he fairly enter upon his new life at Cautleigh Hall. Nor, even then, until the legal period of possession was fulfilled, did he feel absolutely secure. The path from Bohemian to baronet was not a simple one, after all. Rank and wealth were endeared to him by danger. He took to economy as a means of hedging against some possible claim for mesne profits. He tried to make his son and heir a working-man with a view to the worst that might befall.

But the twenty years of possession were at last fairly complete, and Uncle Rayner had always been far too unlucky a man to have tumbled into idiocy, lunacy, or any other method of extending the term. Sir Charles Bassett might at last feel as secure as any man can be of anything in this uncertain world. He had never seen his uncle Rayner; but his touch of artistic fancy had painted a very complete picture of the scapegrace in his mind. Of course a family label had been pasted on Rayner, containing his full description; and, of course, being a family label, it was wrong. Feeble obstinacy in folly had been painted in the darker colours of resolute and desperate villainy. Uncle Rayner was a dangerous profligate, with the physique attaching to such a reputation; for when a man is supposed to have committed a murder, who does not at once exclaim that he looks the very image of a murderer? Sir Charles, as an artist, physiognomist, and man of the world, was bound, by all reason as well as instinct, to picture this terrible Uncle Rayner as a big, burly, handsome, gentlemanlike ruffian, invincible with women, dangerous with men; to be avoided, but not to be despised. He certainly did not picture him as a man likely to forego a great estate out of respect for the prejudices of Lincolnshire. This alone had been moral, if not legal, evidence of death—imagination is the very grandmother of reason.

So much for the history of Rayner

Bassett, as it was known more or less imperfectly to his few relations and to the still fewer, whom, as a matter of form, he might have called his friends. The conclusion of the whole matter was that, after some twenty years and more of doubt and secret insecurity, Sir Charles Bassett might breathe freely and safely, and feel himself to be Sir Charles Bassett indeed. The character of the ex-Bohemian had hardened and stiffened; but that only made the sensation of relief the more welcome. One must have cramped limbs to know the luxury of stretching them. He might, so far as habit would let him, relax his system of increasing his personal property by investments at the expense of the land, so that, in case he ever should turn out to have been merely a steward, he might not prove to have been a steward for nothing. The twenty years were well past and over now, and the security which duly followed relief had been growing day by day, until the old anxiety was as practically forgotten as the toothache of yesterday. It was not always that he would have written so light a letter to his son on the latter's aimlessness and idle ways; but then there was no longer the same need that Ralph should be able, in case of need, to open the oyster of life with a sword instead of a silver spoon. Then there was the land absolutely crying out for all kinds of improvements which had been neglected by an owner who could not feel sure, till now, that what he had was his own. The Bassetts of the direct line had been such old-fashioned people, and of such little enterprise, that a considerable portion of the Lincolnshire estate was still mere undrained marsh and fen. Sir Charles himself was not a particularly energetic or practical person, but his first instinct was to commit some act of unquestioned and unquestionable ownership, and the most obvious act was to set about draining and reclaiming the waste of Cautleigh Holms. There was a certain largeness, too, about the notion that promised good room for his life to stretch in; just as, when a young man, he had always his canvasses to be at least twice as large as his ideas. He had just reached the point of life when the Indian summer of second youth is apt to begin, wherein those who can catch the season do their largest and their best, just before it grows too late to begin anything new.

So, after turning the matter over in his mind for a few months, he made up his

mind in a single hour, and, full of a second birth of zeal, set off that very morning to London, to lay his plans before a well-known firm of engineers. An arrangement for somebody belonging to the firm to come down and look over the Holms was soon made; and Sir Charles was at leisure, well before dinner-time, to call at Urquhart's chambers in the hope of finding his son there. But Urquhart was still away at his great arbitration case in the North, and Ralph, so he learned, had not been at chambers that day. And, on going to his lodgings, he further learned that Mr. Bassett had gone out an hour ago and was not likely to be back till some time unknown. It was irritating; and the whole thing looked erratic and unsteady to the ex-Bohemian. He had not planned a lonely evening, and had looked forward, with a newly-awakened desire for confidences and sympathies, to telling Ralph all about the Holms scheme. The heir might even catch some of the improvement fever; and that would be a grand thing—better even than a dose of Quarter Sessions as a training for the future squire of Cautleigh. He did not feel inclined to dine at his club with himself for his only guest, and a dinner at his hotel would be worse still. And so it came to pass that a very strange adventure happened to him; stranger than may seem likely to those who are unable to read between the lines of lives.

His mind was running on the Holms, and this made him a little absent-minded. He was going nowhither in particular, and yet he was bound to arrive somewhere. He was the most respectable of baronets, and yet certain old instincts had been faintly revived. And so the chain of those old instincts, with every link an old association, drew him eastward until the daylight imperceptibly grew into gaslight, and he found himself at the narrow door of a dark passage within Temple Bar—that gate of a million memories which the storytellers of the future will have to describe with cold pens instead of merely naming it, as we may do still, with the respectful silence that, from so many of us, its manifold associations with our own lives make its due.

Charley Bassett—not Sir Charles—had once known that passage well. He had known it as a school-boy knows every inch of the old school bounds, so that, twenty years after, he can find his way to any corner of them blind-fold. For up that court

was the Old Grey Mare. The Old Grey Mare went the way that all things go for which anybody cares before Temple Bar; but there are men—some rich, more poor—who remember that very dirty den as their school, college, home; as everything that one house can be to one man. To the profane eye, it was simply a singularly unattractive chop-house, which nobody would enter except for a wager. But nowhere round Bow Bells had the midnight chimes been heard to sound so merrily; nowhere had headaches been more genially earned. There had been brave nights at the Old Grey Mare twenty, and forty, aye, and sixty years ago, when men were not compelled to keep their good things for their printers, but let them out freely upon all comers, and when licensed hours were unknown. It had been a house of talk, where a few famous men had drawn their first blood as wits, and where beaten men had been content, and more than content, to win all their laurels. And there, in what were now the old times, had Charley Bassett, with his pleasant ways and his four hundred a year, once been a greater man than was Sir Charles in Lincolnshire. In Lincolnshire, he was a great landlord. But he had been a great musician, a great painter, a great poet, and a great good fellow at the Old Grey Mare.

What did Shakespeare do when, settled down respectably at Stratford, he came up to town and chanced to find himself standing before the sign of the Mermaid? Certainly he went in. Even Sir Charles was not without the touch of human nature which makes the common acts of great men and small men very much the same. Sir Charles Bassett would not have asked his son Ralph to take a chop with him at the Mare; indeed, a year or two ago he would himself, though without a companion, have passed by without a thought of entering. But now—well, he might do as he pleased, and there was nobody to wonder at his choosing such a place for a meal. Charley could not be quite killed by having been turned into Sir Charles, and so all that remained of him yielded to natural impulse, broke through the shell of twenty years, and—just because there was it, and there was he—he turned up the court and entered the Mare.

Any Lincolnshire neighbour would have suspected some mystery on seeing Sir Charles Bassett, of Cautleigh Hall, forsake the comfort of his club for a hole like this, to which no mere chance could possibly

have led him. And the discovery that there was no mystery at all about the matter would not have disappointed the neighbour more than the atmosphere of the Old Grey Mare disappointed Sir Charles. The place was not the same. It is true that the sawdust-carpet appeared to have never been renewed since he had last dined there, and that the same clock ticked, and that the arrangement of the boxes and their tables was precisely the same as of old. But the room itself seemed to have shrunk into half its former size, and the ghosts of past meals had taken to cling about the place in the form of the odour of an ill-kept menagerie. Then there was the company. He had purposely kept on his rough travelling great coat lest the style and completeness of his clothes should be out of harmony with his surroundings. Alas! there was no occasion for any such precaution. Of course he did not expect to see any of the old faces, or to recognise any that he might see. But still less did he look to find himself among a herd of smartly-dressed clerks, of noisy and probably briefless, but by no means ill-tailored, barristers, and of a majority in general which the old habitués of the Mare would have scornfully regarded as snobs and swells. There were some, it is true, who might be taken to represent the old press element which had once been the special glory of the Old Grey Mare. But even of these the style seemed to have changed. He had come to be a silent listener. But where were the flashes of wit, and the rain of humour, and the thunders of dispute that, in his recollection, had made the place a temple of good company every day and all night long? Or was it he, and not the place, that had changed? Had he once taken chaff for wit, and chatter for humour? Were these also imagining themselves geniuses and wits, to wake some day, like himself, to the discovery that wit and humour are always things belonging to one's own youth and no other man's? He had better have gone to sleep at his club, after all. Suddenly his eyes fell upon one familiar object—that of an old man eating a chop, with a pint of port by his side; the very same old man who, five-and-twenty years ago, had been known to eat two chops and to drink a pint of port at the same hour every day and in the same seat at the Old Grey Mare, who then looked seventy years old, and now did not look more than seventy-one. Surely that old

man must be the only reality in a world of shams and dreams.

"An' faith, Esdaile," said a hoarse brogue in the box immediately behind Sir Charles, "it was a mighty queer yarn she spun me before she died. 'Ronayne,' says she—that is to say, 'Doctor,' says she, 'I'd like ye to write a word to me poor father at home—Cox his name is, and so was mine; I was only Stella Fitzjames, ye know, on the boards.' 'To tell him ye're dead?' asked I. 'No,' says she, 'to tell him I really was a married wife, after all; an' there's my wedding-ring. Tell him if he'll go to Helmsford, to the church there, he'll find the marriage of Mary Cox, that's me, to Rayner Bassett (that was the name) only in another name.' 'An' what's the name the villain that's left ye married ye in?' says I. 'He'll see in the church books,' says she. "'Twas Doyle—John Doyle.' Now, Esdaile, that was queer. If Rayner had been Charles, we'd have had Charley Bassett and Jack Doyle in the same yarn—a meeting of the waters, leastway of the names, to make one think how things are bound to run in pairs."

"Hum! Things don't run in pairs unless they're harnessed," was the answer in the very tone which had characterised Esdaile the painter. Sir Charles could almost fancy he saw the twitch of the corner of the mouth that used to give an air of irony to his simplest words. "Nobody ever did know anything of the archdeacon, except that he had some spite against womankind. I always thought he must have married, and come to grief over it in some way. Those big babies always do. I suppose some Rayner Bassett has found it convenient to take up with an alias—that's all. Poor Jack, or poor Rayner, or poor both; I suppose it's all one, now. Here's to his memory—Jack Doyle the archdeacon, alias Rayner Bassett the married man. So that was the end of Stella. We began together, she and I; she played Juliet, and I painted the balcony. Wouldn't I have roasted Jack Doyle if I'd only known!"

Surely something more than a chance impulse must have brought Sir Charles Bassett to the Old Grey Mare. And Esdaile, and Ronayne, after all these years! If this were true, he was no more Sir Charles Bassett than he was that old gentleman who had eaten his chop and drank his port for fifty years, unmoved by the chances—if of chance they be—that make havoc of less philosophic lives.

MAHOMETAN RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

MODERN visitors to Constantinople are usually of opinion that all the mirabilia of the famous city may readily be seen in the course of a fortnight; and their inspection of the wonders which it contains is consequently hasty and perfunctory. Most of them contrive to visit the Tekés, or Convents of the Dancing and the Howling Dervishes, partly because they have been told that such visits are "the correct thing," and partly because the local guides and interpreters, who receive a commission on the fees paid for admission to the Tekés, are careful to confirm them in this preconceived opinion. Sights which can be seen without payment never find favour with a local dragoman, who counts all as labour lost, which brings him no fees. From these flying visits to the Tekés, and from the stereotyped explanations of the interpreters, the travellers obtain but little satisfaction, and, for the most part, take their leave in the belief that even if the antics which they have witnessed had at any time a religious meaning, they have now ceased to be symbolical of aught, except the profound reverence of the gyrating or shrieking worshippers for the great god "Backsheesh." It is true that in either Teké the ceremonial has lost many of its most imposing features. The Mevleevs, or Turning Dervishes, no longer take opium before their dance, with the view to induce the ecstatic trance which was supposed to denote their spiritual union with the Creator. Tournefort, the French botanist, who witnessed their mystic evolutions at the beginning of the last century, says that a dancing dervish would take an ounce of opium in a dose.

Nor do the Rufá-ees, or Howling Dervishes, any longer swallow hot coals, or gash themselves with knives after the manner of the priests of Baal, or chew pieces of broken glass, or apply red-hot irons to their flesh; or exhibit their wounds and sores to their sheikh in order that he may heal them with his saliva. The noisy recitation of the ninety-nine names of God by the Howling Dervishes, and the solemn posturings of the Dancing Dervishes to the sweet but melancholy music of the Turkish flutes, make but a slight impression on the minds of the visitors. Travellers in the interior of the empire may often be eye-witnesses of the respect paid to the tombs

of deceased Santons, and may be astonished by the votive offerings which are suspended to the walls of the tombs, and by the appearance of the pilgrims who come there to pray; much as Portia, after she had done justice on Shylock,

did stray about
By holy crosses, where she knelt and prayed
For happy wedlock hours.

But though these tombs are as thickly set in the Turkish Empire as holy stations were, and perhaps still are, in Ireland and in Wales, many of the perfervid fancies which hallowed them in former days

have vanished
And live no longer in the faith of reason.

The keepers of the tombs, who live by their vocation, do their best to encourage and stimulate the piety of the pilgrims, and might, perhaps, succeed more frequently, if their own lives did not too often belie their professions. Even in Konia, where the great founder of the Mevleevs, whose mystical poems are now being translated by Mr. Redhouse, sleeps in a tomb of peculiar beauty and admitted sanctity, and where the dervishes of his order have a large and wealthily endowed convent, there is little in the conduct of his disciples to inspire admiration. They are insolent, quarrelsome, truculent, and dissolute, while their sheikh, who is the lineal descendant of their founder, and on whom it devolves, as it has long devolved on his ancestors, to gird on the sabre of a new sultan in the Mosque of Eyoub, is known to be a dissolute, drunken, and dishonest man. Whatever may be thought throughout the rest of the empire of the present "Mollah Hunkiar," as he is called, he is well known in Konia to be as I have described him. But though, to hasty visitors, the dervishes of to-day offer little or no attraction, those who study their history and examine the writings of their leaders, know well that the first is by no means the least interesting chapter in the voluminous records of religious enthusiasm, and that the second contain doctrines which have influenced, and still do influence, the thoughts and actions of pious men in every quarter of the globe. Asceticism, which had its birth in the far distant East, and grew to a vigorous manhood in the south and west, but pined and dwindled in the too bracing atmosphere of the north, found a congenial climate at a very early period of the world's history in the countries which, after many vicissitudes, came to make up the Turkish Empire.

It is difficult to distinguish the asceticism of the Moslems from that of the early Christians, or to separate the latter from that of the Jews; and it is certain that similarity of doctrine has induced and confirmed similarity of practice. Amongst the Moslems, the Christians, and the Jews, imposture has often walked side by side with asceticism, and it has not always been easy to distinguish the cheat from the saint, but I shall attempt to preserve this distinction in the following pages, and shall hope to show that if the religious orders of Turkey have included many foes to religion and morality, they have also contained many sincere believers, who have consistently pressed forward in what they deemed to be the "true path to union with the Creator."

I propose first to offer some citations from the writings of travellers and historians, who have described the practices and customs of the dervishes, and shall supplement them by such comments as will enable my readers to compare the dervishes with other ascetics of ancient and modern times, and also to distinguish, to a great extent, between real and pretended enthusiasts. As a matter of course it is in the practice, rather than in the doctrine of the religious orders of any country, that the signs of degeneration and corruption are to be found, and I shall therefore describe the outward manifestations of the Moslem sects before I treat of the principles which were inculcated by their founders, and which successive teachers of acknowledged piety and ability have laboured to enforce.

I commence with a crucial example. Evlia Effendi, a Moslem, who was himself a dervish, and who travelled over a large part of the Turkish Empire in the beginning of the seventeenth century, has the following curious passage:

"Near Erzeroum there are some dervishes who go bareheaded, and barefooted, with long hair. Great and little carry wooden clubs in their hands, and some of them crooked sticks. They came to wait on the pacha, and to exhibit their diploma of foundation. The pacha asked them whence their immunity dated, and they invited him to pass to their place of devotion. We followed them to a large place where a great fire was lighted of more than forty waggon loads of wood, and where forty victims were immolated. They assigned to the pacha a place at a distance from the fire, and they began to

dance around it, their drums and their flutes playing, and they crying 'Hoo!' and 'Allah!'

"This circular motion having continued an hour's time, about one hundred of these dervishes, being naked, took their children by the hand and entered the fire, the flames of which towered as high as the pile of Nimrod, crying: 'Oh! Constant!' 'Oh! all Vivifying!' After half an hour they came out of the fire without the least hurt except their beards and hair singed; some of them retiring into their cells instead of coming before the pacha, who remained astonished."

With regard to the foregoing extract I will observe that the "forty victims immolated" were assuredly animals and not human beings. The sacrifice of animals prevails throughout Turkey to this day on the occasion of the greater and lesser Bairam.

These are, as it were, Paschal sacrifices, but the sacrifice of animals on important occasions was in full vigour during the first half of the present century. When, in 1836, the bridge over the Golden Horn was opened, thirteen bullocks were sacrificed at the bridge head, Sultan Mahmoud, the reformer, himself putting the knife to the victims' throats.

Marshal Von Moltke, who was then in the Turkish service, witnessed, and has described the ceremony.

If we may judge from their invocation of the names of Allah and from their use of the ejaculation "Hoo!" the dervishes, whom Evlia saw, were Rufá-ees, or Howling Dervishes, who have always been famous for their handling of fire. There is nothing at all impossible in Evlia's statement that these dervishes with their children passed naked through the fire. In point of fact their nudity lessened the danger. Every schoolboy knows that he can pass his bare hand rapidly through flame without feeling pain. It is not to be supposed, of course, that the dervishes remained long in the fire. They probably skipped rapidly in, and as rapidly skipped out again, whilst the pacha and Evlia were prevented, by the distance at which they had been placed from the fire, from perceiving that they were witnessing, not one, but many immersions. But it is well known that human beings may with impunity pass through fire if their passage be rapid. So long as it was the custom of the people of the United Kingdom to keep up the pagan custom of kindling Baal fires

on Midsummer Eve, so long was it their custom also to leap over the fires, and this act of leaping over must, in many cases, have involved a leaping through the flame. In many cases it is certain that our ancestors did actually run through the flame.

A Scotch minister, who was in Ireland in 1782, thus describes what he saw in that year on Midsummer Eve:

"At the house where I was entertained," he writes, "it was told me that I should see at midnight the most singular sight in Ireland, which was the lighting of fires in honour of the sun. Accordingly, exactly at midnight the fires began to appear, and, going up to the leads of the house, which had a widely extended view, I saw, on a radius of thirty miles all round, the fires burning on every eminence which the country afforded. I had a further satisfaction in learning from an undoubted authority that the people danced round the fires, and at the close passed through these fires, and made their sons and daughters, together with their cattle, pass through them also, and that the whole was conducted with the greatest solemnity."

Thus it was, as many think, that the sons and daughters of the ancient Israelites passed through the fire to Moloch or Baal. The practice was always idolatrous, but seldom if ever barbarous. No slaughter, no actual sacrifice was intended or perpetrated, and those who took part in the ceremony were as free from danger as were the dervishes whom Evlia saw in Armenia, in 1634, or the Irish, whom Mr. McQueen saw in 1782. Religious rivals might see cruelty in the practice, but there is no reason to suspect the existence of anything but superstition.

What is chiefly noteworthy in the foregoing quotations, is the circumstance that the dervishes, notwithstanding their Mahometanism, and the Irish, notwithstanding their Christianity, had alike preserved one of the most striking features of the ancient worship of the sun. I shall have occasion to comment in the following pages upon other cases in which popular practices have long survived the doctrines out of which they sprang. Evlia, as has been seen, states that the fire which the dervishes had kindled, sent up "flames which towered as high as the pile of Nimrod," and, with regard to this statement, I must observe that in the Arabian legends, which were certainly in circulation long before the time of Mahomet, and possibly before the

preaching of Christianity, the place which in the Jewish scriptures is assigned to Nebuchadnezzar, was assigned to Nimrod. Sometimes Nimrod is said to have thrown the youthful Abraham into a furnace, and to have been converted, by Abraham's freedom from injury, to a belief in the power of the God of Abraham. Sometimes it is the slave of Abraham who is thrown by Nimrod into a furnace, from which he is rescued by the thaumaturgic power of Abraham. In this case, Nimrod not only agrees to worship the God of the patriarch, but endows him with a rich territory on which Abraham builds a city, which he names Damaschk (Damascus), after Damshak, or Damaschk Eliezer, which was the name of the slave in question. The association of Nimrod with events in which fire plays an important part is so old, and yet so firmly rooted, that the natural naphtha-wells which abound in Mesopotamia, - and which are often ignited, are regarded by the natives as the "fire temples of Nimrod." Evlia saw one at Erdisheir, near Mossoul, which was said to have been spontaneously extinguished on the night of Mohammed's birth, and to have been subsequently rekindled. So the early Christians believed that on the night of our great nativity, the pagan oracles became dumb, and the nymphs and dryads forsook their wonted haunts. The sober Milton, in whom Puritanism was interwoven with classicism, says on this head :

Peor and Baalim
Forsake their temples dim.

And, still more appositely :

And sullen Moloch, fed,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue ;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue.

These lines might have served to commemorate the spontaneous extinction of Evlia's "fire temple of Nimrod" at the birth of Mohammed.

The same Evlia gives the following account of a dervish whom he saw in Constantinople :

"We were thus talking, when we beheld suddenly at the door a dervish Reytashi, crying the usual formulas of that order : 'From God the truth of religion !' and again, 'God is the Truth.' Walking in, he began to play on his flute, playing first twelve times in honour of the twelve Imams, which put me and the pacha in astonishment. We were so much the more

surprised how he came in, as the door-keepers had the strictest orders not to allow any one to walk in. I began now to examine this dervish more closely, and saw he was barefooted and bareheaded, of pleasant parley ; a clear and eloquent man, with a crown, or head-dress, divided into twelve red divisions in honour of the twelve Imams, and of the twelve elders of the order of the Reytashes. He took his flute again in his hand, and began now to accompany himself, reciting the ninety-nine names of God, and, after the exclamation, 'The truth of God is friend and friend,' he remained silent. I began now to look at his body, and saw on his breast the deep wounds in remembrance of the killing of Hossein, wounds and scars so deep that I might lay a hand in each of them. He took off his crown, and then I saw a scar on his forehead, which is the mark of resignation to the orders of God ; he showed it to witness the purity of his religion, and true derviship. On his right arm he had the wounds in remembrance of the four friends of Mohammed (Abu-bekir, Omar, Othman, and Ali), and on his left arm the blood-marks of the battle of Kerbela. His being entirely shaved, indicated his renunciation of all forbidden pleasures, for he had neither beard nor whiskers, nor eyebrows, nor eyelashes, and his face was bright and shining. At his girdle hung his coal-pan ; in his hand he had his back-scratcher ; at his waist a sling, like that wherewith David killed Goliath ; at his breast a flute breathing wonderfully like that of Moses ; in brief, all the instruments necessary for such a soldier of God. I took then the liberty of addressing to him the following words : 'Oh, my sultan of sanctity, you bring us health !' and then I declaimed a stanza of six verses. 'Thy sweet breath, of what rose is it the morning gale ? Thy shining cheeks, of what candle are they the splendour ? The moisture of thy face, of what river is it the water ? The dust of thy feet, of what ground is it the earth ? Of what nature are you who charm all nature ! What is your name, your country, and your master ?' When I had sung these verses, the dervish began to move with nimbleness, so lightly that his feet did not touch the ground. He answered my Turkish sextain with an Arabic quatrain, declaiming with great precision and elegance. Then he answered my questions in the following way : 'I am of the order of the Reytashes, the disciples of Dervish

Ali, who fasted forty years, and never in his life ate anything that had been touched by a knife. I am a native of Irak, born at Bagdad, and my name is Dervish Sunneth.' I kissed then his hand as a sign of homage and duty, and answered now his questions, saying: 'Thy servant Evlia is the son of Dervish Mohamamed.' 'So accept then of me,' said he, 'as thy companion in land and sea,' and stretching his hand, he recited the following verse: 'Those who render homage unto thee, render homage unto God, and the hand of God is over their heads!' And I was awakened to a new life after this homage was paid."

I have a few remarks to offer on the foregoing quotation. The recitation of the ninety-nine names of God, which is always performed with a rosary or chaplet, and is sometimes accompanied by prayers and praises proper to each successive name, is common to all the orders of the dervishes. In this and in some other respects they had much in common with the Essenes, who were the dervishes of the Jews, and one of whose principal occupations was the study of the name of God; of that unpronounceable name which only the High Priest dared utter once in a year in the Holy of Holies, "during the most awful and solemn service on the Day of Atonement; and who thought that the knowledge of that name, in four, in twelve, and in twenty-four letters, would give them the power of prophecy, and of receiving the Holy Ghost!"

The dervish whom Evlia describes was the disciple of Dervish Ali, who never in the course of his life ate anything that had been touched with a knife.

Now the Essenes were opposed to animal food. Josephus, the historian, was for three years the disciple and imitator of an Essene, "who lived in caves and solitudes, had no covering but the bark of trees, and fed upon nothing but the spontaneous productions of the earth." John the Baptist, who is now admitted to have been an Essene, lived on "locusts and wild honey."

Nor will it be forgotten that Daniel, Shadrach, Mesheck, and Abednego, would eat nothing but "pulse and water," or that the Rechabites were forbidden to hold property, or to till the ground, so that their abstinence from wine must have been supplemented (though this is not expressly stated) by abstinence from all but the spontaneous fruits of the earth.

With regard to the wounds and scars

which Evlia saw on the head and arms of the dervish Sunneth, it is to be observed that no pretence is made of their having been other than self-inflicted. No exception could be taken to the practice of the dervishes in this respect, as they merely wounded themselves in token of their own reverential belief; but there is grave reason to disapprove of the fables which have been circulated with regard to the so-called supernatural marks, which are said to have been discovered on the persons of Saint Francis d'Assisi, Saint Catherine of Siena, and others.

Evlia regarded the baldness of the dervish, and his want of beard, whiskers, eyebrows, and eyelashes, and the general smoothness of his skin, as proofs that he had renounced "all forbidden pleasures."

Now it is recorded by other writers, of a saint called Hadji Bahram, that a woman praised his hair, his eyebrows, his eyelashes, and his beard, and that on hearing her he retired into a corner and prayed that he might be relieved of these too fascinating ornaments. His prayer was heard, and when he once more presented his face to his admirer the effect on her was instantaneous. It cannot, indeed, be said, as was said by Moore of Zelica and Mokanna in the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan, that

He raised his veil, the maid turned slowly round,
Looked at him, shrieked, and sank upon the ground.

But she did still better, for she ordered her servants to turn him out of the house, and thus released him from temptation.

The admiration which has prevailed everywhere for long and beautiful hair, has naturally led many sects of ascetics, who were desirous to exhibit outward signs of grief, penitence, and mortification, or to mark their separation from the world, to shave their heads. From the earliest times men shaved their heads as a sign of mourning for deceased friends or relatives, or during captivity, or in the time of any other trouble; and a voluntary baldness has constantly for many ages been the chief outward mark of abstention from the ordinary life of worldly men. The Greeks and other Orientals have been in the habit of shaving the entire head. The Western Christians have been content to shave only a portion of the crown, but with them the shape of the tonsure has varied in different churches, and some of the variations have an historical interest.

The Irish form of tonsure was supposed to be derived directly from apostolic

times, and the attempt to supersede it by the introduction of the Roman form well-nigh gave rise to a schism.

The outward and visible sign of sanctity which baldness affords, is not always accompanied by an inward and spiritual grace. The western proverb of "Cucullus non facit Monachum" finds its parallel in the Turkish proverb, "Ihrâm dervîch etmez" (the habit does not make the dervish).

Amongst the Israelites one large sect of ascetics, the Nazarites, indicate their separation from the world by permitting their hair to grow, and by allowing "no razor to come upon their heads." So also amongst the Moslems there are, and long have been, ascetics after this fashion.

The Kalenders, or Wandering Dervishes, all permit the growth of their hair and beards, and mark their separation from the world by the dirty and tangled condition of these appendages.

As the devotees of this order are always partially, and sometimes wholly nude, it may well be supposed that their appearance is not attractive. I have before me the picture of a kalender, taken by Nicholas Nicolai, who came into the Levant with the French Ambassador in 1551.

In this picture the kalender has a tiger's skin thrown over his shoulders, but the rest of the figure is nude.

In Egypt perfectly nude kalenders may still frequently be seen, and even in Constantinople I have seen one such within the last five years. He passed for a lunatic, which is a common practice with the kalenders, and, in the belief that he was mad, any kind of eccentricity was permitted to him.

As a rule, however, the dervishes are decorously and even well-dressed, and denote their separation from the world more by attention than by inattention to externals. Still, it remains to be said that for many ages the ascetics of the East have sought, either by a studied attention to peculiarities of costume or by a scrupulous observance of personal cleanliness, or by a total or modified disregard of personal decency, to set up an outward mark of distinction between themselves and those less fortunate beings who had not separated themselves from the world, its pleasures, and its ambitions.

These practices have not been restricted to one age, or to one country. The Moslems claim that Elijah and Elisha were dervishes,

and we know that Elijah went partially clothed, and that Elisha was bald. Samson was a Nazarite from his birth, and only lost his supernatural strength when, after yielding to the temptations of the senses, he was deprived of the outward sign of his "separation unto the Lord."

Unfortunately for the reputation of the dervishes, European travellers in the interior of the Turkish Empire have chiefly been acquainted with the kalenders, or travelling dervishes. They have not had the time, or the opportunity, or perhaps the curiosity, to study the lives and doctrines of the stationary Santons, and have formed their opinion of all the religious orders from the Order of Pilgrims alone. The kalenders, indeed, have had their saints, and a pretty village on the Bosphorus, between Therapia and Yeni-Keni, derives its name from the tomb of a Santon of this order. But in the ranks of the kalenders there have been, and still are, many impostors. The Jesuit, Father Justinian, of Tours, who spent many years in Turkey during the last half of the sixteenth century, had a very bad opinion of the kalenders, of whom he says, in an elaborate work which he published in 1687, under the nom de plume of "Michel Febvre," "It is not good to meet them in any lonely place, especially if one has anything to lose," and his adverse opinion is confirmed by other writers. The kalenders are for the most part professional jugglers, fire-eaters, glass-chewers, and snake-charmers. Some of them eat live snakes in public, others seek to create a belief in their sanctity by eating offensive substances. They interpret dreams, deal in charms, and profess to cure diseases. In short they display what may be called the "seamy side" of ascetism, but they are not peculiar to Turkey, or to Mahomedanism. Their analogues have been found wherever real and sincere ascetics have dwelt. These vagabond dervishes have not always been natives of Turkey. Father Justinian says that in his time there used to come into Asia, from the Christian States of Europe, a great number of vagabonds who passed themselves off as Santons. They feigned to be dumb, and demanded alms by signs, by which means they contrived to escape detection. Father Justinian saw an Italian at Aleppo, who had even been to Mecca, but who had grown weary of the life and besought the father to procure him the means of returning to his own country. In the novel of

Anastasius, which is full of accurate and graphic pictures of life in Turkey, the hero at one stage of his career passes himself off as a kalender, and whilst in this disguise meets with others not more saintly than himself. Indeed, the ease with which the character may be assumed, and the many advantages resulting from the assumption, must always have tended to tempt the cupidity of impostors; but it is not from the actions of these vagabonds that the dervishes must be judged, and I hope to furnish my readers with the means of forming a more correct and liberal opinion of them.

IN THE LANE.

SOME time ago, in a description of a Sunday in Shoreditch,* allusion was made to the crowd of men who, at the stroke of one, poured out of the narrow entrance of Petticoat Lane. Ever since, a strong desire has been felt by the present writer to visit a scene so attractive to the multitude—a desire rather increased by a slight skirmish in one of the daily papers on the question of Petticoat Lane and its Sunday market; a certain correspondent, "A," taking a sad and gloomy view of the goings on in that quarter, as a scene of uproar, vice, and profanity, of which unbelieving Jews are the presiding demons, while another correspondent, "B," took up the cudgels for toleration and free trade, as right and proper even with Hebrews and their dealings. And, indeed, as far as these last are concerned—the Hebrews, that is—one feels with delight that the most potent weapon in the armoury of the intolerant "A" is scarcely available. Anyhow, these worthy dealers in Petticoat Lane are not "breaking the Sabbath." They have had their Sabbath, have gone through with it quite as strictly and religiously as you, my worthy friend, who kept your shop open without compunction while these others were at their devotions. And then a third combatant intervened, this time not in the form of a letter to the editor, but of a prayer addressed to the mercy-seat of Heaven—a prayer, which if it failed of its mission there, anyhow attained the distinction of a "paragraph" here below—a prayer for the denizens and frequenters of Petticoat Lane, who were, however,

sorrowfully recognised as being in reality past praying for, and in the trenchant words of the man of prayer, "outside the pale of salvation." Some prayers are a good deal like curses, and curses of a more malevolent description than those, really of a playful character, so freely bandied about in Petticoat Lane. But this is to anticipate, for we haven't got there yet, nor have we even settled how to go, and when.

It is felt that the Lane cannot be satisfactorily explored without a guide—someone who knows the ways of the place, a genuine frequenter of it, even if outside the pale in consequence. Happily such a one is not far to seek. William is that man. William is an enthusiast for the Lane. He goes there "most every Sunday," now that things are looking up a bit. It was when things were looking very much downwards with William that we first made his acquaintance in the fog and gloom of the great frost of this year. William is something in the painting way, confining his artistic efforts to doors and window-sashes—not a top-sawyer in the line, but still with a capacity for earning his thirty-five shillings or two pounds a week when work is to be had. In that gloomy winter-time work was not to be had, and, indeed, for some months previously William's particular trade had been bad, and the lad himself out of work. And how did he live in that conjuncture, his last shilling gone, his last available piece of clothing deposited with the pawnbroker? Well, somewhat as the sparrows do. He picked a bit here and there; and then he had a roof over his head by good luck, although his tenure of that shelter was uncertain. His landlady was one Mrs. Colibrán, and this lady, in fact, is the connecting link between William and ourselves. Mrs. Colibrán is seen a good deal about our house with a scrubbing-brush and pail, and by her means I have come to know a little about William's intimate history. William paid half-a-crown a week for his room, which he shared with a comrade, James, and that included the cooking of his meals, and Mrs. Colibrán did his little bit of marketing for him, and took in his loaf of bread with her own. And this went on for a while, even after William had come to the last shilling; but when the baker stopped Mrs. Colibrán and put her in the county court for a fortnight's supply, naturally the poor woman couldn't go on buying

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vo. 27, p. 108, "Sunday in Shoreditch."

bread for William. And then the comrade, Jem, fell ill, and went home to his father and mother in the country—Jem, who had always paid Mrs. Colibran his lodgings to the day, and who sometimes had lent a trifle to William. With that, as misfortunes never come alone, the first-floor lodgers, who paid six shillings a week, had a tremendous row with the Colibrans and decamped. In the dead winter time nobody was looking for lodgings, you may be sure, and the rooms remained unlet, and there was Mrs. Colibran, with her twelve shillings a week to pay for rent and her five children to keep, and all out of the eighteen shillings a week her husband earned as potman, and a few shillings the missus skirmished in by aid of brush and pail, and never a lodger to help her out of the mess, except William.

William stopped in bed a good deal at that particular time, but even there he suffered some agony from Mrs. Colibran's remarks. He owed her four pounds five and the current week's lodgings, and you may suppose that a woman without a penny in the house, with a landlord threatening to put her outside the door, and two or three summonses over her head, was not likely to be choice in her language to one who was partly the cause of her difficulties. But William bore it all meekly and still stuck to the Colibrans, and, to do them justice, the Colibrans stuck to him. Sometimes, when he would come in cold and weak with hunger after a hopeless and unsuccessful search for work, Mrs. Colibran would point out the teapot on the hob, and bid him sit down and warm himself and munch a crust of bread-and-butter. And then on Sundays, when William would be shivering upstairs, conscious of a savoury fume of roast meat—in all their troubles the Colibrans never failed of a Sunday's dinner, as far as the writer knows—conscious of the smell of it, but feeling even in this he is enjoying something to which he has no right; well, in this particular dilemma, Colibran himself would sing out from the foot of the stairs, "Now, Bill, ain't you coming down to your dinner?" A hint that Bill was nowise slow to take.

But when the snow came, and roads and houses and all things were choked up, this very choking up opened out a brighter prospect for William. Mrs. Colibran was the first to suggest it in an appeal to her customers: "If you want your steps clearing and causeway, why not let

William earn his sixpence at it?" And William drew first blood in the way of sixpence, and his "korfee" smoking hot, with a big chunk of bread-and-butter, and was lost in the gloom, starting with a good heart under his tattered coat, and a broom and shovel over his shoulders. Mrs. Colibran almost gave him up that night; thought that poor William had ended his troubles in a snowdrift, or thrown himself into the river by way of squaring his accounts with an unaccommodating world, and the good woman was inclined to grieve over him, and even to affirm that she wouldn't mind losing the four pounds fifteen he owed her to know he was all right somewhere. And then came a rat-tat at the door like a postman's knock, and William himself poured into the house and chucked something wrapped up in paper right into Mrs. Colibran's lap. There were fifteen sixpences in that paper. "And now, missus," said William, the tears standing in his eyes; "you won't say as I'm good for nothing, any more, p'raps." You may fancy there was a pretty good frying and frizzling after that, and that William took his seat at the social board with the air of one who is sure of his welcome.

But there were still hard times after that, although, perhaps, the worst had been reached. And then William nearly lost himself with Mrs. Colibran, and all in the most innocent way; he not knowing that he was in any way putting his foot into it. William had a sweetheart, a very smart-looking girl, as nicely got up as anybody could wish his sweetheart to be; and one day in the fulness of his heart, the snow and slush meantime having disappeared, and with them the chances of earning sixpences with a shovel and broom, William invited the girl to come home with him and see Mrs. Colibran. Now Mrs. Colibran is not particularly smart-looking—the five children and the exercises with the brush and pail, to say nothing of Colibran's extravagances, have put that out of the question—and to see William's sweetheart sitting there like a lady, and he owing her four pounds nine and sixpence at that very moment, was a little too trying. To crown it all Colibran came home, and being of a temperament addicted to gallantry, at once invited William's sweetheart to stop and have her tea, asking for this and that, while Mrs. Colibran waited upon them like a hired servant. Is it to be wondered at that Mrs. Colibran should have spoken up at

last, to such a purpose that the girl fled the house in a tempest of tears, while William himself, who had taken her part, shared her flight, and even Colibrán was awed into submission. But William slipped in again about bed-time, and by keeping out of the way for a while eluded further outpourings of wrath. And then we lost sight of William and his fortunes for a while; till meeting Mrs. Colibrán in the passage one morning with her broom and pail, she proved to be in a communicative mood and began to talk about her own affairs. Yes, she'd got all her rooms let, and there wasn't much to complain of; only if they'd got a few shillings in the house, Colibrán was sure to find them out and spend them. And as for William, he had left them for months; left them to go and get married. Yes, he had got into a job at last, and had married on the strength of it. And as for the money William owed, why he had paid it off. Yes, they had brought her five shillings regular every Saturday—she and he—and Mrs. Colibrán thought she was a very nice pleasant-spoken young woman, and they paid her off the very last shilling, the very last Saturday that was. And what's more, William had got all his things from uptown, meaning the pawnbroker, and now he was going to lay his money out on getting a few things together, and there was William every Sunday morning, with five shillings in his hand, or, perhaps, seven-and-six, off to Petticoat Lane.

There! we have been a long while in getting round to the Lane, but have achieved the journey at last, and this little discursive interlude has been planned with the view of bringing William prominently into view, as a proper and suitable guide, and of showing that if his unhappy Sunday visits to the Lane place him out of the pale of sectarian sympathies, there is yet something about him that may commend him to the heart of general humanity. Anyhow, with William for a guide, I find myself in a carriage of the Metropolitan Railway, one Sunday morning, between ten and eleven, on my way to the East End.

It is a soft sweet September morning—one of those mornings so pleasant in the country, and yet not without melancholy associations of fading leaves and coming winter. There are mellow distances even among the brickfields, and roofs and chimney-pots assume effects of atmosphere. But the present moment is trying, as the carriage is full, with half-a-dozen people

standing up in the gangway. Tobacco-smoke one is inured to, but the effect of six flaming vesuvians going off at once is choky in the extreme. That stout man with a cigar may be going to church or chapel, but the young men with their short clays, their jaunty airs, and their Sunday paper for occasional reference, where are they going, pray? At King's Cross the crowd abates, but a respectable contingent turn out with us at Aldgate. "We might have got out at Bishopsgate," remarks William, "but I think it's best to take the Whitechapel end first; you come to it more gradual."

Actually the sun is shining in Aldgate, bringing out the quaint old houses, with the butchers' sheds below, and the cavernous recesses, suggesting slaughter-houses, lairs, and imprisoned beasts awaiting doom, but where happily now nothing more harmful is done than teaching aspiring youth to ride its bicycle. The sun is shining in Aldgate, but we pass suddenly into complete shadow as we turn up a narrow entry, hardly to be remarked but for the crowd of people that is surging in. A squeeze, a push, and we are shot forth, with a stream of others, into a somewhat broader part. But, although broader, the increased width scarcely relieves the crush, for along the middle of the road is a continuous line of barrows, loaded with all kinds of miscellaneous articles. The sight is a marvellous one. As far as the eye can reach, this narrow street—a street of low shabby-looking red brick houses, stretching before us for nearly half a mile, is crammed and packed with a restless moving crowd—a compact mass of low-crowned hats, on which one might walk as on a causeway, with little danger of tripping over one bigger or higher than the rest. Our progress is first stopped by a compact crowd about an open shop-front devoted in a general way to the sale of gas-fittings, but on this day occupied by a smart-looking man who is as much Israelite as American. "Now then for your medicine, nerve tonic, the finest eye-opener, cobweb-crusher, of the day. Never fails to pick you up. Hoberve! Don't pay me if you don't like it. I don't want your money if it don't please you. What do you say, old boy? That's about the cut. Only a penny! What, another? Bully for you, old man!" All this in the space of about fifteen seconds, while the magician pours a yellow fluid out of one bottle, dashes in a mixture from another,

and with a camel's-hair brush shakes in a drop of tincture from a third that changes the colour to a golden brown. A forest of hands are held out, William's among the rest, while the nerve tonic is bolted down as fast as it can be supplied. "It's prime!" cried William, having swallowed it; "twists ye up as much as a half-quartern of gin."

But, quickly as the go-ahead man is making his harvest, he is rivalled by an old Jew with a barrow a little farther on—a grey old Jew, with a face like an alchemist's. Perhaps it is his face that makes his fortune in this line of business. Anyhow, all his eloquence consists in a persistent nasal croak—a croak of three syllables, with pauses between: "Qui—nine"—as the number nine—"vine!" and he is selling it as fast as he can, handing each customer a lozenge for his penny, and a glass of "qui-nine-vine." The lozenge, no doubt, is to delude his customers into the notion that they are evading the excise laws, but if the old fellow can give them the least taste of quinine and alcohol for a penny, he is more of a conjuror even than he looks. But William tells me that what can be done elsewhere is nothing to the boundless possibilities of Petticoat Lane.

Whatever these possibilities may be, they are not to be enjoyed without a struggle. Now and then there is a very tight place, and the crowd, although not rough exactly, is decidedly unaccommodating and impolite. Possibly there is a good deal of bad language, judged by a polite standard; but what with the general roaring and bellowing of the traders, the shouting and whistling of exuberant youth, and the universal accompaniment of the gruff voices of the crowd, it is difficult to hear your own voice, much less anybody else's. William talks and talks, but it is all dumb show to me, till at last we drift into a side-street, where it is rather quieter—drift with set purpose on William's part, for this by-street, it seems, is devoted to crockery, and William has his eye on jugs and basins, with a view to household plenishing. Not that he means, or has the means, to buy just yet, but wants to find out prices. "Being an object," William says modestly. "Why we pay six shillings a week, me and the missus, for a furnished room, and could do it for three if we 'ad our own sticks. So there'd be another three bob a week to put by." And, probably, it is suggested,

ten pounds would go a long way to furnish the room. "Ten pound," cries William, half scornfully, "why thirty bob 'ud do it 'ansome. Half-a-crown for a pair of lace curtains—get a beautiful pair in the Lane for that—a fine iron bedstead for twelve; the mattress and bedding's the worst, but fifteen would cover that, and there's six-pence left for a chair." Would it not be better to give up the lace curtains, and have another chair and perhaps a table! But William shook his head. "You aint looked upon as respectable, not without your lace curtains; and when you've got them up you may be as bare as you like behind them; while any old box does for a table and chairs."

Once more we sallied into the press, and struggling upwards found ourselves approaching the zone of second-hand clothing. Down below there had been mere playfulness—your drop of drink and your morsel of something to eat. By the way, I have forgotten the eatables. "All a jilly—all a jilly, eels!" cry the men with the little saucers of eels. And then pickles, you can't go far in the Lane without coming upon pickles; great bowls of them in the shops, cucumbers, pumpkins, all kinds of queer-looking vegetables swimming in vinegar, and saucers of them on the booths selling as fast as you please, people swallowing red pickled-cabbage by the handful and the ha'p'orth. Then there is hokey-pokey, which I once took to be a drink, but which, on this occasion, is something like cheese wrapped up in paper; and cakes, and a species of gingerbread called "monkey" by its proprietor. Then you can have fried-fish by the barrow-load, to say nothing of the shop-fronts filled with every kind of luxury in the way of fish, from fried skate to kippered salmon. "And if you want to take a joint home to the missus, why there's a prime bit o' beef at sevenpence," cries William, quite overflowing with satisfaction at the glories of the Lane. And there are turnips, too, as big as your head, and greengroceries of all kinds. "Only the clothes is the most surprising," he adds; "you aint seen 'alf of it yet."

"Got a suit just your size, sir—got it on purpose for you—knew you'd be coming our way. Now just look it over; I don't want you to buy; or a splendid overcoat. Come, sir, and I'll take the old un in exchange," with an affectionate but depreciatory rub of the fingers on the nap of the garment I am wearing. "Yes, just have a look round," cries William, and I

am taken into a little shop, where treasures of clothing are displayed, and at prices that are certainly amazing for cheapness. "Why, they wasn't made for the money," cries William, when we had left the shop, "let alone the material and the cutting out." And then we watched a young man, certainly very shabby and seedy to begin with, as he bargained with one of the Jews in the street for much superior garments. Presently he departed quite metamorphosed. "There's a good deal of style about that coat," said William, reflecting; "but then, you're liable to be took in by the finish. I knew a young chap once who found his Sunday coat getting seedy. He came to the Lane and gave five bob and the old coat for a newish one—but Bob went for style, and there was a wrinkle about the back, and so he came back here next Sunday and give another five bob and the new coat for another one, a regular glossy one, and fitted him like his skin. Well, Bob gets home and was stroking his new coat up and down, when he feels something in the lining, as he hopes might be a five-pound note, and he has it out, and lo and behold it's the pawn-ticket of Bob's German-silver watch, as he put up more'n a year ago, and never thought no more of. That was the identical coat he'd parted with a fortnight ago, only done up to look like new!" William chuckled heartily over his story, and then, as if he feared he might compromise the Lane in my eyes, he added: "They don't take you in like that if you goes in for quality."

Somewhere about half-way up the Lane, there is a spiked iron railing stretching partly across, and this is a perilous point to get past, a sturdy column of people a quarter of a mile long forcing you onwards, while another equally strong column is bearing in the opposite direction, and the iron rails leave barely room to squeeze through. But seeing that the traffic of this mighty host of people is entirely unregulated by the authorities, the order and good behaviour of the crowd is something remarkable. A few determined roughs might create a lamentable disturbance here; but though roughs are not lacking they seem here to be on their good behaviour. And then the feminine element, the nervous, excitable part of a crowd, is almost entirely absent. Else it is not Petticoat Lane alone, but all the side streets, and a dark arcade kind of place called the City of London Clothes Ex-

change, that are filled with this seething crowd of men. And the great majority of the crowd are artisans, all well dressed and comfortable looking. Half the shops, nearly, and half the barrows, are devoted to nothing else but tools, the tools and fittings that a workman wants. And a workman is likely to know what he buys in the way of tools, and if he comes here "in his thousands" to get what he wants, it is a pretty sure sign that he gets what is good and cheap. Anyhow the vendors are independent enough, as if they knew that they gave good value for people's money.

"'Alf a dollar, old man," cries the British workman, holding a tool in his hand and feeling the edge lovingly. "Come, I can't give no more."

"Then you don't give it to me!" cries the proprietor, a thick-set burly Hebrew, who is walking up and down in his shop like a caged lion; "do you think I come here of a Sunday morning to walk about for people to insult me?" And the British workman can get no more out of him; and letting go reluctantly of his prize is carried away by the human tide.

All of a sudden, although the street has not come to an end—it is Middlesex Street, by the way, according to official designation, and the Petticoat Lane is only a memory, preserved in popular affection—the crowd suddenly ceases. As if marked by a barrier, there begins crush and turmoil, and there ends, while all on this side is peace and tranquility. A quiet City lane, with a quiet synagogue in it; doors tightly closed—it is Monday morning there, remember—and a quiet Jewish face near a window, a face belonging to somebody who is writing. Is he a rabbi, and is he writing next Sabbath's sermon? Whatever it is, he is smoking a cigarette very comfortably over it, as quiet and abstracted as if there were not a human being within a hundred miles' circuit. And that leads you into Bishopsgate, which is quiet too, and beautifully airy compared with the Lane; although the street is well-filled with people taking their Sunday walks abroad, while no doubt the churches and chapels about are pretty fairly empty this fine morning. But William has not made his purchases yet, and is anxious to plunge into the fray once more, and soon we are in the human tide again, working our way downwards. The tide is at its fullest flood at this moment, and we move on with little jerks, a few inches at a time,

getting well elbowed and squeezed. Now and then one tramples on a battered old hat or shapeless shoe; for people come to the Lane in rags and tatters, and depart whole and sound, leaving their cast-off gear as a thank-offering—like the crutches and bandages you see at a holy well—as a thank-offering to the Lane; about which these exuvia continue to circulate, by the way, as the dead dog about the moon in Jules Verne's story. But at the extreme height and extremity of the squeeze, there is sudden relief. It is as if a tap had been turned, and the superfluous pressure let off. "That's one o'clock!" cries William. "Market's pretty well over now." And so it proves; for after this we saunter down the Lane in a leisurely way through what would be a dense crowd anywhere else, but here in the Lane is esteemed a mere sprinkling of people. And the barrows are beginning to pack up, while established Israel is thinking about dinner. "Qui-nine-vine" is netting only an occasional copper; the "cider made from Indian fruit," a touch of imagination here that carries us to the gorgeous East, has turned off its tap for the day; while the hoarse cries and loud shouts of just now, have softened into a gentle babble. The sun shines pleasantly about the house-tops and lights up the red ridge-and-furrow roofs. There is meanness here and apparent squalor, but rather as a veil to wealth than an accompaniment of poverty. There are snug rooms behind, from which come the smell of savoury messes; and Israel stands at his door and rattles the money in his pockets, as he watches the horde of strangers file away. And here, in the throat of the Lane, where just now the crowd was gurgling forth in full rush, we can stop and watch the Hebrew American who has put away his nerve tonic and is busily verifying results. He has made his pile, anyhow—a good many piles—many columns of bronze and even of silver. "Not a penny less than four pound!" cries William; "not bad for two hours' work." Two hours? Yes, we have actually been two hours in working our way to the top of the Lane and back. But William is quite satisfied; his five shillings have produced a load of useful commodities that he declares would have cost fifteen anywhere else.

"I've got another little story about the Lane," continued William, with a complacent smile, as we walked back to the station. "About a chap I know'd, who was a Sunday-school teacher and a

Christian young man and everythink, only he'd got a turn for carving in wood, and one day he broke a tool that a gent had given him as he brought from Paris; a tool for under-cutting it was, and he searched all over London and couldn't meet with its feller. And somebody tells him to try the Lana. And he goes one Sunday morning, sendin' a note to the school-superintendent as he's sick. First man he saw in the Lane know'd what he wanted. 'Mo Abram's got what you want,' says he; and so he had—Mo had—and for 'alf the money as what it cost in Paris. After that this chap cut the Sunday-school and everythink, and come to Petticoat Lane every Sunday. And——"

But what the moral of the story might have been, if it had a moral, it is impossible to say, for we came at that moment to the ticket-barrier, and caught sight of our train on the point of departure, and in the rush that followed, the thread of William's eloquence was broken.

MUSICAL FISHES.

IN the wide range of fiction we have some curious stories and legends of talking fish, but through a long—and, I must honestly confess, somewhat unprofitable course of romance reading—I have met with but few allusions to musical fish, although the subject is equally attractive to a lively imagination.

As a matter of fact, however, it must be admitted that of voice—properly so called—fishes are entirely destitute, the particular kind of stridulous sound which some kinds are observed to produce on being first taken out of the water, being owing to the sudden expulsion of air from their internal cavities, as in the gurnards and some other fishes. These sounds differ in some cases, thus the Growler (*Grystes*), the provincial American name for this fish, a native of North America, is suggested by Cuvier as having been given to it from some croaking sound which it emits. Schomburgk mentions that many of the *Siluridæ* issue a sound when taken out of the water, but few so loud and continued as the *Pacaruima*. Like the *Balistes* and some others, the *Pirai*, or *Huma* of Guiana, utter sounds like the grunting of a hog. *Rondelet* gave the Piper the name of *Lyra*, not only from the noise it utters (hence its name), but because the denticulated processes which divide the snout have some faint resem-

blance to the instrument named. Various species of the seal have peculiar cries; the sea-calf is thus designated from its lowing cry. Buffon mentions an instance of a tamed monk-seal that he saw in 1776, who responded to the voice and signs of its master by a hoarse sound which seemed to proceed from the lower part of the throat, and which might be compared to the hoarse bellowing of a young bull; it appeared that the animal produced this sound both in inspiration and expiration, but it was clearer during the former and rougher during the latter. Its joy was testified by a loud murmur; some of its accents were sweet and expressive, and seemed the language of pleasure and delight. The cry of the female and the young male elephant-seal resembles the lowing of an ox, but in the adult males the proboscis gives such an inflection to their voice that it is something like the kind of noise which may be produced by gurgling. This hoarse and singular cry heard at a great distance is wild and frightful. Pernetz mentions that on shooting a seal, sounds instantly arose on all sides like the grunting of hogs, the bellowing of bulls, the roaring of lions, and the deepest notes of a great organ. Alluding to sea-lions, the same writer observes that at sunset the cubs call for their dams by cries so like those of lambs, calves, and kids, that any one might easily be deceived if he were not aware of their true nature. The ursine-seals when amusing themselves on shore low like a cow, or when fighting, chirp like a cricket after a victory, and upon receiving a wound, complain like a whelp.

Harsh and grating noises from fish have been frequently alluded to by travellers. Darwin in his *Journal of Researches*, notices on the voyage to Buenos Ayres that a fish called the Armado (a *Silurus*) makes such sounds when caught by hook and line, and that they can be distinctly heard when the fish is under water.

Several species of the *Corvina Grunniens* of Guiana make a hoarse noise, and have received their provincial appellation in consequence; the *Corvina ronchus* of Valenciennes is thus named; at Maracaibo it is called "el ronco" and "el roncadore;" and at St. Domingo and Surinam other species have received similar appellations.

Of "screaming" fishes we have a curious notice in *Notes and Queries* (Second Series, Vol. 2, p. 109). The writer states: "In the early part of December, I called upon a Quaker gentleman at Darlington, for

whom I waited in a room in which stood a small aquarium containing, along with the usual allotment of sea-anemones, star-fishes, etc., five fishes not larger than minnows—a species of blennies, as I was informed. After watching their motions for a few minutes, as they floated near the surface of the water, I stooped down to examine them more nearly; when, to my utter amazement, they simultaneously set up a shriek of terror, so loud and piercing that I sprung back as if electrified. I think a human being could hardly have set up a louder or shriller scream than did these tiny inhabitants of the water."

That some fish make an approach to vocal performances by emitting tones, was known to Aristotle, who specifies six different kinds. The family of the Maigres, (*Sciœnidæ*), are famous for the sounds they make on being drawn from the water, and also when remaining in it. These fish are remarkable for the size and complicated structure of their air-bladders, which, however, in many instances seem to have no external openings; and great cavernous recesses existing in the crania of many, it has been suggested that these sinuses may afford the true explanation of the phenomena. In some of the genera they are more striking than in others; and one of the most remarkable, the *Pogonia* (of the Maigre family) has acquired the popular name of drum-fish. The sounds seem to vary widely in their character and tones, and are described in very different, not to say discrepant terms, being designated sometimes as dull hummings, at other times sharp whistlings, and frequently as the fishes' song. It has sometimes been supposed that they are uttered by the males alone, and the fishermen by imitating them can frequently collect a troop of the fishes around them. The boatmen, also, by putting their ears to the gunwale of their boat can often readily perceive the sounds, though at the depth of twenty fathoms, and thus guided can successfully cast their nets and procure a draught.

Lieutenant White, of the American service, in his *Voyage to the China Seas*, published in 1824, relates that being at the mouth of the Cambodia, his crew and himself were greatly astonished by hearing certain unaccountable sounds from beneath and around the vessel. These were various, like the bass notes of an organ, the sound of bells, the croaking of frogs, and a pervading twang which the imagination might have attributed to the vibrations of some

enormous harp. For a time the mysterious music swelled upon them, and finally formed a universal chorus all round, but as the vessel ascended the river, the sounds diminished in strength and soon altogether ceased.

Humboldt was witness to a similar occurrence in the South Sea, but without suspecting the cause. Towards seven in the evening, the whole crew were astounded by an extraordinary noise which resembled that of drums which were beating in the air. It was at first attributed to the breakers. Speedily it was heard in the vessel, and especially towards the poop. It was like a boiling, the noise of the air which escapes from fluid in ebullition. The sailors began to fear there was some leak in the vessel. It was heard unceasingly in all parts of the vessel, and finally, about nine o'clock, it ceased altogether.

The interpreter belonging to Lieutenant White's ship stated that the marine music, which had so much surprised the crew, was produced by fishes of a flattened oval form, which possessed the faculty of adhering to various bodies by their mouths. This fish might have been the Pogonia.

Sir James Emerson Tennant in his Account of Ceylon relates: "In the evening, when the moon had risen, I took a boat and accompanied the fishermen to a spot where musical sounds were said to be heard issuing from the bottom of a lake, and which the natives supposed to proceed from some fish peculiar to the locality. I distinctly heard the sounds in question. They came up from the water like the gentle thrills of a musical chord, or the faint vibrations of a wine-glass when its rim is rubbed by a wet finger. It was not one sustained note, but a multitude of tiny sounds, each clear and distinct in itself, the sweetest treble mingling with the deepest bass, evidently and sensibly from the depths of the lake, and appeared to be produced by mollusca, and not by fish."

Somewhat similar sounds are heard under water in some places on the western coast of India, especially in the harbour of Bombay. At Caldera, in Chili, musical cadences are said to issue from the sea, near the landing-place; they are described as rising and falling fully four notes, resembling the tones of harp strings, and mingling like those at Batticaloa, until they produce musical sounds of great delicacy and sweetness. The animals from which they proceed have not been iden-

tified at either place, and the mystery remains unsolved.

The music of the sea is heard in the Bay of West Pascagoula and is described by those who have listened to it as singularly pleasant. "It has for a long time," observes Mrs. Green, an American writer, "been one of the greatest wonders of the South-West. Multitudes have heard it, rising as it were from the water, like the drone of a bagpipe, then floating away in the distance, soft, plaintive, and fairy-like, as if Æolian harps sounded with richer melody through the liquid element; but none have been able to account for the phenomenon. There are several legends touching these mysterious sounds; but in these days few things are allowed to remain mysterious; some have ascribed the sounds to the cat-fish."

The sensibility of fishes to the sound of music has been commented upon by writers, ancient and modern. It was formerly a matter of doubt whether fish possessed the sense of hearing, having no external ear, but it has been shown by anatomists that the organ of hearing, though differing in some particulars from those of other animals, does exist, and is only modified according to the different nature of the animals. Although the nature of the organ of hearing in fishes was not accurately known to the older anatomists, yet it was plain that fishes did hear, from a practice common in many parts of Europe of calling carp and other fishes to their feeding-place by the sound of a bell—a signal which the animals readily obey.

The alose (belonging to the Clupeidæ) has been noticed for its love of music and dancing by ancient writers. Aristotle says that it no sooner catches the sound of music, or sees dancing, than it is irresistibly led to join the sport, and cut capers and throw summersaults out of the water. Ælian declares that the sprightly conduct imputed to the shad by Aristotle was well known to fishermen, who, taking advantage of it, fastened little bells to their nets, by the tinkling of which above the surface the fish within hearing were attracted to the spot, and netted without difficulty.

A somewhat similar mode of catching fish is had recourse to by the boatmen of the Danube, who arch across and keep tense upon strong stretchers hung with grelots, a floating net, and so ring in a great number of fish by the tinkling of these bells. Rondolet, the famous naturalist,

gives a romantic instance of the fondness for music of fishes. When staying at Vichy, he took a walk with some friends in quest of alosa, along the banks of the Allier, with violin in hand ready for a serenade. The air was still, the moon and stars shining brilliantly. When the party had come to a favourable spot for the operation, a net was carefully drawn across the stream, while the violinist putting the instrument to his chin, struck up a lively waltz. A wonderful effect ensued. Scarcely had he drawn his bow when the sleeping surface of the waters began to move; alosa backs appeared rippling the silvery expanse, and after a few strokes a large party of fish might be seen rising and leaping in the water.

Scoresby mentions seals as having acute hearing; music or, particularly, a person whistling, draws them to the surface, and induces them to stretch out their necks to the utmost extent. Low, the Orkney naturalist, remarks: "If people are passing in boats, the seals often come close up to them and stare at them, following for a long time together; if people are speaking aloud they seem to wonder what may be the matter. The church of Hoy is situated near a small sandy bay much frequented by these creatures, and I observed, when the bell rang for divine service, all the seals within hearing swam directly for shore, and kept looking about them as if surprised rather than frightened, and in this manner continued to wonder as long as the bell rang."

A writer in *The Naturalist's Library* observes: "The fondness of seals for musical sounds is a curious peculiarity in their nature, and has been to me often a subject of interest and amusement. During a residence of some years in the Hebrides I had many opportunities of witnessing this peculiarity; and, in fact, could call forth its manifestation at pleasure. In walking along the shore in the calm of a summer afternoon, a few notes of my flute would bring half a score of seals within thirty or forty yards of me, and there they would swim about, with their heads above water, like so many black dogs, evidently delighted with the sounds. For half an hour, or, indeed, for any length of time I chose, I could fix them to the spot, and when I moved along the water's edge, they would follow me with eagerness, like the dolphins, who, it is said, attended Arion, as if anxious to prolong the enjoyment. I have frequently witnessed the same effect when out on a

boat excursion. The sound of a flute, or a common fife, blown by one of the boatmen, was no sooner heard than half-a-dozen would start up within a few yards, wheeling round us as long as the music played, and disappearing, one after another, when the music ceased."

The fondness of seals for music is alluded to by Sir Walter Scott:

Rude Heiskar's seals through surges dark
Will long pursue the minstrel's bark.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOY.

CHAPTER XXXVII. DELPHINE'S DISCOVERY.

MRS. MABBERLEY was busy in her morning-room and had given orders that she was not to be disturbed for anything short of a telegram. She had always been a much-occupied woman, but of late her cares seemed to have undergone a sensible increase. She had become less exacting towards Miss Chevenix, troubling herself hardly at all about her movements, and being satisfied to know that she was with Mrs. Townley Gore a good deal. There were no close observers to take note of Mrs. Maberley's doings; from any movement of curiosity on the part of Beatrix she was well aware that she would be secured by the invincible indifference of her young friend, and her servants were thoroughly drilled. They were well paid and well treated, but there was not one of them who did not know that if the slightest annoyance to Mrs. Maberley were produced by servants' hall gossip, the immediate loss of a very comfortable place would be the result. The quiet insignificant little woman had a wonderful faculty of compelling obedience, perhaps because she conveyed the impression, when there was occasion, that she was entirely inaccessible to any movement of pity. The idea of remonstrating with Mrs. Maberley was not one to be entertained by those who were brought into immediate contact with her. She took a secret and vindictive pleasure in the consciousness that she had reduced Beatrix to obedience, and on looking forward, as she was now doing, to the break up of her present mode of life, and the transfer of herself and her possessions to another country, she almost regretted the relinquishment of that exercise of power. There was none that had ever yielded her more concentrated, concealed, and silent satisfaction: it gratified at once her dislike of Beatrix, and a certain grudge which

she cherished against the memory of Mr. Chevenix. Risky as such a step would, to her full knowledge, have been, Mrs. Maberley would have married Beatrix's father if he had asked her, and she had often speculated upon his doing so as the readiest way of settling certain outstanding accounts between them; for the "frugal mind" of Mrs. Maberley was never diverted from the practical by the sentimental view of any question. Mr. Chevenix had, however, not asked her. For this omission his daughter had unconsciously paid, although Mrs. Maberley kept to the letter of the bargain that had been made between herself and Beatrix.

This bargain was the subject of her cogitation now, and she was thinking how easily, on the whole, Beatrix had fulfilled her share of it, and how fortunate she had been. The turning-up of such a trump-card as Mr. Horndean in such a game as they were playing, was indeed an extraordinary piece of luck. That he was a gambler, momentarily diverted from the indulgence of his favourite vice by the irruption into his life of a temporarily stronger passion, Mrs. Maberley was aware, and that he would probably take to gambling again, when the new passion had been gratified, she did not doubt; but that was the affair of Beatrix, who certainly was not such a fool—albeit she was in love with Mr. Horndean—as to suppose she was going to marry a man without vices. Mrs. Maberley smiled a little as she thought how unusually fair a match it would be between these two, when they should have settled down to the life-long scrimmage of matrimony. She had a sound, though, of course, a secret contempt for Mr. Horndean, and would have backed Beatrix to any extent to win in the long run, if she had not been in love with him. Mrs. Maberley distrusted mixed motives; they divided one's forces, they disturbed one's calculations, they prevented that concentration of mind and purpose which she had found so useful—indeed, so indispensable. But she could not waste time in looking beyond Beatrix's palpable good luck; in the future she must fight her own corner, and Mrs. Maberley would not be there, to observe with impartial curiosity how she did it.

In the silent unobtrusive manner that was her way of doing everything, Mrs. Maberley had been for some time making preparations for leaving London. Some valuable and ugly articles of furniture and ornament had been quietly disposed of.

There was no one in particular to miss them, or to notice that the house had gradually assumed the dull and spare aspect of a house to be let furnished, and was in all respects limited to the strictly necessary. The removal of these articles, and also that of some heavy boxes which were accompanied by Mrs. Maberley herself in a cab, had taken place in the absence of Beatrix, but this might easily have been an accidental occurrence, for whenever Miss Chevenix could find a reasonable excuse for going out and staying out she availed herself of it, and Mrs. Townley Gore, whose complaisance for her brother was all that could be desired, was very ready to furnish her with such excuses. The depletion of the house did not attract the attention of Beatrix, but it was not accomplished without the knowledge of Delphine.

"She is getting ready to be off," said Delphine to herself; "I wonder whether she means to save herself before, or after! It does not signify much to me, because she cannot go, either before or after, without settling with me. And I wonder when I shall receive my final instructions. My faith! I shall be content, for I hate this England." And then Delphine permitted herself to indulge in visions of a future in which a snug and remunerative business and a smart husband played a part, and she was philosophically indifferent to Miss Chevenix's temper. "Somebody else will have to bear that, by-and-by," she reflected, "without being nearly as well paid as I shall have been."

This was before Delphine discovered—from the conversation between Mrs. Townley Gore and Beatrix—what had become of Madame Lisle. From that moment her indifference vanished, and for reasons of her own she took a vigilant interest in all that was going on. Beatrix habitually spoke to her in French, and was apt to forget that Delphine understood English, and Mrs. Townley Gore never troubled herself to think of Delphine at all. Thus she constantly expected to hear some further mention of Madame Lisle. She heard none, however; that subject was entirely without interest to the friends. She was now as eager for information about the marriage as she had been devoid of curiosity respecting it; she wanted to know exactly what was the time fixed, at what church the wedding would take place, and where the happy pair were to go to for their honeymoon. The time was only vaguely named as yet; "some day in

January" Miss Chevenix had said, and this pleased Delphine; there would be plenty of time for the doing of that which she wanted to have done. She might even have the satisfaction of seeing it done, as she had not yet been told at what time she was to leave Miss Chevenix; she only knew that she was not to remain with her after her marriage.

Miss Chevenix had gone out with Mrs. Townley Gore before luncheon, on the dark dull wintry day that Mrs. Maberley was devoting to business, when Delphine was told that she was wanted in the morning-room. Just as she reached the ground-floor, Mr. Ramsden came out of the room, and said, with a familiar leer as he passed her: "Any news of the famous pearls?"

Without waiting for a reply, he went out of the house door, closing it noiselessly behind him.

"I hate that man," said Delphine to herself, "and when I can do him a bad turn without harming myself, I will give myself that pleasure. It is not yet, but it will come."

"I sent for you," said Mrs. Maberley, "to say that I shall want you to leave London just before Christmas."

"That is very soon," said Delphine, disconcerted and disappointed.

"Yes, it is sooner than I had intended, but it will make no difference to you. Miss Chevenix wishes to have her new maid with her for a little while before her marriage, so that she may get used to her."

"Is the new maid engaged? Does madame know her?"

"I believe Miss Chevenix is making arrangements, but I know nothing about them, or the person concerned. You will attend strictly to the instructions I am now giving you. To-morrow you will have a letter from your father, telling you that your mother is ill, and that you must return at once. You will regret to have to leave Miss Chevenix, but you cannot consent to remain beyond next Thursday morning. You must make all your preparations, and on Thursday you will leave London for Paris; but you will not go by the mail, as you are to be supposed to do, but by New-haven and Dieppe, and you will remain at Dieppe until you receive instructions from me."

"I understand, then, that I am still in madame's service?"

"Certainly. You will hear from me, or perhaps see me within a few days. You

will go to the place written down on this paper, and stay there, keeping quiet and attracting no attention."

"And if anything should prevent the arrival of madame?"

"You mean, if I should attempt to deprive you of your place, and cheat you of your pay? Well, I do not blame you for the doubt, I rather admire your prudence; but it is over scrupulous. I always discharge debts of this kind for my own sake. When you leave London you shall take your pay with you, although you still remain in my service."

"I hope madame will forgive me; I did not intend—madame need not fear——" stammered Delphine, cowed by the cold even tone, and the single instantly-shifted glance of the only person of whom she was afraid.

"I do not fear anyone, or anything," said Mrs. Maberley quietly, raising her right hand and letting it fall noiselessly on the desk before her—a familiar movement of hers to which Beatrix had a special dislike; "I am satisfied of your fidelity, because it is necessary to your own safety. You will leave everything that is in your charge in as good order as possible. You can go now; I shall have no more to say to you until you come to-morrow to tell me of the letter from your father."

Mrs. Maberley resumed her writing, and Delphine left the room, puzzled and foiled. Unless that which she wished to see done were done quickly, she should derive no gratification from it. She was equally anxious to do one person a service, and another person an injury, by the letter she had written, and it would be very hard on her not to know whether she had succeeded in doing either.

Delphine could not indulge in reflection just then; she had to take to Kaiser Crescent the things Miss Chevenix would require for a three days' visit, and to be there in time to dress her for dinner.

Mrs. Townley Gore's drawing-room was an animated scene late on that afternoon. The drawn curtains, numerous waxlights, and cheerful wood fire offered a delightful contrast to the cold, damp, and darkness outside; rare hothouse plants with shining leaves adorned the rooms in single spies, and beyond were the battalions of the conservatory, with its scented fountain and its shaded lamps. Tea, with all its comfortable accessories, was in progress, and some subject of interest, sufficient to collect the scattered talkers who had met there

by accident into a group in which a serious discussion was being carried on, had been started among the ten persons who were present. Mrs. Townley Gore, sitting by the tea-table, was examining a drawing held in a position convenient to her eyes by her brother. Beatrix, occupying the central position on a large sofa, between two very elegantly-dressed ladies, had a large flat book of coloured fashion-plates on her knees, and Frank Lisle, who had taken possession of a footstool and placed himself in front of her, was pointing out the claims of a Hungarian costume depicted on the open page. The subject under discussion was a fancy ball which was to take place early in January, at the house of a celebrated artist, and to which "all the world" was going. The occupants of Mrs. Townley Gore's drawing-room were, in their opinion at least, no inconsiderable items of that world, and the costume which each was to assume had been imparted and debated with much interest. Only Beatrix had not yet made up her mind what she would wear at the artist's ball, which was to witness her last appearance in public as Miss Chevenix. The drawing that Mr. Horndean was showing to Mrs. Townley Gore was a sketch by Frank Lisle, of a stately woman, with some resemblance to Beatrix, in the quaint rich dress of the noble ladies of old Hungary.

"Here it is in detail," said Mr. Lisle, pointing to the coloured plate in the volume on Beatrix's knee, "and nothing could be more becoming. So uncommon, too; one is so tired of the eternal Mary Stuarts, the inevitable Queen Elizabeths, the Swiss peasants, and the French fisherwomen—I hope no one here is hurt by my remarks—that a little originality is desirable. Do be persuaded, Miss Chevenix."

"The dress is very rich and grand-looking," said Beatrix, "but the effect is greatly due to the ornaments, and their arrangement. And I have no jewels—indeed, I suppose nobody has any—that could be put on in this way. Look at those bosses, and clasps, and that girdle."

Mr. Horndean had now joined the group at the sofa, and he exchanged a look with Mr. Lisle.

"There will not be the slightest difficulty about that," said Frank, "I know lots of places where things just like those can be hired. They are not real, of course, but nobody wants them to be real. That will be all right. Do make up your mind, it will be a tremendous success."

To this there was a general assent, and Beatrix, looking up to see what her lover thought of the suggestion, for he had not yet said anything, perceived that he was awaiting her decision with positive eagerness.

"Do you really like it?" she asked him, with the rarely-assumed gentleness that was so fascinating in her; and then, with a smile that even Frank Lisle felt to be absolutely beautiful, she added: "Then I decide on this at once. Thank you, Mr. Lisle; with your sketch and this combined, the costume will be perfect, I am sure. And I leave myself in your hands about the ornaments."

"It was a pleasant surprise to see Mr. Lisle to-day," said Beatrix to Mr. Horndean, when they met for what he called "those precious moments" before dinner. "I had no idea he was in London."

"Nor was he; but when I had your leave to write and tell him my good news—he had fortunately only got so far as Paris on his way to Italy; there were some Corots to be seen somewhere, and Frank forgot even climate for them—I put it to him so very strongly that I could not do without him, and that he might get away again when we do; so he turned back, like the best of fellows as he is, and dropped in at my rooms this morning with a portmanteau and a portfolio, just as cheerily as if he had not come out of sunshine into a black hole."

"Mr. Lisle carries his sunshine with him, and turns it on, I think."

Then Beatrix was rapturously assured for the thousandth time or so that she was an angel, and a very pretty and ardent love scene was enacted during the ten minutes preceding the arrival of the guests. Mr. Lisle was among the number. He continued to enjoy a distinguished place in the good graces of Mrs. Townley Gore, and he was always acceptable to her husband.

"An artist who does not think himself the first among living painters, and who takes an interest in other things, is a black swan." Such had been Mr. Townley Gore's pronouncement upon Frank Lisle; thus, it will be seen, that a singular uniformity of opinion prevailed in the Townley Gore household respecting Mr. Horndean's friend.

On the following day (Tuesday) Delphine informed Miss Chevenix that she would be obliged to leave on Thursday morning, and Beatrix received the intimation with

the bad temper and absence of sympathy that her maid expected.

"If my mother had been really dying," said Delphine to herself, "I should have liked to strangle this woman, who would have heard of it with as much feeling as a frog, and thinks we have no right to feelings, because we serve people like her for wages."

Beatrix complained to Mrs. Townley Gore of the "nuisance" of Delphine's departure before the highly-recommended person who was to replace her could possibly arrive, and of the "bore" of family affections among people of that class. Mrs. Townley Gore agreed with Beatrix; she did not understand people who could not afford to gratify their feelings listening to them at all.

The accord of sentiment between the two ladies did not, however, prevent the carrying out of Mrs. Maberley's instructions by Delphine. The preoccupation of Beatrix with the important question of how she was to replace Delphine on Thursday, with the least possible diminution of her own personal comfort, probably prevented her from making any remark from which Delphine might have learned that Mr. Lisle had returned from Paris to join his friend in London, or that Mr. Horndean and Mr. Lisle were going to Horndean on the ensuing Thursday, on business which they kept strictly to themselves.

"And so you won't tell me, Frederick, what you and Mr. Lisle are 'running down' to Horndean for; and I am to take it for granted that your purpose unfolds a delightful surprise for me?"

Thus spoke Beatrix, as she stood, encircled by Frederick's arm, about to say farewell to him on Wednesday. He and Frank Lisle were going down by an afternoon train. Mr. Horndean had confessed that there was a secret involved in his visit to Horndean, but he had also declared that she would be much pleased when she learned the nature of it, and that he had the additional motive of wishing to make, in person, some provision for the entertainment of his humbler neighbours, and the poor for the coming Christmas. Beatrix treated this in a scoffing spirit which even her lover could hardly regard as angelic.

"Pray do not give way to the long-descended ancestry kind of sentiment, Frederick," she said. "It would do just as well if you sent these people some money.

You are not rooted in the soil, you know, like the Charlecotes—until they tore themselves up by their roots—and the rôle of a territorial providence would be horribly tiresome."

Mr. Horndean looked a little hurt; there was a gibing and exceeding bitter spirit about Beatrix which puzzled him, and sometimes almost frightened him. Could she be so happy in his love as she declared herself to be, and view all the world beside—to which his heart warmed because he was happy—with that cold and cruel glance? But he hated a mental misgiving as much as he hated a sensation of physical discomfort, and when one assailed him he got rid of it as speedily. She, too, felt that she had made a mistake, and raising her head from his shoulder, she said softly, while her fair hand stole gently round his neck, and her lips touched his cheek: "You will promise me, dearest, that the secret which I am soon to know shall be the very last you will ever keep from me?"

"The last, my own, own love, the very last."

On the following day Delphine took leave of Miss Chevenix, and (all the promised conditions having been punctually fulfilled by Mrs. Maberley) set out for Dieppe. She was of two minds in going away. The one was a disappointed mind; but she consoled it by reflecting that she could not be prevented from learning what should happen in the matter that interested her, even should she have to come back to England when she was done with Mrs. Maberley, for that purpose; the other was a contented mind, for it reflected that she was safe from all risk of implication in that something to which she referred in her thoughts as "it," speculating whether Mrs. Maberley would leave England before or after "it."

It chanced that Mrs. Townley Gore and Beatrice, in their afternoon drive on that day, passed through Chesterfield Street, and the former, looking out at Beatrix's former home, said to her companion:

"You did not tell me that you had lost your tenants, Beatrix. When did the Ramsdens give up the house?"

Beatrix also looked out quickly, and saw the house, evidently unoccupied, and with bills upon the windows: "To be let, furnished or unfurnished." She turned very red, and looked both angry and foolish.

"Mrs. Maberley takes my business

matters off my hands very completely indeed," she said. "I did not know that Colonel Ramsden had given up the house, and that it was to be let again."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Townley Gore, with that slightly insolent raising of the eyebrows to which she had resorted of late much less often in her intercourse with Beatrix; "that is being useful. Do you know I think I should hardly like it? Women of business, as they call themselves, always have a way of treating other women like babies."

"I don't like it," said Beatrix, "but she means well, and she is always ready to take trouble for one."

"She has not helped you in the matter of your maid."

"No," said Beatrix angrily and incautiously; "because my maid will no longer be her servant."

"Her servant! What do you mean?"

"Oh, it's hardly worth talking of, but when I agreed to live with Mrs. Maberley, she made it a condition that I should take a maid of her selection, and that she should be at liberty to dismiss her if she thought proper. She said she must always be mistress in her own house, and could not have anyone in it who was not under her control to that extent."

"Very extraordinary! I would not have accepted the condition; I should have been afraid of the character it indicated. It was weak of you, Beatrix."

"Perhaps it was."

No more was said.

As the carriage approached Mrs. Townley Gore's house, Mrs. Maberley's brougham moved off to give place to it, and Beatrix found that Mrs. Maberley was waiting to see her. She had come to bring her some trivial message about her costume for the ball, and to ascertain when she meant to return to Hill Street.

Beatrix, irritated by Mrs. Townley Gore's sneer, spoke sharply of her annoyance at being left in ignorance about the house in Chesterfield Street.

Mrs. Maberley answered with her usual imperturbability:

"Your own affairs? You forget that you have none, as yet. I can excuse you, however; the prospect of independence has obscured your judgment, or you would

not talk in a way to oblige me to remind you of the fact."

"What has become of the Ramsdens?"

"They have gone abroad again. You will see no more of them."

"I never intended to see any more of them."

Mrs. Maberley rose to go.

"On Saturday, then," she said. "Will Mr. Horndean dine with us?"

"Thank you for asking him," said Beatrix, "but I cannot answer for him. Mr. Lisle has come back to London, and they have gone down to Horndean for a few days; I don't know exactly when they return."

Mrs. Maberley had approached the door, accompanied by Beatrix; her face was in shadow, and so Beatrix did not see the ashy paleness that overspread it. Neither did she notice that for an instant Mrs. Maberley tottered on her feet. It was only for an instant; the next she recovered herself, and took leave of Beatrix with the remark that the dinner engagement might stand over for the first day Mr. Horndean could give them. She got into her carriage, to be taken home, and then, leaning back, well out of sight, she let the fury and the fear within her escape in muttered broken words:

"Gone to Horndean! And Delphine said nothing of this. What's to be done? I cannot stop it now; I don't know where he is, or what name he goes by. The others are off—all safe. No getting at them if they knew. And it may be to-night."

She wrung her hands hard, and groaned; but by the time she reached her own house she had taken a resolution.

"It is six o'clock," she said; "I have thirteen hours in which to provide against the worst. I'll do it."

ON THE 24TH OF NOVEMBER

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No. 676. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1881.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCESILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER V. "BEYOND SEAS."

SIR CHARLES BASSETT felt no inclination to rise from his seat and clasp the hands of the two old friends whose presence formed, at last, a solid link between the Old Grey Mare and the New. It did not even occur to him that there might be something ignominious in eaves-dropping. Men in public places listen freely to conversations in which they have no interest. Surely if the talk interests them, there is reason for listening the more.

"Waiter! Another white satin—stiff ironed," said Ronaine, in the slang of the Grey Mare, where every sort of drink had a name unknown to the profane. "Have another yourself, Esdaile. If ye want to drink to the memory of the poor old archdeacon, in a way that'll be worthy of 'm——"

"It was curious, your attending Stella on her deathbed," said Esdaile. "Poor little girl! Why, I was in love with her myself once—for nearly a whole week, I believe. We all were, in turn, from the governor himself down to the call-boy. She was an odd sort of a girl; ten times a better actress off the stage than on. She used to want everybody to be at her feet, just for the fun of kicking him away."

"That isn't what Jack Doyle would have called odd, anyhow. 'Tis what he used to say of all the women, and I've come to think he wasn't so far out after all."

"You, doctor? Why, you used never to know the difference between a woman and an angel. Have you been bitten your-

self, eh? But no wonder Jack thought so, if Stella was his experience of what an angel means. I don't believe she ever meant harm, though she'd swallow presents like a savage, and stick to a fellow till she couldn't get any more. I like thorough-going people, you know. Stella was thorough-going. Jack Doyle was just the man for a thorough-going woman to marry—a big, bearded ruffian, who could drink a woman out of house and home and knock her down if she cried, and throw her away if she began to bore him. That's the sort of man a woman loses her head as well as her heart to——"

"And ye call a blackguard like that 'poor Jack Doyle'?"

"I didn't call him a blackguard, doctor. It may have been he that lost himself, head and heart, to her, and then—Heaven help him!—he'd be poor indeed. I suppose he left her, and I suppose he had good cause."

"Good cause—to leave a woman to starve! For 'tis starvin' she was when I doctored her till she died. Ye make me want to knock somebody down, and yourself to begin on. Come, take your drink, and don't talk stuff, like a sensible man. Faith, 'tis queer that the first place I'd turn into, after being twice round the world would be the Mare, and the first man I'd meet there would be you."

"Not particularly queer, seeing what the Mare used to be to us all, and that I've never left off feeding here, off and on. I've been feeling like the last man for years. There's Charley Bassett turned into a baronet among the Philistines, and Urquhart married and done for, and for aught he lets any of us know, as rich as a Jew, and Jack Doyle drowned or hanged, and

you, till to-night, trying to find out the size of the world. If ever a band of brothers was broken up and scattered abroad, it was ours."

"But 'twas a band of fathers we were. And how's Zenobia—poor little thing?"

"You mean poor little Eve? I'm ashamed to say I've been but a bad sort of a father; I haven't been near the place for years. I really must go, some day. But the fact of it is that after a bit it began to strike me that our old friend the admiral wasn't quite such a fool as he seemed—in fact, a bit of a sponge. He began to absorb as soon as his better-half went the way of all flesh and left only the worse behind. I suppose it was because I was the only father left in London. Any way, it was wonderful the number of boots and shoes that baby wore out in the course of a year. And when the boots and shoes got to be too much for my credulity, then she took to catching the measles, and the whooping-cough, and scarlet fever, and dyspepsia, and rheumatism, and heart-disease—about once a month——"

"No, no, Esdaile; that won't do. A girl doesn't catch the measles once a month; and as to heart-disease——"

"I always say, when I want a man to understand a joke, give me an Irishman. Any way, I got sick of the whole thing. I couldn't go near the place without having to pay. I verily believe I kept the whole household in boots and shoes—the admiral and all his boys. What was your department, Ronaine? For I suppose the household expenses were parcelled out among the five. On my honour, I could not afford to be a father any more. So I made a bargain. The child was being kindly treated enough, so I painted her portrait, or at least, put her into a picture, gave the price of it to the admiral for my discharge, and retired from business as a father. I suppose I ought to have invested it for her or bought an annuity, or something of that kind; but I didn't know much about business in those days, and—— But the truth of it is, our friend the admiral did me, I'm very much afraid. Well, done or not done, it was a good bargain. Three hundred pounds down must have kept Miss Eve in boots for some little time."

"And ye mane to tell me that, simple as ye sit here at the Mare, ye can paint a picture for three hundred pounds?"

"Hush! The back of this box may be between us and a dealer. I don't want all

the world to know how little I got for the first picture I ever had hung on the line. Miss Eve did me some good after all. Since that picture I've not done badly, and only come to the Mare when I want a real steak—not the things they call steaks elsewhere. She had the most wonderful eyes as a child. I'd have taken her for model-in-ordinary, if it hadn't been for that son of a horse-leech, the admiral. As it is, I've tried to copy those eyes from my own first studies over and over again, and, except just that once, always failed. But about you—what sort of a father have you been?"

"Oh, first rate, my boy! Of course 'twas out of the question keepin' up my payments to the minute, hither and thither as I've been; but that was no matter, with you, and Bassett, and Urquhart—of course Jack Doyle didn't count—to keep things straight and square. But I never missed putting by five guineas a quarter, when I had them, to make up arrears; and I never drew on what I'd put by except when I was obliged, and then I had to borrow, ye know. But I owe it just the same; so it's all one. Why, the accumulation must have come up to not far from five hundred pounds. Better than your three hundred, Esdaile."

"Five hundred! Well, I suppose it would be somewhere near that, if you've paid nothing. How time does fly—as I've heard somewhere. Only, don't let it get into the admiral's clutches, that's all."

"Faith, after what ye say of the old gentleman, I don't think I will. I'll pay it into the girl's own hands with my very own. And after what ye say of her eyes, 'twill be a pleasant thing. I'll take it to Miss Zenobia myself, all in notes and gold. It's what I've been looking forward to ever since I've been rolling about the world. I always said I'd make her the greatest woman of her time."

"Let me see. She must be a grown-up young woman. She may be dead, she may be married, for anything we know. We are on the wrong side of forty, you and I. Isn't it rather too late to begin?"

"It's never too late to begin. The great thing's not to begin too soon. I'll be able to know now what's her line—music, painting, poetry, acting, dancing, marrying dukes, or whatever ye please. As soon as I've a big practice I'll do everything. And as far as five hundred pounds will go——"

"Good moss for a rolling stone. You've

got five hundred pounds for that baby, in notes and gold?"

"An' that I have—anyhow, an' that I will have, when I've put back what I've had to borrow at odd times."

"And how much may the fund amount to now?"

"Well, it happens, just at the minute, to be a trifle low—not more than sixpence or sevenpence, may be; and may be, I'll have to borrow that, too, for the extra white satin. But it's all there, all the same."

"All there? All where?"

"If ye wasn't yourself, I'd knock ye down. All where, indeed? Why, in the honour of Ulick Ronaine; an' the Bank of England couldn't say more. Waiter! Another white satin—and whiter than the last, if ye please."

Poor Marion Eve Psyche Zenobia June! If she had ever known anything—if she could know anything now! nothing could have promised much fairer for a foundling than to become the adopted child of four—I may omit Jack Doyle—of four generously eccentric young men, who had sworn new brotherhood over a helpless baby. One ideal father had been made up of those four: Charley Bassett, the kindly and accomplished English gentleman; Ronaine, with his impulsive zeal; Esdaile, with his shrewd common sense; Urquhart, with his severe views of economy and training—English, Irish, Scotch; Lawyer, Physician, Gentleman, and Man of the World. Jack Doyle had been the only blot upon the shield held over her, the one weak link in the chain. And now the gentleman had forgotten her, the man of the world had washed his hands of her for comfort's sake, the lawyer had grown afraid of her, and the physician had learned to identify her with that To-morrow which he chased as hotly and earnestly as a kitten hunts its tail—never caught, though always its own. All had broken down.

But Sir Charles Bassett, listening, had no thought for her who should have been to him Marion, just as she was Eve to Esdaile, and Zenobia to Ronaine. For that matter he knew her to be dead, and that there was no reason for Ronaine to bother himself about turning the fairy gold of to-morrow into the hard cash of to-day. Neither poet, painter, singer, actress, duchess, would she ever be now; as a dead foundling she had fulfilled her whole fate, and there was an end of her. It was for

other reasons that his senses had been sharpened to hear every word of a conversation that, though in a public room, was not, after the satin began to do its work, spoken quite in the low tone in which Englishmen mostly discuss matters where money is concerned.

Was it likely, in truth, that John Doyle and Rayner Bassett should be one and the same? Rough guesswork was not proof. But that was not the question—the question stood, to his mind, and was bound to stand, was it likely, was there a reasonable hope, that John Doyle and Rayner Bassett were not one and the same? All he had heard and conjectured of Uncle Rayner was identical with what he knew of John Doyle. Uncle Rayner was known to have been living with a woman as his wife; and now it had been asserted that he had been married under the name of John Doyle, and that the marriage could be proved, fact, place, date, and all. There was absolutely no evidence of the death of Uncle Rayner, while John Doyle, after a long disappearance, was certainly alive. Uncle Rayner was just the man to marry a country actress (if he cared to marry) under a false name, and afterwards to sink to the degradation of John Doyle. If there were no extraordinary coincidence in all this, Uncle Rayner was alive. Strangers to the circumstances had suspected Doyle of some deep-laid design in coming back from India—still with an evil reputation—and raking up old stories about Sir Charles. If he were Uncle Rayner, there could be no possible doubt as to what those designs must be. Uncle Rayner, learning of his inheritance, would not be the man to leave his own unclaimed.

Sir Charles wished in his heart that he had not been moved by the sentimentality of an idiot to drop into the Grey Mare. There was really nothing odd in his finding Esdaile there, if the latter had never quite fallen away from the old place, and as to Ronaine, the world is very small, and stranger chance meetings between old acquaintances happen in London fifty times a day—to most men twenty times a year. Nor was it particularly remarkable, that it should have been Ronaine who attended the death-bed of a woman who called herself both Mrs. Bassett and Mrs. Doyle. It was the combination of all these things that touched Sir Charles as with the finger of destiny, and made him feel, rather than argue, that the most obvious inference was really the most true.

There were no newspapers to cover one's face with at the Grey Mare, so he bent his head over a pocket-book and affected to make memoranda while his two old friends passed his box on their way out. They did not even look towards him, so that he was able to notice how much or how little they had changed. Esdaile had grown stout and sleek, and shaved his chin and lips and wore whiskers, as if he were a solicitor instead of a painter. The world had obviously gone well with him—he had reached comfort and competence, if the fame prophesied for the ex-scene-painter was not as yet great enough to have travelled all over Lincolnshire. But then there had always been something quiet and un-Bohemian about Richard Esdaile, even in the ultra-Bohemian days. Ronaine, on the contrary, looked as if he had been travelling down, as well as round, the world. He was as lean, as gaunt, and as ugly as of old, and rather more shabby. Indeed—a thing that rarely happens to a man—he was uglier middle-aged than he had been when young. Wrinkles and red blotches had not improved him; his eyes had lost their redeeming brightness, and the old genial smile had become defiant and reckless, without however turning sour. He did not look as if he had five hundred shillings; but, at the same time, as if Zenobia Burden would have been a rich girl, if only the heart of Ulick Ronaine had been a mine of common gold.

His moral assurance of the identity of his Uncle Rayner with his old friend the archdeacon seemed to numb him a little, as he walked, not to his hotel, but to Ralph's lodgings. Without something more than moral assurance, his reason told him, there was no cause for meeting possible ruin, and the overturning of all that had become his whole life, half way. Only a few years ago he would have been prepared, after a fashion, for the surrender of Cautleigh Hall. But now, when he had just learned to feel at last absolutely safe for himself and his son, the surrender would come as a crushing blow. Why, what was he in London for, but to indulge to the full in his sense of security? Better than to give up Cautleigh now would it have been to have remained plain Charley Bassett with four hundred a year to throw away in the purlieus of the Old Grey Mare. And what Justice would there be in the transfer of wealth and rank from him and his son, and from such as he hoped his son's sons would be, to a drunkard, a profligate, and a forger? True,

he had been in possession of Cautleigh for the full legal time. But he was lawyer enough to know that absence beyond seas when a right accrues rendered possession short of forty years of no avail. Jack Doyle—Rayner Bassett, had been certainly in India when the Rector of Cautleigh died. Just the one chance in a thousand had happened that he had never dreamed of foreseeing.

It was past midnight when Ralph came home, bringing Lawrence with him, and, to his surprise, found his father waiting in his rooms. And something about his father made him exclaim, by way of greeting:

"You in town! Is anything wrong at home?"

"No; I came up suddenly on business, and I hadn't time to let you know."

"I wish I'd known—I shouldn't have been out of the way. This is my friend Lawrence you've heard me speak of."

"I am always glad to meet my son's friends," said Sir Charles, with an air of vexation at not finding Ralph alone that he could not quite conceal. But Lawrence was happily thick-skinned, and honestly thought that the manners of a Sir Charles Bassett could not possibly be wrong. Ralph set about producing things to drink in a matter of course way that did not please the father, who used to do the same thing for his friends in a very much more matter of course way.

"I am very glad to meet Sir Charles Bassett, indeed," said Lawrence, making himself at home with a cigar and a drink in a manner that irritated Sir Charles for no reasonable reason at all. "By the way, I suppose your son has told you of our meeting with that money-lending fellow, who had the impudence to claim to be a friend of yours? I knew of him in India, you know." The choice of the topic was not the height of tact, but it would have been otherwise harmless, except to Lawrence's own reputation for the good form that he admired.

"Yes," said Sir Charles, more sharply than his son remembered to have heard him speak any one word.

"Oh," said Ralph, "you must know that Lawrence dreams of Doyle. He saw Doyle's daughter once—and he's gone."

"His daughter?" asked Sir Charles, this time in a tone of real interest, which surprised Ralph still more.

"Your son knows," said Lawrence, "just as well as I do, that she's the prettiest girl in London. It's a fact—we do dream of

Miss Phoebe Doyle. But, talking of dreams, I must be gone. Good-night, Bassett—good-night, Sir Charles, and au revoir.”

Jack Doyle's daughter—Rayner Bassett's daughter! If that were so, then good-bye to land and life for good and all. Unless, indeed—

But the thought was too vague to take form even in the mind whence it sprang. It only prompted Sir Charles to say:

“Do you know this man Doyle? Where he lives, I mean?”

“Lawrence knows,” said Ralph, bringing an extra cloud from his cigar, and so speaking as to imply, “Lawrence knows—not I.”

“It's——”

“I may have occasion to see him after all. So she's the prettiest girl in London—eh?”

“Lawrence thinks so,” said Ralph as before. Then they talked of many things, but neither of Jack Doyle, nor of Jack Doyle's daughter, nor of Cautleigh Holms. Sir Charles lingered over the talk, for he was in no hurry for his own company and that of his own dreams.

MAHOMETAN RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

“THE Santon Akyazli,” says Evlia Effendi, “lived forty years under the shade of a wild chestnut tree, close to which he is buried under a leaden-covered cupola. The chestnuts, which are as big as an egg, are wonderfully useful in diseases of horses. Tradition says that the tree sprang from a stick, which the saint once thrust in the ground that he might roast his meat (Kebabs) on it. Round his grave are various inscriptions from the Koran, censers, vases for rose-water, candelabra, lamps wrought in the style of Khorassanic work, and at his head a horse-tail or standard, and a drum. Those who enter this room are struck with trembling awe, and revived by the fragrant scent of musk which they inhale. Out of the four windows you have a blooming prospect of a garden, full of hyacinths and jasmines, of roses and of nightingales. The guard of this sepulchre is entrusted to the dervishes of the order of the Bektashi. I myself, being afflicted with ague, having come to this place, recited the seven verses of the Lord's Prayer (Fatiha, which is the first Soora of the Koran), wrote a distich with which I was inspired on the spot, and put myself under the green cloth covering the coffin.

There I fell into a sleep, and awoke in full perspiration and restored to health by virtue of this grave.” Evlia Effendi's picture of this tomb is a pretty one, but many such may be seen in Turkey, where a delicious climate and a bountiful Nature soon make beautiful the last resting-places alike of Moslem and of Christian. To this day the roses bloom, and the nightingales sing, over the grave of Henry Martyn, at Tokat. Akyazli was of the sect of the Bektashis, and had belonged to their order from its foundation in the time of Murad the First down to the time of Murad the Second, the father of Mahmoud the Conqueror. The standard and drum at the head of his tomb denoted the connection of the Bektashis with the Janissaries, whose patron Santon was Hadji Bektash, the founder of the order which bears his name. Most of the Janissaries were incorporated into the order, and thus formed a military fraternity of monks and soldiers, like the Templars and the Hospitaliers. In later days, the Knights of Rhodes found in them foes worthy of their steel. Down to the massacre of the Janissaries, the Sheikh of the Bektashis was colonel of the 99th Regiment, and eight of his dervishes were lodged in the barracks in Stamboul, where they offered up prayers day and night for the success of the arms of their companion. Hadji Bektash himself came from Khorassan, and it was perhaps on this account that lamps, in the style of “Khorassanic work,” came to be placed round the tomb of Akyazli.

In the history of modern, no less than in that of mediæval saints, there is generally a ludicrous feature. At the door of Akyazli's tomb, a saddle was wont to be shown, and it was said that one of his disciples named Arslan Bey (Lion Bey) was so devoted to his master, that he allowed himself to be saddled and bridled by him, and served him as a steed. We need not attach much importance to this story of the “ass in the lion's skin;” the saddle, perhaps, belonged to Akyazli, and, in course of time, superstition fitted it to Arslan's back.

Hadji Bektash sleeps near Angora, in a tomb not less pretty than that of Akyazli, and a village named after him has grown up round the tomb. Evlia, who was an energetic pilgrim, visited a station on the confines of Persia, where the body of the Santon was seated in one of the corners of the convent in a curved position, with the face turned towards the Kibla, and with

the head resting on the rock. "His body," says Evlia, "is light, and like white cotton without corruption. The dervishes, who are busied all day long with cleaning and sweeping the convent, put every night a basin of clear water at the saint's feet, and find it empty in the morning. The brain of all who visit this tomb is perfumed with ambergris; and he who recites at this tomb the seven verses of the Fatiha may be sure to attain during seven days the object of his wishes."

It would seem from this legend of the basin of water, that the guardians of this tomb were desirous of impressing on devotees that its occupant was one of those holy saints who have the power of revisiting the earth, and who exercise this power during the night. The water, of course, was placed for the refreshment of the saint on his return from his nocturnal expeditions. These Santons are called sometimes the "Rijâl el Ghaib," or the "absent ones," and it is their business to wander over the surface of the globe, and render spiritual aid to those who need it.

My readers will perceive that it is not in Christendom alone that faith and superstition combine to hallow the last resting-places of men, who may be assumed, without hesitation, to have led pious lives.

The Roman Catholics, whose calendar is so vast that each day of the year is sacred to several saints, can scarcely blame the dervishes for believing that their "departed saints" watch over the living and sometimes mingle with them, but always incognito and in humble clothing. Christians and Moslems alike inherit this belief from a remote antiquity. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had this belief present to him when he wrote: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." The history of the patriarchs and the legends of Greece and Rome teem with illustrations of this belief, and carry us back to the times of spirits or gods that used to share this earth

With man as with their friend.

Of the miracles performed by the dervishes, however, I do not propose to write at length. I shall merely cite a few for the purpose of showing that the supernatural power which has been claimed for them, is worth no more and no less than that which has been claimed for other saints of more ancient or more modern denomi-

nations. "The wells about Mocha were brackish, until two saints of great piety were buried there, since when the waters have been sweet." This tradition seems to be a faint reflex from the scriptural account of the sweetening of the fountain of Marah by Moses. "Nashoollah Semmand was so famous a fisher that if he threw his net upon the sand of the desert he was certain of catching fish." This seems to me to be a reminiscence of the occasion on which, when the greatest of Teachers had left speaking, he said to Simon: "Launch out into the deep and let out your nets for a draught."

When Abdul Khadir Ghilane, the founder of the order of the Kalenders, sought to be admitted into an order of the dervishes at Bagdad, the Sheikh of the order handed him a cup of water which was full to overflowing as an intimation that there was no room for him in the order. Abdul Khadir, acting under miraculous inspiration, laid a rose-leaf on the water without disturbing it and without producing any overflow. He was at once admitted into the order. The Abbé Blanchet has appropriated this legend, and introduced it into his Eastern Apologues, but he has converted the Teké of dervishes into a scientific academy, and has laid the scene in Persia. With him Abdul Khadir becomes "Le Docteur Zeb."

There is a village in Asia Minor called Tooz-Keni (the salt village), which derives its name from the neighbouring salt mines. It is said that these salt mines were created by Hadji Bektaah, who, coming there and finding that the inhabitants, for want of salt, lived on unsalted meat, struck the ground with his stick and produced the mines. The miracle of Elisha, whom the Moslems claim as a dervish, is alike in principle, though different in circumstance.

"The men of the city said unto him: Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant as my lord seeth, but the water is naught and the ground barren. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein, and they brought it to him, and he went forth to the spring of the waters and cast the salt in there and said: Thus saith the Lord! I have healed these waters, there shall not be any more dearth or barren land."

I am not going to claim supernatural power as the privilege of the dervishes, I merely state that others have claimed it

for them. In an epistle, which forms part of our scriptures, but which is believed to have been written not by St. Paul, but of those earlier Jewish saints, "of whom rather by Luke or Apollos, mention is made the world was not worthy; who wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth . . . in sheepskins, and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented . . . who stopped the mouths of lions; quenched the violence of fire; and turned to flight the armies of the aliens." All this and more has been claimed for the Santons of the dervishes, and, I may add, for the saints of India, and for the saints revered by mediæval and even by modern Christians. It is time now to enquire whether the doctrines and principles of the Moslem Santons have been as closely allied, as their practices and their reputations have been, to the doctrines and principles of other ascetics in other climes and other ages.

In the estimation of all strict Moslems, the dervishes of every order are sectarian in practice and in doctrine. Their convents; their vows of celibacy and poverty; their lives of wandering mendicancy; their periodical gatherings at the tombs of celebrated Santons; and the presentation of votive offerings to the guardians of the tombs; are all opposed to the teaching, and to the well-known and often expressed wishes of Mohammed. But if they err in practice, they err still more, as strict Moslems think, in doctrine. They conform to the State religion by professing the monotheism which Mohammed inculcated; but in their discourses, their prayers, and their hymns, they hold firmly to the pantheism which he condemned.

I need not say that, both as monotheists and as pantheists, they are wholly opposed to the polytheism which he sought to destroy; though there are some reasons to fear that their pantheism may in time degenerate into a polytheism of their own.

Coleridge was wont to say in his familiar conversations, "Pantheism and polytheism naturally end in each other, for all extremes meet; the Judaic religion is the exact medium, the true compromise." It seems to me that this dictum stands in need at once of amplification and modification.

We have abundant proof that both pantheism and monotheism have from time to time degenerated into polytheism, and that both have at other times revolted

against the degradation. Pantheism, which is the deification of the universe or nature, as a whole, has often glided into that form of polytheism which consists in the separate deification of the several forces and phenomena of nature; whilst monotheism, or the belief in a Creator, who is external to and independent of the universe, has not unnaturally resulted in that other form of polytheism which consists in the worship of beings, human or divine, who are supposed to be the agents and ministers of the Creator. Even when thus degraded, both pantheism and monotheism have had their periods of awakening and recovery. The monotheism of the Israelites was a revolt against the polytheism of the Egyptians and the Canaanites, and a return to the faith of Abraham. The pantheism of the Buddhists and the Hindu reformers was a revolt against the polytheism which had debased and disfigured the purer creeds which the Aryan races had brought into Hindostan. Christianity was a revolt, both against the polytheism of the Gentiles, and against the traditions, laws, ceremonials, and observances of human origin, which had overgrown the pure monotheism of the Israelites, and had become, as it were, idols to the Jews! The Protestant Reformation was a revolt against the polytheism of the Roman Catholics; the monotheism of Mohammed, which was a reflex of the monotheism of the Israelites, was a revolt against the idolatrous practices and beliefs which had debased the original faith of the Arabs and the Persians; and the pantheism of the dervishes, which grew up simultaneously with the monotheism of Mohammed, was a revival of the creed which had prevailed from the very early times throughout a vast portion of Asia.

The dervishes, as pantheists, hold:

That God only exists—that He is in all things, and that all things are in Him.

That all visible and invisible beings are an emanation from Him, and are not really distinct from Him, and that creation is only a pastime with Him.

That Paradise and Hell, and all the dogmas of positive religions, are so many allegories, the spirit of which is only known to the wise.

That religions are matters of indifference; having, however, this advantage, that they serve as a means of reaching to realities. Some, however, are more advantageous in this respect than others, among which is the Mahometan religion.

That in whatever place we may set our foot, we are always within reach of God. That in whatever place or corner we may entrench ourselves, we are always near to Him. That, perhaps, we may say there is a path which leads elsewhere, yet that, be our pathway what it will, it invariably leads to Him.

That there does not really exist any difference between good and evil, for all is reduced to unity, and God is the real author of the acts of mankind.

That it is God who fixes the will of man, who is therefore not free in his actions.

That the soul existed before the body, in which it is confined as in a cage. That death therefore should be the object of the wishes of the dervish, since it is through death that he returns to the divinity from which he emanated.

The pantheism of the dervishes, as thus expressed, is identical with that of the Hindu reformers in the sixth, and with that of the Buddhists in the fifth century before the Christian era. It is the same with that of the Stoics, whose principles, as we know, were, prior to the time of our Lord, largely adopted by Jewish philosophers.

Distinct traces of the same beliefs are to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, whilst modern philosophy has methodised, and modern poetry has illustrated them, even in our own times. In short, the pantheism of the dervishes is merely one link in a great chain of thought, which stretches down to us from the early ages of the world.

The pantheism of the Hindu reformers is thus expressed in the following passage from one of the Upanishads, or sacred Indian poems of the sixth century B.C.

What'er exists within this universe,
Is all to be regarded as enveloped
By the great Lord, as if wrapped in a vesture.
There is one only Being who exists;
Unmoved, yet moving swifter than the mind,
Who far outstrips the senses, though as gods
They strive to reach Him; who, Himself at rest,
Transcends the swiftest flight of other beings;
Who like the air supplies all vital action.
He moves, yet moves not; He is far yet near;
He is within this universe; who'er beholds
All living creatures, as in Him, and Him,
The Universal Spirit—as in all,
Henceforth regards no creature with contempt.

The Stoics of ancient Greece taught that the world was God, or that God was the soul of the world, which they called His substance. They sometimes defined God to be an intelligent fiery spirit, without form, but passing into whatever things it pleased, and assimilating itself to all.

They also taught that human souls were, literally, parts of an emanation from the Divine Being, and they said: "All things obey and are subservient to the world—the earth, the sea, the sun, and other stars, and the plants and animals of the earth. Our body likewise obeys it, being sick and well, and young and old, and passing through the other changes when that decrees. For the world is powerful and superior, and consults the best for us by governing us in conjunction with the whole."

St. Paul, who was a Pharisee, and, like the Pharisees, well acquainted with the doctrines of the Stoics, skilfully availed himself, whilst preaching at Athens, of their pantheistic doctrines, when he said of the God whom he was describing: "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being."

The pantheistic doctrine of the ubiquity of the Supreme Being finds an apt exposition in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, thus:

"If I ascend up into Heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in Hell thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Readers of Spinoza will at once recognise that his pantheism was identical with that of the Brahmins, the Buddhists, the Greeks, and the Dervishes, which last form of pantheism was methodised immediately after the death of Mohammed. Spinoza taught that man had no free will, but was merely a *modus* dependent on causes without, and not within him. In his opinion, free will and liberty belong only to God, who is not limited by any other substance. Good and evil, according to Spinoza, are mere relative notions, and sin a mere negation, for nothing can be done against God's will, and there is no idea of evil in Him. So also Spinoza taught that every thought, wish, or feeling is a mode of God's attribute of thought; that everything visible is a mode of God's attribute of extension; and that the world does not exist as world, i.e., as an aggregate of single things, but is one complex whole, and one peculiar aspect of God's infinite attribute of extension.

It is in Pope's Essay on Man that the most popular exposition of pantheism is to be found. It is well known that to the composition of this famous poem Lord Bolingbroke, who was a follower of Spinoza, contributed the arguments, whilst Pope supplied the versification and the imagery.

Wordsworth's pantheism, as might have been expected, is not so close in grain as that of Spinoza, but it is still sufficiently cogent. It was his theory that "every flower enjoys the air it breathes;" that there is "a thrill of pleasure" in the least motion "of the birds," and that there is pleasure in the budding twigs when they "stretch out their fans to catch the breezy air."

Together with their pantheistic doctrines, the dervishes hold certain spiritualistic views, and the latter do not at first seem altogether consistent with the former. While they deny the existence of free will and liberty of action, they believe in the power of the will, and give some curious illustrations of this belief. Thus they have a legend to the effect that the Santon Bayazid Bestamee was born after the death of the Imam Yafer, Sadik, and yet that by the force of the Imam's will he received spiritual instruction from him. This is not consistent with the belief that free will and liberty are attributes of the Universal Being, and of Him only.

In the year 1857, a learned and devout dervish described to Mr. John P. Brown, the secretary to the American Legation, the following personal experience:

"When I was at Kerkoot, in the province of Sherazor, near to Mosul, I visited a Tekkieh, of the Kâdiree order, for the purpose of seeing a sheikh of much repute and great spiritual powers. When I arrived many disciples were present, all appearing to be much excited by the power or by the spell of the sheikh—so much so as to rise and dance, sing, or cry out, involuntarily. On entering the hall, I was also much affected by the spectacle, and retiring to a corner, sat down and closed my eyes in devout meditation, mentally praying to the sheikh to send away those persons, and to permit me to enjoy alone his society. The sheikh was several paces distant from me, and, as I did not speak, could only have known what was passing in my mind by means of his wonderful spiritual powers, by which expression I mean the faculty which one spirit has of

communing with another, and the power which a superior spirit has over the will of another spirit. On opening my eyes, I was amazed to hear the sheikh address me in the following words: 'In a few minutes your prayer, young man, will be granted, and you will commune with me alone.' To my surprise, in a few minutes, the sheikh, without speaking a word to anyone, had dismissed all his disciples from the hall, so I remained with him alone. One by one, each had ceased to be affected by his spell, and withdrew. I then experienced an impulse, beyond my power of refusal, to arise and approach him, which I did. I threw myself, helpless, at his feet, and kissed the hand which he extended to me. We next sat down together, and I had a long and most instructive conversation with him."

Coleridge, whose pantheism almost runs riot in *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, tells us that the man to whom the Ancient Mariner was impelled, by the inward burning of his soul, to tell his story, could not choose but hear him.

I take one other illustration of the "power of the will" from Mr. Brown's work on the dervishes. He gives it in the words of a dervish writer: "In my youth I was ever with our Lord Molâva Sa-ed ed Deen Kashgaree at Hereed. It happened that we one day walked out together, and fell in with an assembly of the inhabitants of the place, who were wrestling. To try our powers, we agreed to aid, with our powers of the will, one of the wrestlers, so that the other should be overcome by him, and, after doing so, to change our design in favour of the discomfited individual. So we stopped, and, turning towards the two parties, gave the full influence of our united wills to one, and immediately he was able to subdue his opponent. As the person we chose each in turn conquered the other, whichever we willed to prevail became the most powerful of the two, and the power of our wills was thus clearly manifested."

Mr. Brown has recorded another illustration of a coincidence between the early dervishes and our modern spiritualists. He writes thus of the founder of the dancing dervishes: "It is a tradition of the order that whenever he became greatly absorbed in pious and fervid love for Allah, he would rise from his seat and turn round, much as is the usage of his followers, and that, on more than one occasion, he began to recede upwards from the material

world, and that it was only by the means of music that he could be prevented from entirely disappearing from his beloved companions."

The modern Mevleevs have lost this singular power. They still keep up their mystic dance, which is supposed to exemplify the rotation or dance of the heavenly bodies. Pope alludes to their dance in the following lines :

As Eastern priests, in giddy circles, run
And turn their heads to imitate the sun.

And it is probable that the dance has come down from the age of sun-worship, and is merely a graft upon the pantheism of the dervishes.

The Turkish monks have not all been true to their principle of non-intervention in mundane affairs. Some of them have been as murderously inclined, as Ravallac or Jacques Clement.

One of them murdered Sultan Bayazid the Second; and, in the early part of the reign of Solymán the Magnificent, a dervish, called Kalender Oglon, who was descended in a right line from Hadji Bektash, raised a revolt, and headed an army of dervishes and kalenders. The revolt was with difficulty suppressed. In 1822, the Janissaries compelled Sultan Mahmoud to dismiss his favourite minister, Halet Effendi, whom they regarded as the author of the military reforms which the sultan was endeavouring to enforce. Halet Effendi was exiled to Konia where, being a dervish of the order of the Mevleevs, he took refuge in the convent of the order. Even there, however, the wrath of the Bektashees, followed him, and he was strangled in the convent, and in the midst of his brethren.

Sultan Mahmoud himself, after the massacre of the Janissaries, was in such peril from a fanatical Bektashee, that he was compelled to put the man to death, and to banish the order for a time from Stamboul.

It is curious that Mahmoud, the reformer, was himself a member of two orders of the dervishes. The hostility of the Bektashees to him was, therefore, akin to that of the Italian secret societies to Napoleon the Third. At present the dervishes, as a rule, are disaffected to the state.

More than once during the last five years, the great Sheikh of the Mevleevs at Konia and the Sheikh of the same order in Constantinople have been in custody or under surveillance; but, on the whole, the power of the dervishes is greatly broken, and

their system is sapped by the rottenness which has attacked all Turkish institutions. Yet, enough remains in the records and in the writings of the dervishes, to show that their orders have contained many learned, wise, pious, and courageous men, who, from time to time, like the ascetics of other religions, and other climes, have resisted the excesses of tyranny, and mitigated the tortures of oppression; and of whom it may be said that they lived "as unknown, yet well known; as dying, and yet alive; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

WANTING.

UNDER the mighty headland the wavelets laugh
and leap,
The sunny breeze blows over the seas, soft as an
infant's sleep;
The butterflies over the clovered hill, flutter in
mazy dance,
The viewless lark in the deep blue arc, sings to the
radiance.
And all below and all above,
Is sweet as hope and pure as love;
"But ah," sighed the maiden, "the sunshine is dim,
And the gladness is wearisome, wanting him!"
Under the mighty headland the mightier rollers
crash,
As they break asunder in foam and thunder, and
their crests in ominous flash
Gleam in the steel-grey distance; and the winds in
furious sweep
Waken the waves in their deepest caves, and the
voice of the angry deep
Rolls full and far, over sand and Scar,
In the glory and grandeur of Nature's war.
"But ah," sighed the maiden, "the glory is grim,
The grandeur is ominous, wanting him!"
Over the mighty headland, over the heaving sea,
From the sullen shroud of the lowering cloud the
rain falls ceaselessly.
Sobbing with wings wet laden, the wild west wind
wails on,
And our hearts sink low as its tale of woe, to its
dreary monotone;
And the embers grow grey on the lonely hearth,
And the dull night closes on tired earth.
"And ah," sighed the maiden, "as day died dim,
So do my hours pass, wanting him!"
The laugh that welcomes the sunshine rings false
for the chime it knew;
There is something dull in the beautiful, that is
not watched by two;
The sad sweet cadence of autumn, needs the ring of
the soothing voice;
Unless one is there her mirth to share, can the
household joy rejoice?
For the chords of life ajar must be,
Unless one hand hold the master key;
"And ah," said the maiden, "the nectar may brim,
But for me is no loving-cup, wanting him!"

THAT PARROT.

DON'T be alarmed. This is no anecdote of any instance of "Extraordinary Intelligence" on the part of one of those birds;

no record in support of their reputed surprising tenacity of life; no verbatim report of any remarkable oratory. Indeed, as will presently be gathered from the tenor of this painful tale, I have very little to say in favour of the *Paittacidæ* generally (holding "no opinion" of the tribe myself), and still less of the individual specimen which forms the subject of this narration. I am simply about to relate a chapter of small but vexatious accidents, in which a parrot and myself were involved.

A previous turn of the wheel of Destiny, which proved so adverse to my feathered protégé, had allotted to me the curious hybrid position of ship's surgeon, and it was in that anomalous situation that I found myself off Greytown, six years ago, on board the Royal Mail Steamship *Tasmanian*. Greytown (so-called in honour of Sir Charles Grey, a former governor of Jamaica), or, more correctly, San Juan del Norte, is a small settlement located at the mouth of the river of that name in Nicaragua, on the coast of the Spanish Main, and is chiefly interesting from the probability that if a canal through the Isthmus of Panama ever really becomes an accomplished fact, it will have its Atlantic mouth at this spot, and will be formed by establishing a communication between the above-named river—or rather the lakes in which it has its origin—and the Pacific.

As we were to lie there a week, I readily obtained permission from the captain to go ashore.

Now going ashore at Greytown is more lively than pleasant, owing principally to the peculiar formation of the land. The amount of solid matter brought down in suspension by the river, in combination with the rapid growth of coral in those regions, has created new ground in such a way that Greytown may now be said to lie on a big lake, studded with fantastically shaped islands, or perhaps more correctly described as broken up by them into lagoons, and surrounded on the seaward aspect by a huge semi-circular reef, fringed in some parts with palms and mangroves, and in others consisting only of bare low-lying sands. On the outer side of this, the heavy swell of the Atlantic breaks with a dull perpetual roar—at times increased to a fury of thunder by the fearful hurricanes which sweep this coast—and dims the little white town standing out from its background of gigantic rubber-trees, with a thin gauzy veil of mist. The

openings in this reef and the lake inside it once afforded sufficient depth of water for the passage and anchorage of big vessels. Now, both have silted up to such an extent that three feet is the extreme depth on the only part of the bar that is passable, while close up to the landing-place the flat-bottomed centre-board schooners which trade to Costa Rica and Colon seem to be lying in a green field of rushes. A little steam-tug brings out to the ships the cargoes of coffee, india-rubber, tobacco, and specie which are exported from here—when she doesn't blow up, that is, or stick on the bar, as usual.

Of the climate, and conditions of life generally, in Greytown nothing need be said except that it rains in ceaseless torrents for ten months in the year and intermittently during the other two; that the heat is consequently of a stifling, steaming, starch-eliminating nature; that every noxious insect and reptile there looks on man as his best friend; that yellow fever, ague, earthquakes, and revolutions are more to be depended on than daily bread; that the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's steamers call there only once a month; and that those who have sojourned there have been heard to declare that rather than live in San Juan del Norte they would prefer to be dead anywhere else.

Towards this terrestrial paradise I set my face, not without some misgivings.

To begin with, it was a bad day, and we were anchored a good three miles from the reef. The tug had either stuck on the bar, or burst, or both; at any rate, she wasn't out, so I had a Hobson's choice of going ashore in a large dug-out canoe manned by six Indians or of remaining where I was. No doubt the canoe was really the safer craft of the two, but it didn't look so as it rose and fell on the waves, every one of which would have engulfed her had she been allowed to fall broadside on to them; and the big white fins which moved slowly backwards and forwards on all sides brought vividly to one's mind the ghastly yarns of boats capsized and their whole crews dragged down and torn to pieces under their shipmates' eyes, which had been retailed for my especial behoof at the breakfast-table. This danger, by the way, is so far from being an imaginary one, that a standing regulation of the Mail Service prohibits any ship's boat being lowered in this roadstead. There was a tremendous sea on, so that using the companion ladder was out of the question, since the canoe could not

come alongside; and as I was swung out by the steam-derrick, holding my little black portmanteau and umbrella in one hand and clinging to the rope with the other, I felt, as I remained poised in mid-air, waiting till the boat should come underneath me, like some rare species of fly in conjunction with a Brobdingnagian fishing-rod and line. I daresay the sharks thought so too.

Safely lowered at last, after two or three misses which seemed to dislocate every joint in my body, I alighted in the canoe with a thud on top of one of the Indians, whom I nearly transfixed with my umbrella. He didn't say "Waugh!" as he ought to have done according to the best authorities, but muttered something which sounded more like a "big, big D;" such is the universal spread of education and refinement nowadays. Still, there was a distinct, characteristic, Captain Mayne-Reid flavour about the whole adventure, as off we went on the "mounting waves that rolled us shoreward soon," and grew up in great green hills behind us, curling and frothing over the stern of our boat, with the daylight looming glassily through their crests till each seemed to overhang us like a watery cavern. I had supposed, of course, that we should pass the reef into the lagoon beyond through the opening above-mentioned, and was therefore no less surprised than alarmed when our dusky coxswain steered the canoe with his long paddle straight for a strip of sandy beach which seemed to constitute the lowest part of the bar, unmarked by rocks or trees, but which every sea converted into a snowy bank of hissing foam as it fell on the shingle. Nearer and nearer we drew, to take advantage of some current, as I supposed; nearer still—so near that I was in the act of turning round with a remonstrant shout to the man in the stern-sheets when, with a rattle and a roar, the breakers seemed to fly up suddenly around us like a pack of demons, and we were in the midst of the surf. With a yell the Indians sprang out of the canoe, which was instantly capsized; I was conscious of touching bottom as I was thrown out, but looking up saw a wall of water towering above me, felt two brawny arms thrown around me, a deafening rush and clatter in my ears, a long, long silent burial apparently in the depths of the ocean with a swift onward motion, a waking to more rushing and uproar and confused daylight, a scuffle, a scramble, a prolonged scraping and general sense of

whiteness pervading earth, sky, and air; and in fewer seconds than it takes the reader to read the wording of the process, I found myself laid high (but by no means dry) on the sands, while the boatmen were stolidly carrying their canoe across the bar to the still water beyond, as if nothing unusual had happened. Indeed, nothing out of the common had happened, as far as they were concerned, since they usually beach their canoes in this way in preference to running the risk of having them stove in in the passage of the outlet, where the current is strong. Of course, I was drenched to the skin, and my poor little portmanteau—whose capacity I estimated on the spot at about eight gallons, ale and beer measure—was still streaming through its hinge, like the rose of a watering-pot, as the child of the forest to whom the job of beaching me had been allotted took it up; my umbrella had gone for ever, and has perhaps formed the nucleus of a coral island by this time. "Venga, señor!" said my preserver, and we re-embarked.

But, oh! that glorious trip up the lagoon more than compensated for the dangers of the outer sea. The town lay in front of us, about a mile off as the crow flies, but the windings we were compelled to take nearly trebled that distance. It wanted an hour of actual sunset, but the edge of the grand old forest was already blackened in outline by the sun which was sinking redly behind it. The water—smooth as a mirror save where the repose of its surface was disturbed by the occasional splash of water-fowl or the sullen surge of an alligator—rippled away from our bows in two long lines which arrow-shaped our course as the canoe advanced, propelled by the Indians who now chanted a wild monotonous air to the rhythmic sweep of their paddles, and reflected a hundred green palm-crowned islets, gemmed with gorgeous blossoms or chequered with white patches of aquatic birds, or holding in the palm of some tiny hollow a wigwam from which the blue smoke twisted fantastically upwards into the evening air. Here and there a startled animal by the waterside sped away into the thicket, pausing for one instant only to gaze at us with head erect and quivering nostril, or an Indian squaw, sharply defined against the lurid sky, stood out on some jutting rock, momentarily heedless of the twisted grass line with which she sought to draw the evening meal from the quiet water of the lake. It was a scene which must ever dwell in the memory

of anyone who has witnessed it as I did, heightened in its calm intensity of beauty by its contrast to the turbulence of the billows whose solemn anthem still rang on the bar behind us. When I landed, the brief twilight had already set in, and with it, alas! disenchantment, too.

This is no guide to Greytown, nor have I any intention of inflicting on the reader a detailed description of my novel experiences of the inner life of that favoured spot. Suffice it to say, for the next three days, I varied my excursions into the jungle in quest of snakes with the scarcely less agreeable occupation of raking in ten-dollar fees from the inhabitants, who came in force for medical advice; that I lived chiefly on plantains and turtle, because there was nothing else to be had, and shall loathe the same henceforth and for ever; and that the rain set in within an hour of my arrival and continued the whole time of my stay there in such a style that the pulpy state of my shirts in the saturated portmanteau ceased to be a matter for regret. No wonder that greenness clothes every vestige of earth there, in which the most persistent trampling fails to wear a bare path, and that the sensitive plant, which carpets the ground and withers down under one's feet at every step, curls into the houses over the very threshold of the doors.

But I must pay tribute of grateful recollection to a certain Englishman there for his never-to-be-forgotten kindness to me on this, my first visit, and on a subsequent occasion. I was an entire stranger to him, yet he no sooner heard that a fellow-countryman had visited the shore than he rushed down to meet me, rescued me from the local saloon (or rather bar) keeper with whom I was bargaining for the accommodation of a vermin-stricken sort of porkless pig-stye furnished with a broken chair and a bed full of natural history—this gallant and daring act on his part being by no means devoid of danger to life or limb in that land, where every man carries a forcible argument in his right-hand pocket or boot—and carried me off to his own house in the little plaza of low white-washed tenements which constitutes the thriving and important city of Greytown.

My new-found and most hospitable friend made me welcome in a degree and with a sincerity of which people at home can have no idea. We call it hospitality when a man asks us to dinner in common with twenty other people, or gives us a spare bed. But

here was one who, though pecuniarily a prosperous merchant and one of the largest exporters of produce in the country, was often absolutely in want of the common necessaries of life, and to whom those comforts which we look upon as necessities were there unknown. Yet he and his partner insisted on turning into the same bed that I might have the other, and bundled all their things into one of the two wretched rooms of which the house consisted in order that the second should be the more habitable for me.

A miserable hut it was, like all the rest; built of rough packing-case boards raised from the wet earth on piles among which reptiles took up their abode; lighted by unglazed shuttered apertures; and thatched with dried palm-leaves which afforded cover to scorpions, centipedes, tarantulas, and every other villainous creeping detestation that pollutes the earth. I used to lie awake at night and shudder, as I looked up at that entomological roof, which seemed horrent with abominable life in the dim light of the oil-lamp, nor shall I readily forget the cold sensation which traversed my spine when a great hairy spider walked stickily and stiltedly, with pompous military exaggeration of gait, up one side of my mosquito-curtain and down the other.

No words can describe that Englishman's kindness to me; the very fulness of expression in which I would give vent to my gratitude prevents me from mentioning him by name, but I have no doubt that many others who may peruse this would bear like testimony. He not only gave me all that his house afforded, but procured all that other houses in the little community would afford; he sent his labourers into the woods to catch animals and procure botanical specimens for me; he detained dollar-bearing patients who came while I was out, singing extravagant praises of my professional ability, whereof he had no particle of evidence, and carefully combating any wavering disposition on their part to get better in my absence; and when, more than a year later, I paid him another visit and returned from a journey up-country which I had undertaken under convoy of a party of his native rubber-cutters whom he had placed at my disposal, when I came back shivering and delirious with jungle fever and with my leg swollen and useless from snake-bite, he nursed me with the tenderness of a girl. A curious life for a man, well-born and of University

education, accustomed to society in which he was well qualified to shine conspicuous by his talents and thousand good qualities, to lead in that semi-savage desolation where his occupation was a strange compound of great mercantile operations with the pettiest retail shop-keeping! He has lately returned to his native land with, I hope, the big fortune he deserves.

But where on earth is the parrot all this time, and what has this tremendous panegyric to do with the misadventures of that bird which, as set forth in the heading, was to be the subject of this paper?

I don't know where he was at this precise juncture of affairs—probably not yet caught. No presentiment of him clouded the horizon of my happiness, but the finger of Fate was irresistibly drawing our circles nearer and nearer together, and directing his accursed flight towards the borders of my ken—that little bit of the world which we carry about surrounding us like a girdle, and which for us is the world. When the Tasmanian displayed the ensign surmounted by a black ball at the fore on the morning of the fourth day—the signal for my return in case of accident or sudden illness on board, which had been agreed upon before I left the ship—I took leave of my friend, as may be imagined, with heartfelt thanks and regret. Now, what could I do for him? I asked. Nothing, he thought, unless—with a little hesitation—we could spare a bit of mutton, real English mutton, on board, in which case—What else? Well, a bit of ice. He would ask me to send him some soda-water and bottled ale, but it would certainly all be smashed in the bringing ashore. This last proposition was subsequently verified, but he got a saddle from the fattest Southdown in the ship, and a lump of ice that must have warmed his heart.

Since there is little difference in being seized by a shark or an Indian, and as being blown up in three feet of water is infinitely preferable to either, I elected to take the steam-tug back instead of the canoe. During my stay I had become the happy possessor of—in addition to a cart-load of inanimate curiosities—a tiger-cat, an ant-eater, two hawkbill turtles, a monkey, a mountain turkey, four whip-snakes, and a boa-constrictor; so that if I had thought I resembled Captain Mayne Reid whilst coming ashore, I felt more like Noah in going back—the similitude being strengthened by the rain which was pouring

down in torrents. But I got on board without further adventure: resumed buttons and gold lace, and that night enjoyed a tranquil and turtleless dinner, followed by unvermined sleep.

Early the next morning I was roused by the receipt of a letter and the intelligence that a canoe, just arrived from the shore, was lying alongside. I rushed on deck and looked over the rail. In that canoe was the parrot.

The letter was from my late host, acknowledging safe arrival of the ice, etc., and saying that, after all, he had determined to take advantage of my offer by entrusting me with a commission. He had an aunt in England who was partial to birds, and had bethought himself to send her a parrot. Would I mind taking it? He had been remiss of late in the matter of letter-writing, and the old lady would value the present doubly as an assurance that her favourite nephew did not forget her in that far-off land. She was in delicate health—suffered from heart-disease—so that he wished the bird sent to his agent in London who would personally convey it to her, lest she should be frightened by its sudden and unexpected advent—that is, if I would take it home.

Would I mind taking it home! Would I have left a single bird in the New World, if his aunt had wanted them all? The parrot was instantly established in a large cage in my own cabin, and care cast its shadow over me coincidentally.

There was nothing remarkable, good or bad, about the bird itself, as distinctive from the rest of his species in process of domestication; he had no salient points, and, indeed, played rather the passive part of first cause or principle in the abstract than an active one in the troubles which overtook me later. Of course, he capsized his bath over my papers and screamed at night; of course, he gnawed everything within reach; of course, he bit caressing fingers (not mine, because I had taken home a parrot before); of course, he got out of his cage and was with difficulty recaptured—these things are incidental and inevitable to parrots. Conscientiously did I labour to teach him to speak, spending hours upon hours in monotonous repetition of "Pretty Polly." Occasionally the idiotic solemnity of his eye would lighten for a moment into something akin to scorn, as indicative of having heard the sentiment before and not thinking much of it, but the only thing he ever attempted to learn was

an anathema which I once—only once, upon my honour—hurled at him in exasperation at the futility of my efforts at tuition. This he caught directly, and would practise it in an imperfect form at intervals afterwards—often guiltily and in a ghost-like manner at the dead of night, till discouraged by a hair-brush, slipper, or other meteor. That he should have commenced to moult on nearing land, so that on his arrival, when it was desirable that he should look at his best, he presented the appearance of having been prepared for the table, is also a theme for no special astonishment, since all birds that are taken home as presents invariably do so, and reach their destination in a raw condition which excites the recipient's indignation.

But it was not until we were actually in port that the real nature of the calamity he was about to prove to me became apparent.

I had lost the address! Somewhere in Queen Victoria Street I remembered, but I had entirely forgotten the number of the house and name of the agent; the aunt's name I had never known. I had torn up the letter with a lot of others as being of no moment one hot sleepy afternoon as we lay off Barbadoes, never remembering to make note of the essential part of the contents.

My position now was really something more than ludicrously embarrassing. Here I was, with this awful fowl on my hands, I could not go up and down Queen Victoria Street with it, asking in every office if the owner had a correspondent in Greytown, a Mr. So-and-so, by whom he had been advised of the consignment of a parrot per R.M.S.P. Tasmanian of such and such a date; and I dared not advertise with full name in the newspapers lest the old lady should see it, imagine possible disasters in the background, and become dangerously alarmed. An ambiguous advertisement I did insert in several of the daily papers, but it met with no response. But this was not the worst of it. The outward mail was just leaving, by which both aunt and agent would write announcing the non-arrival of the bird, and my hospitable entertainer would think that his guest, perfect stranger as he was, had requited his kindness by stealing the pet destined for his relative! I hastened to drop a line myself, which—knowing the insecurity of postal arrangements in Nicaragua—I forwarded, for safety's sake, to the club in Southampton, under cover to the

chief officer of the outward steamer, an old shipmate of mine, whom I begged to ensure its arrival.

Almost immediately afterwards, I was transferred to another ship on the Brazilian station and sailed, taking that "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore" with me. I pass over his doings and misdoings of that voyage because, as on the previous one, I cannot honestly say that I think they were exceptional; but I may just remark that my firm belief is, if Dante had had the experience, he would have made the guiltiest of his souls travel about sempiternally in steamers with other men's parrots.

Returning to England four months later, I found my own letter, addressed to my friend the chief officer aforesaid, still in the letter-rack at the club; he, too, had been transferred to a Brazil ship at the last moment, and another man had sailed in his stead. The letter not having been received, it goes without saying that the enclosure had not been forwarded. And the bird was thriving diabolically all the time. In an ecstasy of despair I wrote two letters for post by the next mail to Greytown, and entrusted duplicates to every one on board for delivery, with bitter imprecations on their heads if they failed in that sacred trust. All reached their destination this time, but the addressee was away from home—had gone for a trip to Libertad.

Meanwhile, I had again sailed on the Brazil route, but I didn't take the parrot with me this time. No, I left him at home in charge of some relatives, who have since quarrelled with me. When I returned at the end of another four months and heard the unaltered position of affairs, I waited for several weeks to see if the post would bring an answer to my letters; none came, however, and an opportunity then occurring, I exchanged into the next steamer carrying the mails down the Spanish Main. Arriving at Greytown, I was received by my friend with open arms, and found that his reply had crossed me on the road, as he had not long returned from his visit to Libertad—it was on this occasion that I got my first touch of jungle-fever and a bad bite, as I have mentioned before. I left there charged with all particulars of names and addresses, which you may be sure I did not fail to note this time, and looked eagerly forward to reaching England and effecting the long-delayed fulfilment of my com-

mission at least. And when I got there, I found the parrot was dead!

A fire had broke out through some defect in the heating apparatus of a green-house; that structure, with a valuable collection of orchids, and some adjacent buildings, had been destroyed; and the poor bird, who had formed the pivot on which such a whirl of difficulties had revolved, and who was kept in the green-house for warmth, had been suffocated by the smoke before he could be rescued—not burnt, as his stuffed corpse testifies to this day.

I had an interview with my friend's agent at once, who accepted my explanations most cordially, and took me down to introduce me to the old lady who was thus bereaved of her long-promised pet. Counting on some little influence with the Zoological Society, I assured her confidently that she should receive the handsomest parrot in Europe in the course of a few days, but this she would by no means hear of. Her nerves, she said, would not bear a parrot. (Nor would mine, I mentally added.) Her darling canary was almost too much for her. But, I urged, she must allow me to send her something besides the embalmed remains of poor Poll. We had a pretty large collection at home—would she take her choice?—jaguar, racoon, Mexican squirrels, love-birds, agoutis, lizards, snakes? Nothing, she insisted, absolutely nothing; and I was obliged to leave with this very unsatisfactory dictum on her part. But, for all that, I sent her a pair of exquisite little Fijian parakeets, of certified taciturnity, before the week was out, who still live to console her and, in a far greater degree, myself for the misadventures of That Parrot.

TOM SHERIDAN.

THIS brilliant member of a brilliant family enjoys a reputation of a rather tantalising sort. Everyone can allude to "Tom" Sheridan, and the mention of his name calls up a figure whose humour seems to have a flavour not equal to that of his great parent, but agreeable in its kind. Yet, popularly, there is scarcely anything known of this clever young man. But we fancy we know him. Another of these mysterious unaccountable reputations is that of Sydney Smith's brother Bobus, of whom little or nothing is preserved, yet who is accepted universally. Not

to know him argues oneself unknown. This obscurity as to Tom Sheridan may, however, be a little lightened, and the colours in his somewhat shadowy outlines deepened. What is certain, too, is that we regard him, even under such conditions, with an indulgent partiality much as people do some off-hand good-humoured youth, met but once or twice, leaving an impression that we should like to know more of him, to see him again. In the same spirit, too, we have something of the old man's feeling, who likes the young fellow for the sake of his father, old Richard Brinsley, who fills such a large space in the social life of his day, but unfortunately does not improve as the years advance; he grows less respectable, in fact, as more is known of him. Indeed, it may be assumed that most "viveurs" of his class were driven by their wants and tastes, and the difficulty of satisfying them, to practices which the world now holds to be intolerable and "shady."

It may be said that young Tom's reputation may be fairly traced to a single well-known reply, or retort, of his, which has been considered of such excellent flavour and quality as to confer fame. This is his well-known answer to his father's threat "to cut him off with a shilling;" and which took the shape of, "You haven't got it about you, sir!" Now, in this, when first heard, there was something so unexpected and original (it has since grown familiar to us), something in the compounded insinuation, the implied doubt as to his parent being able to command the coin in question, and the eagerness to secure present cash at the sacrifice of his inheritance, such as it was; there was something that so piqued the public in all this; that it came to be accepted that the person capable of such a flight must be a wit of the first water, and capable of other efforts.

When a boy, he is said to have been like his beautiful mother, and his face to have had that peculiar look which is shown in the lovely Gainsborough at Dulwich. Like his father, he was sent to Harrow, and it is curious that he had the same celebrated master as his father enjoyed, viz., Dr. Parr. After passing to Cambridge, he entered the army, and being put into what is called a "crack" regiment, was almost at once placed on the staff of one of his father's political friends and associates, Lord Moira, also a bosom friend of the Regent's. This nobleman commanded in Scotland, and lived in one of the old stately mansions of

Edinburgh belonging to Lord Wemyss, the grandfather of the present Lord Elcho; and here the agreeable young officer, recommended moreover as the "son of the celebrated Brinsley," was welcomed into every house, and lived a rather dissipated life, to the prejudice of his official duties. A story is told of the good-humoured reproof given by his chief, who did not relish his servants being kept up, and his household disturbed by his entry during the small hours: the door being one night, or rather morning, opened by Lord Moira himself, acting as porter.

It was when he was in this country that he fell in love with a young lady, Miss Callendar, an heiress, and married her.

The agreeable and always welcome "Monk" Lewis, on a round of visits in Scotland, once found himself at Inverary Castle, during festivities given for the duke's birthday. Here were a number of lively persons of congenial dispositions, and among others Mr. Sheridan and his bride. It struck him that marriage had not as yet "steadied" the gay son of Brinsley.

"I am very regular," writes Mr. Lewis to his mother, "in my mode of life, compared to most of the other inhabitants of the castle; for many of them do not go to bed till between six and seven; and between four and five in the morning is the time generally selected as being most convenient for playing at billiards. The other morning, I happened to wake about six o'clock, and hearing the billiard-balls in motion, I put on my dressing-gown, and went into the gallery, from whence, looking down into the great hall, I descried Tom Sheridan and Mr. Chester (who had not been in bed all night) playing with great eagerness. Fortunately, Tom was in the act of making a stroke on which the fate of the whole game depended, when I shouted to him over the balustrade, 'Shame! shame! a married man!' on which he started back in a fright, missed his stroke, and lost the game.

"Mrs. T. Sheridan is also here at present, very pretty, very sensible, amiable and gentle; indeed, so gentle, that Tom insists upon it that her extreme quietness and tranquillity is a defect in her character. Above all, he accuses her of such an extreme apprehension of giving trouble (he says), it amounts to absolute affectation. He affirms that, when the cook has forgotten her duty, and no dinner is prepared, Mrs. Sheridan says, 'Oh! pray don't get

dinner on purpose for me; I'll take a dish of tea instead;' and he declares himself certain, that if she were to set her clothes on fire, she would step to the bell very quietly, and say to the servant, with great gentleness and composure, 'Pray, William, is there any water in the house?'—'No madame; but I can soon get some.'—'Oh dear no; it does not signify; I dare say the fire will go out of itself!'"

One of Tom's droll adventures is retailed by Theodore Hook in his own manner in Gilbert Gurney.

"He was staying at Lord Craven's at Benham (or rather Hampstead), and one day proceeded on a shooting excursion, like Hawthorn, with only his 'dog and his gun,' on foot, and unattended by companion or keeper; the sport was bad, the birds few and shy, and he walked and walked in search of game, until, unconsciously, he entered the domain of some neighbouring squire. A very short time after, he perceived advancing towards him, at the top of his speed, a jolly, comfortable gentleman, followed by a servant, armed, as it appeared, for conflict. Tom took up a position, and waited the approach of the enemy. 'Hallo! you sir,' said the squire, when within half earshot; 'what are you doing here, sir, eh?' 'I'm shooting, sir,' said Tom. 'Do you know where you are, sir?' said the squire. 'I'm here, sir,' said Tom. 'Here, sir!' said the squire, growing angry; 'and do you know where here is, sir?—these, sir, are my manors; what d'ye think of that, sir, eh?' 'Why, sir, as to your manners,' said Tom, 'I can't say they seem over-agreeable.' 'I don't want any jokes, sir,' said the squire; 'I hate jokes. Who are you, sir?—what are you?' 'Why, sir,' said Tom, 'my name is Sheridan—I am staying at Lord Craven's—I have come out for some sport—I have not had any, and I am not aware that I am trespassing.' 'Sheridan!' said the squire, cooling a little; 'oh! from Lord Craven's, eh? Well, sir, I could not know that, sir—I——' 'No, sir,' said Tom, 'but you need not have been in a passion.' 'Not in a passion, Mr. Sheridan!' said the squire; 'you don't know, sir, what these preserves have cost me, and the pains and trouble I have been at with them; it's all very well for you to talk, but if you were in my place, I should like to know what you would say upon such an occasion.' 'Why, sir,' said Tom, 'if I were in your place, under the circumstances, I should say, "I am convinced, Mr. Sheridan, you

did not mean to annoy me, and as you look a good deal tired, perhaps you'll come up to my house and take some refreshment." The squire was hit by this nonchalance, and, it is needless to add, acted upon Sheridan's suggestion. 'So far,' said poor Tom, 'the story tells for me, now you shall hear the sequel.' After having regaled himself at the squire's house, and having said five hundred more good things than he swallowed; having delighted his host, and having half won the hearts of his wife and daughters, the sportsman proceeded on his return homewards. In the course of his walk, he passed through a farmyard; in the front of the farmhouse was a green, in the centre of which was a pond. On the pond were ducks innumerable swimming and diving; on its verdant banks a motley group of gallant cocks and pert partlets, picking and feeding—the farmer was leaning over the hatch of the barn, which stood near two cottages on the side of the green. Tom hated to go back with an empty bag; and, having failed in his attempts at higher game, it struck him as a good joke to ridicule the exploits of the day himself, in order to prevent anyone else from doing it for him; and he thought that to carry home a certain number of the domestic inhabitants of the pond and its vicinity, would serve the purpose admirably. Accordingly, up he goes to the farmer, and accosts him very civilly. 'My good friend,' says Tom, 'I make you an offer.' 'Of what, sur?' says the farmer. 'Why,' replies Tom, 'I've been out all day fagging after birds, and haven't had a shot. Now, both my barrels are loaded—I should like to take home something; what shall I give you to let me have a shot with each barrel at those ducks and fowls—I standing here—and to have whatever I kill?' 'What sort of a shot are you?' said the farmer. 'Fairish!' said Tom, 'fairish!' 'And to have all you kill?' said the farmer, 'eh?' 'Exactly so,' said Tom. 'Half-a-guinea,' said the farmer. 'That's too much,' said Tom. 'I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll give you a seven-shilling piece, which happens to be all the money I have in my pocket.' 'Well,' said the man, 'hand it over.' The payment was made. Tom, true to his bargain, took his post by the barn-door, and let fly with one barrel, and then with the other, and such quacking and splashing, and screaming and fluttering, had never been seen in that place before. Away ran Tom, and, delighted at his success, picked up first a hen,

then a chicken, then fished out a dying duck or two, and so on, until he numbered eight head of domestic game, with which his bag was nobly distended. 'Those were right good shots, sur,' said the farmer. 'Yes,' said Tom, 'eight ducks and fowls were more than you bargained for, old fellow—worth rather more, I suspect, than seven shillings—eh?' 'Why, yes,' said the man, scratching his head, 'I think they be; but what do I care for that? they are none of them mine!' 'Here,' said Tom, 'I was for once in my life beaten, and made off as fast as I could, for fear the right owner of my game might make his appearance—not but that I could have given the fellow that took me in seven times as much as I did, for his cunning and coolness.'"

It is well-known that Tom pursued a course as reckless and extravagant as that of his father, was ever in debt, and desperately struggling to raise money. There is something piteously humiliating in this spectacle of the spendthrift son and the spendthrift father thus competing with one another in this degrading course. We have a picture of him at Watier's club, gambling all night, and stripped of everything, in which state Mr. Brummell found him, sitting very ruefully, and with his last stake before him. The good-natured Beau, who was at that time in luck, offered to "take the box," and joining their fortunes, sat down to play for both. He had very soon won a sum of over a thousand pounds, and stopping at the right moment, divided the winnings, and said in his rough way: "Now, Tom, go home to your wife and brats, and never touch a card again." This is a pleasant trait, but, as may be conceived, it was profitless. The gambler is never cured.

We next find the agreeable Tom filling an office for which, of all offices in the world, he was least capable, or at least as capable as was his father, namely, that of managing a theatre. For a time he helped to administer or disorganise the great concern of Drury Lane. The truth was, both father and son looked on the undertaking as a sort of bank or bill-discounting establishment for their improvident necessities, and the worthy treasurer, Peake, seems to have had a miserable time in striving to provide for the calls of the theatre, and save the moneys from being intercepted by father and son. It was indeed a case of killing the goose. When the moneys which should have gone to pay

salaries, etc., were intercepted, pledged, and anticipated, we have quite enough to account for the decay of Old Drury.

The connection of the Sheridans with Drury Lane lasted for some twenty years. Indeed, it was amazing how he contrived to maintain it so long. But few could have an idea of the desperate shifts, the devices for raising the wind, the miserable straits in which the manager found himself. The life of the baited treasurer, Peake, must have been a burden to him. His papers have been preserved, and offer a truly piteous picture of the life of the impecunious. Letters, scraps, bills, all to the one tune, written also by the various members of the family, the father, the wife, and the son.

Thus Sheridan: "PEAKE,—It is impossible to say the suffering I have and the distress you bring on me when you totally disappoint and make me a liar to my own servants. Peake, it seems hard."

Again, he would press for money, ten pounds or twenty, "as to-morrow was the last day for the taxes."

"DEAR PEAKE,—I really must make a point that you take up your acceptance for May. It distresses me beyond measure."

And again: "Be the consequence ever so much you must send me twenty pounds by the bearer."

Then from another quarter the unhappy Peake would be pressed by the wife who wrote that "Mr. Sheridan assured me that a certain sum was to be remitted to me every week. I cannot go on longer without money. E. Sh."

Then Mr. Tom Sheridan comes on the scene addressing, "Dear Dickey," asking for ten or twenty pounds, vowing that "I haven't been master of a guinea scarcely since I have been in town, and wherever I turn myself I am disgraced! To my father it is vain to apply. He is mad, and so shall I be if I don't hear from you." Again: "Remember the 30th. Do not, for God's sake, forget me. Something must be done."

A Mr. Cosher had been persuaded by Sheridan, the father, into advancing two hundred and forty pounds to pay the renters, to be repaid out of the nightly receipts, at the rate of twenty pounds per night. After a month the creditor writes indignantly, "that he has received nothing!"

On May 1st, when money is forwarded to

Peake, out of the receipts of Pizarro, amounting to one hundred and thirty-four pounds, the agent writes:

"SIR,—The above is the statement, and enclosed is the bill which the money went to pay, by Mr. Sheridan's engagement. There is still, you will see, thirteen shillings and twopence due to me."

Besides this the treasurer had to meet a dinner order for "Richardson, Grubb, and Sheridan," amounting to three pounds, with a "Mr. Peake, pay this bill," written below. To say nothing of wagers, such as: "1799, Mr. Kelly bets Mr. Sheridan a rump and dozen that the king comes to Drury Lane this season for Bluebeard."

"Pray," writes poor Mr. Sheridan, distracted, after a warm discussion between the managers, "do not let any bad consequences arise from the words that passed between Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Grubb to-night, and if you should suspect anything, I entreat you to let me know." It is, indeed, a most painful picture. Finally, as is well known, Sheridan was burnt out of Drury Lane, and then the actual ruin of himself and his family set in.

Once the son asked his father for a supply of cash. "Money I have none," was the reply. "But money I must have," said the other. "If that be the case," said the affectionate parent, "you will find a case of loaded pistols upstairs, and a horse ready-saddled in the stable—the night is dark, and you are within half a mile of Hounslow Heath." "I understand what you mean," said Tom, "but I tried that last night. I unluckily stopped Peake, your treasurer, who told me that you had been beforehand with him, and had robbed him of every sixpence in the world."

"Mike" Kelly, who knew both father and son well, gives us a glimpse of both at this time:

"The Drury Lane Company were performing at the Lyceum, under the firm of Tom Sheridan, the late Colonel Greville, and Mr. Arnold, and were very successful; and every person belonging to the establishment were regularly paid their full salaries. Tom Sheridan, for some part of the time, was manager, and evinced great talent and industry. I had the pleasure of living on terms of intimacy with him; and many a time, when he used to come to town from Cambridge, with his friend, the Honourable Berkeley Craven, have they favoured me with their company.

"Tom Sheridan did not 'ape his sire' in all things; for whenever he made an appointment, he was punctuality personified. In every transaction I had with him, I always found him uniformly correct; nor did he unfrequently lament his father's indolence and want of regularity, although he had (indeed naturally) a high veneration for his talents.

"Tom Sheridan had a good voice, and true taste for music, which, added to his intellectual qualities and superior accomplishments, caused his society to be sought with the greatest avidity.

"The two Sheridans were supping with me one night after the opera, at a period when Tom expected to get into Parliament. 'I think, father,' said he, 'that many men, who are called great patriots in the House of Commons, are great humbugs. For my own part, if I get into Parliament, I will pledge myself to no party, but write upon my forehead, in legible characters, "To be Let."' 'And under that, Tom,' said his father, 'write—"Unfurnished."'"

Actually, Tom Sheridan made two attempts to enter Parliament, but he failed. In 1806 he was defeated for Liskeard, by Mr. Huskisson. He also attempted Stafford with similar result. At last his necessities became too pressing for him to remain in England, and his powerful friend obtained for him the place of Colonial Paymaster at the Cape of Good Hope, with a salary of one thousand two hundred pounds a year. The Prince Regent sent for him on his departure, and, with many kindly words and good wishes, made him a substantial present of money. But he was in wretched health, and showed signs of consumption. Angelo, the fencing-master, met him on the eve of his departure, and with a sickly countenance he said, smiling: "Angelo, my old acquaintance, I shall have twenty months longer to live."

This presentiment was, unhappily, fulfilled. He died on September 12, 1817, only a short time after his gifted father, and left his family totally unprovided for. His body was brought home, and the destitute children with their mother returned to England. It was little suspected then that the family would have so favourable a fortune in store. Of the three girls one became the well-known brilliant Mrs. Norton; another the charming Lady Dufferin, one of the sweetest and most attractive of women, even in old age; and the third Duchess of Somerset,

THE QUESTION OF GAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. GHOSTS.

MR. HORNDEAN and Frank Lisle had a pleasant journey. Everything, even the weather, which had taken up again after one wet day, was looking bright for the happy lover of Beatrix. It was vexatious that his beautiful betrothed should have had all that trouble, and Mrs. Maberley was a fool, but in reality the matter did not distress Mr. Horndean. He was perfectly indifferent about money, on the simple condition that he always had as much as he wanted. He was in high good-humour with his friend, the ready sacrifice of whose plans and wishes to his own did, for once, strike Mr. Horndean as a trait of amiability; for he knew how the sun-loving soul of the painter hated the English winter. And he was delighted with their present errand at Horndean; for it had the adornment of Beatrix for its object, the rendering of a fresh testimony to her beauty and to his worship of it. The idea had occurred to Frank Lisle on the occasion of the first discussion of the projected fancy ball, that the precious stones, which formed a portion of the Horndean collection, and especially the famous Hungarian garnets, would complete with striking effect the rich and uncommon costume which he hoped to induce Beatrix to wear. The jewels were ancient, and of considerable value, and their form was exactly that required: the circular head-tire of gold was studded with uncut stones; the girdle had long ends of wrought gold and iron, with clasps, fringes, and bosses of the rich red garnets of Bohemia and Magyarland; the stomacher bosses of the same; and in the collar and bracelets, of more modern date, and extraordinarily fine workmanship, a profusion of similar stones was employed. Of all the objects in the collection Beatrix admired these garnets the most; there were gems of greater value there, but the richness and the quaintness of this parure pleased her, and she had been quite interested in Mrs. Townley Gore's account of old Mr. Horndean's acquisition of the precious things, and his pride in the recognition of their value by rival collectors. His heir and successor would have continued to regard them as "a parcel of valuable rubbish shut up in a box, and bound to stay there"—according to his

contemptuous designation of them to Frank Lisle—if they had not been glorified by Beatrix's admiration, and if the artistic Frank had not instructed him in their beauty. That they should be used for the adornment of his betrothed was a delightful idea. Beatrix would be the observed of all observers, of course, in any costume, but Mr. Horndean looked forward with the triumph of a lover, and Frank Lisle with the satisfaction of an artist, to her success thus splendidly and singularly arrayed. It had been agreed that the friends should go to Horndean, select the jewels from the case, of which Mr. Horndean had the keys, and take them back to London to be arranged for Beatrix's use. She was to know nothing about the matter until the parure should be complete; and this was the harmless secret which her lover had promised should be the very last he would ever keep from her.

Frank Lisle also was very happy in his easy way, as they travelled down to Horndean, in a comfortable smoking-carriage, talking pleasantly in the intervals of newspaper-reading. Mr. Lisle had made up his mind to his friend's marriage; it could not be helped; the red-haired witch was heartily in love, at all events; that said more for her than Mr. Lisle had expected; and Mr. Horndean's latest, and severest, "fit" was certainly keeping him from gambling.

They arrived at Horndean in time for dinner, and late in the evening they went to the long drawing-room, where the cases containing the collection were placed, as has already been described. A bright wood fire was burning, the room was partially lighted, but nevertheless its aspect—the long range of cases, hidden by securely locked covers, that occupied the recesses underneath the bookcases, the sheeted cabinets, swathed-up lustres, and generally out-of-use furniture, with which the full-dressed portraits seemed to be in strange disaccord—was gloomy.

"I wonder whether old Mr. Horndean 'walks,'" said Frank Lisle. "This looks a likely sort of place for a ghost. Perhaps he keeps guard over his treasures, and won't like our meddling with them. I say, Fred, I hope we sha'n't see the old fellow."

Mr. Horndean did not smile, and he made rather an odd answer to Frank Lisle's foolish speech.

"Do you?" said he sadly. "I think I should like to have the chance of saying 'Thank you,' though only to his ghost."

The case which contained the jewels was not one of those which occupied the recesses under the bookcases. It was a separate structure, placed in the centre of the long room, between two beautiful inlaid marble tables, and exactly opposite to a door masked by tapestry, that communicated with a small sitting-room which Mr. Horndean had used in the summer, and which had now been made ready for him and Mr. Lisle on the short notice given to the housekeeper. This case was composed of ebony and thick plate-glass, and it stood on brass feet which were screwed into the floor. An oak cover fitted over it like an extinguisher, and was secured by an iron band passing under the bottom, over the top, and along the sides; this bar was fastened by a padlock. They speedily removed the cumbersome cover, and revealed the thick sheets of glass under which lay the precious collection of gems, cut and uncut, and the famous Hungarian parure, fitted into its white velvet case, and ticketed with the dates, the origin, and the name of the workers in precious metals whose cunning skill had produced it.

"Here they are," said Frank Lisle, "and more of them than I thought. They will do splendidly, when it is all put together. Just look how the light gets into and shines out of the red hearts of them!"

Mr. Horndean looked at the jewels with a new interest; he could imagine how they would set off the smooth creamy whiteness of Beatrix's matchless complexion. He was impatient to see her wear them; he hoped they would console her for the loss of her pearls.

They carried the jewels into the little sitting-room, having carefully locked the case, and replaced the cover, and Frank Lisle set to work at once at the drawing which they were to place, with the parure, in the hands of a jeweller.

"There will not be much to do," said Frank Lisle, "only a few clasps to set right, the necklace and stomacher to mount on velvet, and the head-circlet to set right. There will be plenty of time."

He went on with his drawing, and Mr. Horndean smoked and read. He was not in a talkative mood, and the stillness of the big empty house seemed to oppress him. At length Frank Lisle completed the sketch to their joint satisfaction, and after a little desultory talk and they were about to part for the night:

"By-the-bye," said Frank, "what had we better do with the gimcracks? It won't

do to leave them about here. Mrs. Grimshaw will think there has been a robbery, and that the thieves have abandoned a portion of the spoil, if these are found on the table in the morning."

"Take them to your room and put them in your bag. And, Frank, remind me to tell the old lady, to-morrow, that we have taken these things; she ought to know of their removal. I suppose you will be early, and I shall be late, as usual, in the morning."

"Yes. I shall be off for a walk as early as I can; but I shall be back in plenty of time for our start at eleven o'clock."

He wrapped the antique parure up in a handkerchief, deposited the packet in his dressing-bag, and after a final admiring contemplation of his sketch, bethought him that as he contemplated a long walk in the Chesney Manor and Notley Woods early on the following morning, he had better get to sleep at a reasonable hour.

When Mr. Horndean was alone, the depression that had come over him increased. He felt restless; he hated the stillness, he wanted to think of Beatrix, of nothing but Beatrix, and he could not. Was the glass falling? Was a storm coming? He was sensitive to things of that kind, and he drew back the window curtains and looked out, almost hoping to see an angry sky, with black scudding clouds and menace in it. But there was nothing of the kind, the sky was serene, and the moon was shining, unveiled. Mr. Horndean drew the curtains together with a clash, and sat down before the fire, stirring the logs, and finding a relief in the crackle with which they flung off their sparks. What was the matter with him? Why did the past intrude itself now, of all times, upon him: the needless, dead, irreversible, unmeaning past? Was it Frank Lisle's jesting mention of that old friend, that generous benefactor, whose patience he had so sorely tried, whose kindness he had so ill repaid, from whose death-bed he had been absent (but that at least was no fault of his own), that had done this? Were there ghosts that took no form, and yet could haunt men in the broad daylight of their lives, in the full sunshine of their happiness, coming back long after they had been laid, and bringing the chill of doubt and presentiment with them? What was this that was in the air around him; threatening, intangible, formless, but so real that his skin shivered, and his heart sank at its presence? What

was this that the fair face of his betrothed Beatrix could not shut out, when he summoned it up before his mind's eye, and addressed the beautiful image in murmured words of passionate endearment? Whatever it was, he was determined to drive it away, by all the opposition which a happy lover's rehearsal of his bliss could offer it. He would write to Beatrix; his letter would reach her only a little before his own arrival, but so much the better. She would meet him with that wonderful look in her starry eyes, and that intoxicating tone in her low clear voice, which made him half mad while their spell was upon him. What could all the ghosts of all the past, or even that one ghost, feared the most of all, that ghost gliding horribly near him now, do to him then? He almost laughed aloud as he defied them.

Mr. Horndean wrote on steadily for two hours. Never before had he written so long a letter, and as he sealed it he wondered whether Beatrix would keep it always, or burn it at once. He had said so much in that letter; he had poured out his whole soul to her, he had made vows and protestations of love such as he had never uttered to her in speech, even in the most assured moments of their solitude and their happiness; he had revealed and admitted her empire over him with lavish adulation such as she had never yet received from him; for there was no restraining touch of that cynical hardness which Beatrix showed, even towards him, to check him in the worship he was offering to her now. It was such a letter as some women could not bear to keep, lest it should ever come to be a mocking memorial of a dead passion—these would be women who knew the world. It was such a letter as some women could not bear to destroy, holding it an assurance of the immortality of their treasure—these would be the women who knew nothing of the world. Mr. Horndean was well aware that Beatrix was of the former class; but he did not reason at all upon the question that suggested itself. Some day he would ask her what she had done with his last love-letter; for this would be his last; they were not again to be a day without meeting, until their marriage.

He placed the packet in full view upon the mantelshelf, and, the ghosts being all gone, his serenity restored, and his mind exclusively full of Beatrix, was about to undress, when his eye fell on the coat he had worn that morning, and he remembered that at

the moment of starting he had put some unopened letters into its breast-pocket. He had not thought of them until now, when he resumed his seat, and looked over them. They consisted of two or three notes of no importance, and a letter, evidently unwelcome, bearing an Indian postmark. Mr. Horndean looked at the address with a strange aversion, the expression of one in whose memory a jarring chord is struck, and with a visible effort, opened and read the letter. Presently he let it fall into the fender, and sat like a man stricken with death, pale and motionless. The time passed, and save when he passed his hand across his forehead and uttered a deep sigh, he remained in the same seemingly paralysed state. The night was far advanced, the candles were guttering in the sockets, the last spark had died out amid the grey ashes of the charred logs, when he rose, shivering, and threw himself upon his bed. The vague presence had taken form now, and was close upon him; he knew the ghost now.

It was after eleven o'clock on the following day when Frank Lisle, coming in, out of breath, but in high spirits, found Mr. Horndean waiting for him, but without any appearance of being prepared for their journey.

"I was almost afraid I should be late, Fred," said Mr. Lisle. "I have had a run for it, but I suppose my watch is wrong, as usual. I ought to have allowed for that, like Captain Cuttle."

"You have plenty of time. Where have you been?"

"I started for Notley, and had a pleasant walk; the hedges were all sparkling with the sun on the night frost. They're getting on capitally with the restoration of the spire. I saw the postman, and old Bob, the carrier; I wish I hadn't been too modest to ask him to sell me his red waistcoat; it's fifty years old, at least, and the tone is wonderful! Then I turned into the Manor, and taking the short cut through the shrubbery, by the copper-beech, you know, whom should I meet but Mr. Warrender, two little girls, and a white dog—my white dog—the one whose leg I mended in the autumn."

"Yes, yes, I remember, you told me about it," said Mr. Horndean hurriedly, and stooping to poke the fire unnecessarily.

"The children recognised me; I introduced myself, and in a few minutes I found

myself enrolled as a volunteer on a holly and ivy cutting expedition. My young friends were very unwilling to part with me when I had to leave them—by which time the attendant gardener's wheelbarrow was filled—and very anxious that I should join them in the afternoon, when they are going to 'dress up' the church they call 'Uncle's' for Christmas."

"Where is the church, and why do they call it their 'Uncle's'?"

"It is the little Catholic church, with a pretty cottage within the enclosure, near the west lodge of Chesney Manor. I suppose the children call it their uncle's because it is chiefly supported by him. Mr. Warrender is the only Catholic among the gentry about here."

"I understand. Well?"

"I walked back with them to the house, and Mr. Warrender invited me to dine, and asked me to invite you, but I explained our flying visit, and came away."

"Did you see no one else?"

"No; not belonging to the family. I caught a glimpse of the governess, at the door, as the children ran up the steps to her. Such a pretty girl, Fred. I did not observe her when I saw the children the first time; she is quite beautiful. But, my dear fellow," added Frank, as he came hastily towards Mr. Horndean and looked curiously at him, "there's something wrong with you. What is the matter? Are you ill? Have you heard any bad news?"

"I have."

"What is it?"

"I cannot tell you!"

"You cannot tell me! Why, Fred, what do you mean? There you stand, looking ill, and as if you had not slept all night, and you acknowledge something has happened, and you cannot tell me what it is."

"I cannot tell you now," repeated Mr. Horndean, laying his hand heavily on Frank Lisle's shoulder, "but I will, before long. I am in a difficulty, a great difficulty, Frank, and you must help me, as you always do; only this time you must help me blindfold for a little. I must be alone here to-day. It is indispensable; there is something I must do—you shall know it all soon, very soon; but I must be alone until it is done. I want you to go up to town; you must start in ten minutes, taking the things with you, to settle about them with the jewellers, and to send word to Beatrix, who will be expecting me, that I shall be detained here until late to-morrow by business. Will you do this, Frank?"

"Of course I will, but——"

"You don't understand it. No, but do I not promise that you shall? I will tell you all about it when I come up to town."

"Is there any reason why I should not return? For how long do you want to be alone?"

"For only a few hours."

"Then I will come back to-night. You need not see me until morning if you don't like, but your looks are not at all to my mind, and I shall come back to-night, by the last train very likely, but to-night. There's the dog-cart; and there go my bag and my coat into it. —Good-bye, Fred."

"Good-bye, Frank. You shall know all to-morrow."

They shook hands, and parted. Mr. Horndean did not go to the door with his friend, but so soon as the dog-cart had disappeared, he remained lost in thought for some time, and then returned to his own room. There he took a small packet from the tray of a despatch-box, placed it in his pocket-book, and came downstairs again. A few minutes later, he left the house, passed through the shrubbery, jumped the iron fence which formed the boundary between the Chesney Manor lands and his own, and striking into the path that led through Chesney Wood from east to west, was soon lost to sight among the stems of the gaunt leafless trees.

In the meantime Mrs. Masters's little daughters had been relating the incidents of their morning walk to their mother, who was kept in the house by a cold, and to Miss Rhodes, who had gladly availed herself of that pretext to remain with her.

"Tippoo Sahib knew the strange gentleman at once," said Maggie, cutting out Maud in volubility and circumstantiality, "and he was so glad to see him; he sniffed, and barked, and hopped like anything. And the strange gentleman knew him, and spoke to Uncle John, and then he came with us to cut the holly and ivy, and I like him so much that I mean to marry him when I am as tall as Miss Rhodes."

"And he drew a picture of the copper-beech that Uncle John is so fond of, before we came home," struck in Maud gaspingly,

"and took Moo-Cow's portrait, and Jack's, too"—Jack was a donkey—"and oh, do tell me, Miss Rhodes, what is a bit of an artist?"

"A bit of an artist!" said Mrs. Masters, smiling; "why do you want to know that?"

"Because the gentleman said his name was Frank Lisle, and he was a bit of an artist, and I should like to marry him, too, when he comes back."

Mrs. Masters glanced at Helen in alarm. Here was what she had dreaded, come upon them! Here was that she had endeavoured to conceal revealed by an accident, which she might easily have foreseen to be a probable one. What was to be done now? She sent the children to their nurse before she spoke again, and when she and Helen were alone, she said to her tenderly:

"I have been very wrong, my dear girl. I have known for some time that this man was in the habit of coming to Horndean, and that there might be danger of your meeting him, and I did not tell you, fearing to disturb your peace, and because I heard that he had gone abroad for the whole winter. Of course the risk of your meeting him now can be averted; but I wish you could have been spared this shock."

"There is some mistake," said Helen, who was deadly pale, but quite composed, "I distinctly remember the person who set Tippoo's leg. I was with the children when the accident happened, I saw the gentleman, and spoke to him then. He was a perfect stranger to me!"

"And yet, his name is Frank Lisle, and he is Mr. Horndean's friend."

"Yes. It is strange; it seems almost impossible that there should be another of the same name, also Mr. Horndean's friend; but this gentleman is not—he."

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

NO. 677. NEW SERIES

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1881.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER VI. "LOVE WILL FIND OUT THE WAY."

THAT night at the theatre had been an event. But gradually, she knew not how, the manner and all the surroundings of her life changed and changed for Phœbe, until it seemed to her that she had always been Phœbe Doyle. Of course she thought she knew perfectly well that she had once been Phœbe Burden, who lived with the Nelsons; but knowing a thing is one thing, and feeling it is another. When stay-at-home people have been a week out of England, their familiar home seems to belong not merely to another country, but to another world, so far away does it feel; and the foreign ways are all the more real for being so new and so strange.

Nothing in the old life had ever been quite real, seeing that it had been nothing so much as a back garden of dreamland. But the play, so long as she attended to it, had been real, and the new life was so unlike the old as to force itself upon all the sense of reality that nature had given her; to wake up, in fact, her senses from their sleepy stagnation. Harland Terrace is a clean and pleasant street in a western district, which people who wish to flatter its residents address as "Hyde Park" by courtesy, and with a little more show of reason than in the case of yet more distant regions. The rents were high, the tenants rich, and the houses large enough to hold the whole Nelson family twice over. There were rooms, and to spare, to give Phœbe three entirely to herself—her bedroom, of

course, and a day-room, and another little room for odds and ends of things and uses. Her father also set up a sacred den, and there were the drawing-room, and dining-room, and morning-room left for them to meet in and for company who never came, and enough bedrooms to make a full house instead of an empty one. The stairs were so low and so broad as to seem to Phœbe, used to something like a ladder, scarcely to be stairs at all, and there was a small greenhouse at the back waiting for flowers. The furniture had once appeared to be on a scale of no less magnificence and elegance, though few women would have called it either the one or the other. It was comfortable in detail, but rather bare and tasteless in general effect; as might be expected from the arrangements of an old Indian who had been used to the life of a bachelor and was in a hurry to get the business of furnishing over and done. There had been very little planning of rooms, and none of that lingering over this and that idea of decorators' and upholsterers', which cheats one into the half belief that their works are things to be personally proud of as well as to be personally liable for. Phœbe's taste, whenever it found expression, was rather wild; her father's was decidedly stiff and hard—so the result was by no means successful to the orthodox eye.

However, she was used to it all now—to the house, to its furniture, and to the art of living therein, without having as yet been screwed down into the groove of its undeniable monotony. There was still a sort of dignified excitement about the aristocratic process of coming down to a late and leisurely breakfast without having first to take in the milk, and sometimes to

pay the milkman, and often to run out in bad weather to buy a red herring or a quarter of a pound of tea, while the boys were squabbling over their mixed-up boots, and the fire refused to make the water boil. She had closed her eyes to the old ways with the art of the ostrich; she was glad enough to open them wide to the new. Her father also took to the earliest home comforts of the day very kindly, and rather lingered over a breakfast-table at the head of which a woman sat for the first time since he had been a boy. He was not talkative, and read the Times, more or less, throughout the meal, but he was always gravely good-tempered, and always pleased and ready to listen and respond whenever Phœbe happened to think of something to say. There was nothing that could be called conversation, but the barrier between their thoughts was not thicker than is usual between a father and a grown-up daughter, who must naturally be farther apart than even a husband and wife can contrive to be. After breakfast her father retired to his own den, dividing the bulk of the day between unknown and solitary pursuits, accompanied by much tobacco, at home, and irregular wanderings out of doors, so that Phœbe was left mistress of herself till dinner-time. But she had been used to that in her old home, and understood the art of doing nothing without weariness perfectly well. It was of nobody like Phœbe Doyle that were written those lines of half-wisdom:

Ah, wretched and too solitary he
That loves not his own company!
He'll feel the weight of 't many a day,
Unless he call in Sin and Vanity
To help to bear 't away.

In spite of the nature of her bringing up, she did not make friends of her servants—not because she was too proud, but because she could not help being more than half afraid of them, especially of the highly respectable person who had been chosen to act as Phœbe's particular maid, to attend to the linen and the sewing, and, in general, to relieve the mistress of the house of all the troubles of housekeeping. There was no man-servant, and for that matter there was no need of one except for unnecessary show, nor had Phœbe's father yet set up a carriage. But there was no lack of service, as became the household of an old Indian, and the maids were looked after, more or less, by Mrs. Hassock as Phœbe's *maitresse du palais*. She was one of those people who are apparently born to be called

“Mrs.,” whether married or single, and are never, even when in service, roughly called by an unprefaced surname. In all visible ways Mrs. Hassock was a treasure. She moved with a staid and noiseless dignity that befitted an earl's housekeeper, never dropped an H, never chattered, and seemed to have no friends—followers were out of the question, for she made no pretensions to be young, and was as hard-featured as honesty. Moreover, if she soon learned how to rule the house, it was with an invisible sceptre. No rare order or suggestion of Phœbe's was ever disregarded, and Mrs. Hassock never gave what were her own orders as her own. Phœbe felt really afraid of this duenna-like personage, for whom she found several prototypes from her acquaintance with the Spain of fiction; and so she thought it her duty to dislike her a little. But never did duenna—if such she were—ever give less cause for disliking. All she seemed to live for was to make the wheels of Sixteen, Harland Terrace, run smoothly.

Phœbe did not sing; did not paint; nor play the piano; nor write sonnets nor novels; nor ride, nor make calls nor receive them; nor employ her fingers with what women, for some jocular reason, call work; nor perform one of the duties belonging to the station of life into which she had been called. But, to repeat it, she found it infinitely easier to get through her days than one could have believed. How many hours were there to dispose of after all? It was fully eleven o'clock before the day began, and the dinner-hour was six and bed-time eleven, which, making all due deductions for meals, and for the times that even the busiest people have to spend in their dressing-rooms, left but some nine hours, at most, out of the four-and-twenty to be idle in. One must be a cormorant for work to be incapable of doing nothing for eight or nine hours a day. There were Kensington Gardens, with their real trees and their real people, and the streets with their shops, and it never appeared to occur to her father that there was the least peril or impropriety in her going out alone. Sometimes he went out with her himself, but not often, and she very much preferred the solitary walks in which she could think her own thoughts, such as they were, and put herself into the places of the chance people she saw and make up histories of them. In the evening, after dinner, when her father always stayed at home, even his companion-

ship, after an unaccompanied day, was relief and change enough to make some three hours, with the help of tea-making and with the nearing prospect of bed-time, pass not unpleasantly. But in the daytime it sometimes rained, or was misty, or going out was, for some other reason, impossible. And presently, as time went on, Phœbe discovered an amusement at home that proved so fascinating as to make her less and less disposed for the shop windows and for the silent company of the world out of doors. Considering that she was a grown-up young woman, it was childish enough. She had found among her father's exceedingly few books—for through all his changes of life a few books had still clung to him, and a few more had found their way about in the unaccountable way that books have of gathering in the most unlikely corners—an odd volume of plays. It was a collection of acting editions of some dozen stray tragedies and comedies of various authors, cut to the same size and shape by an unskilful book-binder, and bearing on the first page of the first play, in faded ink and highly-flourished letters, the name of "Stella Fitzjames." With the experience of Olga upon her, she first read the plays, and then acted them aloud to an imaginary audience in her own room, taking all the parts, but especially those belonging to the leading lady. It was better than novel-reading. And the nearer she knew the plays by heart, the more fascinating it grew. It allowed her to throw herself into the thoughts and feelings of other people and to make a stage of her life, better even than the old back-garden, which had dropped out of so much as her dreams.

Of her dead mother she never found a sign nor heard a word. She would have asked questions had she dared; but instinct told her that this was sacred, or at least forbidden, ground. No doubt her mother's death had been a tragedy so deep as to make memory torture and words profane—a wound beyond the power of time to heal. Silence upon such a subject increased her awe for the strong man who had suffered so terribly for such a cause. Yet it seemed strange that an only child should be left ignorant by a widowed father of so much as her mother's name. And yet, after all, it did not seem strange. Stranger things happen in real plays every day. So she went on with her play-acting, and found in it a very real world, fully as large as any back-garden in the world. No

doubt the last scene of the last act would come all in good time.

One morning, after breakfast, her father went into his own room as usual and had lighted his first cheroot, when, against all the routine of the household, Mrs. Hassock tapped at the door and entered with hardly a formal waiting for leave. She was always as dignified and stately as a tall and portly person and a black dress could make her, but this morning she looked as proudly important as if she were the bearer of bad news.

"Well, Mrs. Hassock, what is it?" asked Doyle rather impatiently, for he had of late been drifting into grooves that a trifle disturbs.

"I have come, sir," said she in a voice as solemn as a funeral, "to say a word about Miss Doyle."

"About Phœbe—Miss Doyle? What on earth should you want to say about Miss Doyle? Do you mean to say you're not satisfied? Then——"

"There it is, sir. I'm not satisfied. I've not been satisfied for a good while. No, sir, I don't mean about the place. I'm not satisfied about Miss Doyle."

"Good Heavens! Do you mean to say anything's the matter with her? That she's not well? Why, she looks better than when—when we came here, a hundred times."

"Oh, sir, it's like enough she'd look the better for being back from India. She was bound to look yellow enough then. But looks are as deceitful as males. Of course she'd look her very best. Young ladies in that state of mind mostly do."

"Oh, if you don't mean she's ill—— But what do you mean? I don't know anything about states of mind. You've got something to say—nonsense, I suppose. Have it out at once. What have you got to say about Miss Doyle?"

"There it is, sir. Of course, it isn't to be expected that a gentleman, with other things to think of, would take notice of such things. But things mayn't be noticed, and yet they mayn't be nonsense, all the same. I know what I'm going to say might be called free. But if a woman isn't free to speak her mind, then all I can say is, I don't know what freedom means. It's been on my mind a long time."

"For Heaven's sake throw it off then, and as quickly as you can. What has been on your mind?"

"Why, how it's not good, nor natural, nor proper for a young lady that's grown

up beyond a governess—not that I think much of governesses; they mostly know more than's good for them, and their sense is too uncommon for me—but for a young lady that's outgrown her back-board to be mewed and cooped up like an abbess in a harem. She's bound to mope after company of her own sex, let alone the other—”

“Yes, let alone the other, Mrs. Hassock, if you please,” said Doyle with real impatience. “I knew you were going to show me where you keep some mare's-nest or other, when you began. I don't keep company, as you knew very well when you came into my house. Miss Doyle has never been used to company since she was born. I lived by myself in India, as many people have to do out there.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” asked Mrs. Hassock, “but was Miss Doyle born in India? She speaks uncommonly little of the country, to be sure, and I've known the ways of Indian ladies, and what they want, and what they've been accustomed to, and Miss Doyle's like for all the world as if she'd never seen the outside of London. As I was saying to Ellen only on Saturday, or as I ought to say, as Ellen was saying to me when we were sorting out the wardrobe, she hasn't an Indian shawl.”

Mrs. Hassock was far too grave and dignified to be suspected of impertinence or curiosity. Her master could only feel annoyed that even so innocent an imposture as his should not prove wholly plain-sailing. Phoebe was ostensibly from India. What could signify to a mortal soul the unsolvable problem of where she had really been born?

“I never listen to gossip,” said he shortly. “I suppose my daughter's shawls are entirely her own affair. Is that all?”

But Mrs. Hassock was obviously not to be dismissed until she had spoken out the whole of her mind. To give her credit, it was an indulgence to which she was by no means prone, and she had evidently in the present case set herself the task less as a pleasure than as a duty.

“No, sir,” said she. “It's not good for a young lady to be shut up in a house all alone with nobody to speak to and nothing to do. Of course, there's yourself, sir; but I remember I didn't call my own father much company in particular, when I was a young girl. Lord! you may love your father or your mother as much as you like, but there's thousands of little things, and all as harmless as doves, that a girl wants to say to somebody—and a father won't do.

If she can't say them out in a wholesome way, mark my words, sir, they'll strike in like pimples; and what's to happen then? You'll want a doctor, or a sensible woman to say. She'll shut herself up with books, and that's bad for the brains. I've seen girls muddled out with reading, till they'd no more brains left than a cheese. And if they get sick of that rubbish, and aren't looked after, then they go walking out like a school without a mistress, and only one girl. And then, if they're not as plain as a pikestaff—”

Her increasingly solemn manner was beginning to have some sort of effect upon him. After all, he felt, what did he know about girls? Had he really made a mistake in arranging her life so as to keep her away from every possible influence of harm?

“Well?” he asked, in a severe tone that had no effect upon Mrs. Hassock whatever. “I suppose you mean well; so I will let you see, once for all, that you are wrong. I do not interfere with her in any way. There are the theatres—she might go to one every night if she pleased—”

“And, begging your pardon, sir, it's clear, as she doesn't, that Miss Doyle don't please. And little wonder there, say I—to be cooped up in a box, and not so free as when she's at home, with nobody to look at her clothes. That night she did go, she didn't come back as if she'd enjoyed herself more than a herring on a hill, as one may say. Only if she don't enjoy so much as that, she'll find out something, or else something'll find out her. There's other folk than young ladies that have eyes in their heads, and tongues in their teeth, to take their walks abroad.”

“Do you wish to stay in this place, Mrs. Hassock?” said Doyle in a very different tone.

“Certainly, sir,” said she. “I'm satisfied now I've spoke my mind, and washed my hands.”

“Then, remember this, that you are not engaged to watch over Miss Doyle. You have forgotten your place so far as to dare to hint to me that my daughter is not to be trusted alone.”

“There it is, sir. There's nobody fit to be trusted alone—not one. Not till she's fifty if she's a day, and not too often then. It's just being left alone that makes girls go wild. Only, of course, if I'm not to speak, it's nothing to me. So when any more shabby young men that don't make their hairdressers' fortunes come moon-raking up and down the terrace, and giving

a shilling—which is part of their shabbiness—to housemaids and such like to put letters into young ladies' own hands, I'm to see that their bidding's done. Very well, sir, I will; and if the letter's to ask her to meet him in Kensington Gardens, I'll go and pick enough gooseberries for a pie."

"A letter!" exclaimed he. But he instantly added, with an indifference that must have disappointed Mrs. Hassock sadly, "what an absurd ado about nothing! I suppose you have the letter if Ellen has the shilling; what would have been a handsome fee for carrying a letter up a flight of stairs? Give it to Miss Doyle at once, and don't dare to delay letters any more."

Mrs. Hassock, with doubled dignity, left the room. But it does not follow that any airs of indifference on the part of a mere man, however well assumed, deceived her longer than it took her to go upstairs and say:

"A letter for you, miss, if you please."

The very first letter Phœbe had ever received.

It was a commonplace-looking letter enough, except that the exceptional commonness of its envelope made it look like a small shopkeeper's bill rather than one of those communications that are delivered to young ladies with a piquant touch of mystery.

Phœbe had sometimes opened bills, but she knew perfectly well that this was no bill as soon as it touched her fingers. Bills do not smell of musk or patchouli, and for the same reason she knew that it did not come from any of the Nelson family. She took it with a "Thank you, Mrs. Hassock," but not without a flush of excited curiosity that made the old lady look between the lines, and read, by the light of experience, a great deal that was not there. As soon as she was alone, Phœbe opened her first letter and read:

"Angele of my Leif, and Queen of my Sol! Wat is this Mistere meen? I loose you of the garden, I feind you to the Drama. If you love me, it is all right; but if you love me not, it is Revenge! I call you to remind, I have killed a man. The nearest time, I shall kill three. If you meat me not rount the corner of Keswick Place, at three hours Friday afternoon, I shall kill first him, and then you, and then me. But I am just and brave; I will once know if we deserve. You are mein. And I am
ADRIANSKI."

And she had been forgetting hero's very existence, even in her dreams; except,

indeed, when something unpleasantly reminded her of her first theatre. But this was a page out of a real play! Suicide and murder, it was terrible; but Phœbe felt, at last, that life was not going to be a wholly empty thing. She placed the letter in her bosom, according to rule, and, with beating heart, considered what stage law called upon her to do. She was still considering when the lunch-bell rang, and uncomfortably reminded her that her father had not gone out that day. She would have to meet him, as if nothing had happened, but with a secret on her heart. It was a golden situation; one to be proud of figuring in for ever. And yet she wished that lunch had not been ready quite so soon.

WANDERINGS IN SUSSEX.

It has so happened that a great deal of my life has been spent at various times in the county of Sussex, and I have endeavoured to make a somewhat systematic exploration of the grand old county. It very much reminds me of the description which Thucydides gives of Athens, which, he tells us, was peopled by men of the plain, men of the hills, and men of the seashore. The natural divisions of Sussex exactly correspond. There are the people of the great weald or plain, the people of the downs or hills, and the maritime population of the seaside.

There is yet another aspect in which I find the county full of interest. It seems to reflect different phases of English history and social life. Certainly, in its great watering-place of Brighton, it shows us the most modern and momentous characteristics of contemporary manners. Brighton is to other watering-places what the Boulevard des Italiens is to other parts of Paris. It is a suburb of London, in the height of the season—in November—its gayest and most popular suburb, or rather London-super-Mare itself. All through the year there is a wonderful vitality about Brighton, a kind of high-water mark which is hardly maintained anywhere else. East and west there are watering-places of great pretensions, and also of very great merit. Eastbourne, for instance, increases in proportion as rapidly as Brighton itself. But the rural districts of Sussex, which were once full of iron-works, are now intensely rural everywhere outside the towns, and abound with scenes of most soothing rest and quietude, with

primitive people, and old-fashioned ways, with wonderful glimpses of pastoral and woodland scenery, with the noble loneliness of hills and sea.

I might speak of some magnificent modern structures in Sussex. Such would be some great public schools which have been erected, and chief of all the vast Carthusian monastery at Cowfold, now rapidly approaching completion, which will surpass the glories of Christ Church, Oxford, or Trinity College, Cambridge. Then there are many show places well worth visiting and describing, such as the castles of Hurstmonceaux and Bodiam, the art palaces of Petworth and Parham; but here I would rather speak of some devious, careless rambles, in which I followed my own wayward will instead of the course of fashionable visitors and tourists.

I remember the time when, wandering about Sussex on foot, one met with very sorry accommodation. The cheese was rough, the beer was bad, the bacon salt and indigestible. The belated tourist, if obliged to turn in at a wayside inn, hardly found the inn's proverbial welcome. He was not wanted or expected. I have been glad to sleep on the parlour sofa of the hardest horsehair. There was nothing worth mentioning in the way of attendance. In the morning, if you wanted to tub, your demand was received with scorn and incredulity. Of course I am not speaking of inns on the regular line of roads, for at these there has never, in my time, failed to be good accommodation for man and beast, but in those remoter regions where only such a wanderer as myself was likely to penetrate. But again and again in Sussex, within recent date, I have found coffee-houses and reading-rooms even in what seem unlikely localities. I am writing these lines in one of these places. I have been partaking of those fruit essences which the French drink so much, when the English people would be drinking beer and gin. I only pay a penny for a large tumbler of fruit essence and water. A working-man has just dropped in, and asks for a pint of tea. That will cost him threepence. If he added an egg and bread-and-butter it would only cost him threepence more. I observe that working-men can have their cans filled with tea, coffee, and cocoa. A chop or steak can be brought in and cooked at the charge of one penny. Pen, ink, and paper are furnished at the charge of one penny. Soup is sold by the basin and the pint, and the charge never goes beyond a

penny. The pleasant room is plentifully furnished with periodicals, and the efforts made to promote cleanliness and comfort are most successful. Perhaps it is only fair to say that the place of which I am speaking is at Hayward's Heath, close to the railway-station. The pretty secluded village of Crawley shows an advance even upon this. Crawley is a place eminently worth visiting. It opens up the way to some of the most genuine forest country that is left in Sussex. In the neighbouring church of Worth we have one of the most perfect examples of the architecture of a parish church to be found in England. Now this village of Crawley has a perfectly excellent institution. It has all the cheap wholesome eating and drinking that can be desired. Moreover, it has some excellent dormitories, where a good bedroom can be obtained at less than a shilling a night. These improvements belong not to large centres of population, where philanthropic people set up coffee-palaces, but to rural districts, where they are beginning to supersede the beer-house and the gin-shop.

It is really wonderful how soon you can get away from London, and in less than a couple of hours find yourself in lovely scenery as simple and primeval as that of Westmoreland and Cumberland. Get out at Hassock's Gate, for instance. A moderate walk takes you to the entrance of the Clayton Tunnel, where such a terrific accident happened not so many years ago. The train you have left plunges beneath the downs where the London road goes over them. As you turn either to the right or left, you may find some little village nestling on the combes, or you continue your walk along the ridge of downs. For long stretches of many miles you have profound solitude. You may hear the sheep nibbling the sweet thymy pastures which give the South-down mutton its peculiar flavour; you see the small circular ponds where the sheep come to drink; and here and there, very seldom, there is a tuft of trees, much more frequently only briar-bushes. In the deep cool caverns of the chalky downs is vast storage of the purest water in the world. The local companies tap them for the larger villages in the neighbourhood, and it is almost worth while to live in one of these villages for the sake of the water alone. In the hottest day of summer the water is as cool as if it were moderately iced.

In the combes of the downs the parish churches cluster thickly. The old manner survives. It is very pleasant to see the

old men come in their smock frocks to church. They like their bit of gossip in the churchyard, and they think all the better and none the worse of the sermon that sends them to sleep. I am afraid that the worst thing against the Sussex peasant is that he is decidedly beery, though, as I have said, the cheap refreshment places are in various districts seeking to cope with this evil. Of all the labourers the shepherds are the quaintest and most picturesque, and, I think, also, the worthiest and most deserving. You meet an astonishing number of persons who can neither read nor write, but the School Boards are busy even amid the downs, and the new generation will probably show the most decided advance that has been known in Sussex for generations. With all their simplicity the race is shrewd enough; they are perfectly aware of every advance in the price of labour, and many who subsist on the squire's charity in the winter will refuse to work for him in the summer, if they think that the wage is sixpence below the attainable price. When you come to questions of money, you are on a subject on which, as the great preacher Melville said, the most ignorant have their lore, and the dullest their acuteness.

In rambling about Sussex I go to all sorts of places, and in all times of the year. I move about in winter as well as in summer. My general rule is to avoid the beaten paths and the public haunts. It is not a bad plan to take the coach which runs between London and Brighton, and if any place strikes your fancy, to dismount and look about you, and spend a few hours or a few days in a locality that seems to please you.

Like the rest of the Brighton world I go to the Devil's Dyke, for the sake of the wonderful prospect. They seem to have given up the plan of a railway to the Dyke. Even in the depth of winter people go to the Dyke; it is, moreover, a great meet place in the hunting season. But, instead of returning to Brighton by the car, I plunge into the Weald. The noble church of Poynings, embowered in woods, at the base of the mighty down, is the point of attraction; but it is by no means an easy place to get at. It is curious, however, that even in the summer season one meets with so few people in the woodland lanes or in the meadows. Now and then you hear the quick movements and careless laughter of a happy riding-party, but this is very rare indeed. There are points of very great interest about Poynings which deservedly make it dear to the naturalist

and archæologist. As you pass by Newtimber, notice the noble moat of water that surrounds the place. The picture is very perfect of its kind. On this occasion I turn eastward, on a way which will ultimately bring me to the line of railway which runs parallel to the main London and Brighton route. I wish to see the sheet of water belonging to Knepp Castle, which is not only the largest sheet of water in Sussex, but also the largest south of the Thames. It spreads in an irregular form beyond a noble well-timbered lawn, and is exactly of the same extent as the Serpentine. Such a lake is most unusual for Sussex, where, indeed, there is a scarcity of water, which the landscape often seems to lack.

It may be as well to mention that Holbein's pictures, enumerated in Murray's Handbook, are not here, but have been transferred to West Grinstead House.

There is a solitary fragment remaining of old Knepp Castle, once a feudal castle associated with Bramber Castle. It is in a field, just off the high road—a massive remnant of the Keep Tower, with a Norman window and door arches. I was, however, on this occasion not so much studying the perishing glories of the past as the rising glories of the present. Only a few miles off is the parish of Cowfold, whose interesting church is overshadowed by the great Carthusian foundation which I have already mentioned. On two occasions I have visited, and carefully inspected, this wonderful edifice, or series of edifices. The good fathers were most courteous, and proffered their liqueur, the Chartreuse, out of the profits of which the new monastery and many charities have originated and are sustained. The Carthusian brethren feel that the new monastery is essentially their own property and their own home. For the Grande Chartreuse in Dauphiné they have to pay a rent to the State, and they seem to think that they have reason to fear that there may be an expulsion of their order, and the forfeiture of their mountain home. They have certainly shown their confidence in English institutions by embarking their fortunes on English soil. The Cowfold monastery will only be partially inhabited by monks and lay brethren so long as the parent institution in France is maintained. The monks are poorly fed, but they are magnificently housed. We are bound to say that they looked extremely

well on their meagre diet. For months together they taste no meat, and have little or nothing after their frugal mid-day repast. Once in a week they take a country walk. Once in a week they are permitted to have a free conversation. But each monk has his bedroom, his study, his sitting-room, his workshop, and his garden. The refectory, and the library, and the chapel are on the most magnificent scale. The length of cloisters is only inferior to that of St. Peter's at Rome. The grounds embrace several hundred acres. For many years there has been a little settlement before these magnificent structures were commenced. As the buildings are not formally opened, the rule of the order is not just now maintained. Ladies are freely permitted to see the buildings at present, but at the parent monastery, in France, their visits are placed under the greatest restriction, and they are uncomplimentarily reminded in the notice that is posted up of the evil which their sex wrought to Adam and Sampson and Solomon. Very interesting are these monks, who have perhaps passed from country to country throughout Europe, spending their lives in meditation and prayers for the multitudes who disregard and ignore them, and coming at last to the quiet Sussex fields to live and die among those who so little comprehend the secret of their austere sequestered lives.

When staying at Worthing it is very interesting to visit the old Roman encampment at Cissbury and the noble heights of Chanctonbury Down, on the summit of which a worthy squire planted seeds which he lived to see expand into the now famous grove or "ring," a fact which he has commemorated in graceful verse. Near this is the great domain of Wiston, the house and park, identified with the romantic and wonderful history of the three famous Shirley brothers. One of these, Anthony, discovered coffee at Aleppo, "a drink made of seed that will soon intoxicate the brain;" fought against the Portugese on the African coast; went out to Ispahan, and returned as the Shah of Persia's Ambassador to the Courts of Europe. Robert Shirley accompanied his brother to Persia; there he married a Circassian, was Persian Ambassador at Rome, wearing a crucifix stuck in his turban, visited paternal Wiston with his wife, and returned to die in his own Persian home. The eldest brother, after a life of wonderful changes, and not without a dash of Spanish knight-errantry,

sold Wiston and settled in the Isle of Wight.

The opening of the new railway, a few months ago, from Chichester to Midhurst, has opened up a very lovely country of hills, glades, and woods to those who, in search of scenery, do as much cheap travelling as they can by railway. One of the stations, Singleton, is the station for Goodwood, and it proved crowded and useful enough at the Goodwood Races. But I love best to visit Goodwood if only for its cedars of Lebanon—which are more numerous than on Lebanon itself—when the races are not going on. Getting out at Singleton I turn into the adjacent parish of West Dean, into scenes of wonderful pastoral beauty little known to tourists; such hills, such woods, such ravines! All the road to Midhurst shows lovely scenery, and Midhurst, with its woods and ruins of Cowdray, amply repaid me for the visit. From this line the two Lavingtons are easily accessible. South of Midhurst is the church of West Lavington, built on a terraced hill looking across the Downs; in the south-east end of the churchyard is the grave of Mr. Cobden. On the other hand, if you walk along the edge of the Downs, which gives a view of some of the finest scenery in the county, you come to Lavington, where Bishop Wilberforce is buried. Here was the bishop's country house. A curious fact is mentioned in Mr. Knox's book on Birds that when the powder-mills at Hounslow exploded, in 1850, all the pheasants in the Lavington woods, fifty miles off, crowed at once. Then we go on to the Roman remains at Bognor, and the stately house of the Howards at Arundel.

Arundel is a place which I often visit, and always with a renewed sense of enjoyment. There are delicious retreats about this place. I do not discuss the lordly castle rising above the sea of foliage, or the magnificent Roman Catholic church which the duke has built, or that ancient parish church about which there was so much litigation between the vicar and the duke. I take a boat on the Arun, and go up the stream to a pleasant hostel of which I know, whose lawns slope down to the water's edge. On the way I enter into conversation with some fishermen, who sell me some eels which they have just caught, and for which they ask a very moderate sum. It is just as well to secure a basis for a dinner, for, as I know by long experience, at the little Sussex inns

on the line of route I have indicated, you can get little else than bread and cheese, or, at the outside, eggs and bacon. When I was on the river last, ten years ago, the boatmen had captured hundred-weights of grey mullet. They complained, indeed, that they had caught too many. They would have made much more money if they had caught only half the quantity. From time to time the fishermen are able to kill an osprey that haunts the stream for the fish.

It is possible to get by water all the way from Arundel to London. A canal joins the rivers Arun and Rother with the Wey, and so with the Thames. One day I walked the half-dozen miles from Arundel to Amberley, "one of those picturesque old-world villages which may still be found; the aspect, however, would seem to vary with the seasons, for the local adage in winter is, 'Where do you belong?' 'To Amberley, God help us!' but in summer, 'To Amberley, where would you live?' The cottages here are unprofaned by civilising innovations; there is an old ruin; the farms are quaint and comfortable; the trout have not wholly deserted the Arun; cranberries may be gathered in the wild brook or marsh." Across these marshes I made my way on a path between osier-beds; the place, however, has a melancholy association. One day a poor man was here bitten by a snake or adder, and despite every care he died of the poison. It is very rarely, indeed, that such a bite proves fatal in this country—even the adder's bite being ordinarily curable. From thence we get down to the two Shorehams—Old Shoreham and New Shoreham. A curious chapter of political history belongs to New Shoreham in Sussex, which proved one of the first stages in the history of Parliamentary reform. The story is told at length in Mr. Trevelyan's recent work, *The Early History of Charles James Fox*. "There was a certain society at Shoreham which called itself by the name of the Christian Club, and took an oath upon the Four Evangelists. The principle of this evangelical association was that each member should be bribed on the square, and that none should receive a greater or smaller bribe than the rest of his friends. An Act of Parliament was passed which disfranchised the holy members of the club."

New Shoreham is now celebrated for its gardens, a great attraction to the pleasure-seekers of Brighton: but if you cross the

ferry to a strip of beach opposite, you find yourself on a wild lonely shore, with Brighton five miles to the left hand and Worthing five miles to the right. Three or four miles from Shoreham is Bramber, which is also famous in electioneering history. A writer in the *Sussex Archaeological Collections* says: "In 1768 a memorable contest took place, eighteen polling one way and sixteen another, and one of the tenants of the miserable cottages refused one thousand pounds for his vote." It would be interesting to know whether this elector merely wished to raise the price of his vote, or was animated by the purest patriotism.

In Sussex the new and the old commingle. For the most part the old holds its own. But there are some districts which are entirely new. Perhaps the most striking example of this is Burgess Hill. Within the memory of many living people the whole district was a wild common, known as St. John's Common, with only a few scattered cottages. It formed part of the parish of a little church which nestled miles away under the brow of the downs. It has now expanded with the rapidity of an American township. It had once a little roadside station most charming and picturesque in its way, but this is superseded by a structure which reminds us of the Metropolitan Underground.

The Weald at Burgess Hill rises into a noble ridge, whence its name, along which there is a succession of pleasant villas embowered in gardens, and roses that love the clay are found in boundless profusion in their season. Burgess Hill owns the unenviable distinction of being the only place in all Sussex where the tall manufacturing chimney arises. Brick-works abound here, including the fine terracotta works, and have introduced a large population of labourers, whose cottages on the common contrast strongly with the villas of the suburban gentry on the Hill. A church, Board schools, rows of shops, Institute, Local Board, have all sprung up, and in a few years a district that was almost a moor has become a parish—almost a town. The very next station to Burgess Hill, up the line, exhibits something very similar, though not to the same extent. This is known as St. Wilfred's parish, St. Wilfred being the patron saint of the diocese, and the parish being the centre of the county.

But many are the quiet lanes, breezy commons, delicious woods, and interesting localities to be found in the immediate

neighbourhood of Burgess Hill and Hayward's Heath. The proper rule is, as soon as you arrive at either station, to get away from it as far and as fast as you can. There is Balcombe Pond, and Bolney Pond, and Slaugham Pond, all pleasant secluded sheets of water; and old Oak Hall, with its high stacks of chimneys, once the residence of the famous Selina, Countess of Huntingdon; and handsome churches that have adopted the hospitable custom of having open portals all day long, and many other interesting places of which it would not be difficult to give a "catalogue raisonné."

The study of Sussex manners and customs is extremely interesting. In the leisurely reading of pleasant fiction we find that Sussex is favourite ground for the order of contemplative and idyllic novelists. They study the landscapes in the same way as the artists do who reproduce them so faithfully on the walls of the Academy. Certainly, in the combination of the sea-board, the downs, the weald, and the forest-lands, the choice of subjects is absolutely inexhaustible. The character of the Sussex people is similarly exhibited by the cycle of Sussex novelists. The enemies of Sussex delight to speak of it as the Bœotia of England. To some extent, we Sussex people must admit the unsoft impeachment. As a rule, our ideas are limited and our vocabulary is scanty. A few hundred words will satisfy the literary needs of the Sussex peasant. But though the bucolic Sussex folk may be stupid, they are not wicked. They are ignorant and prejudiced and gossiping, but they are also patient and shrewd and kind-hearted. They have the greatest contempt for people who settle in the shires, or the "sheres," as they prefer to pronounce it. The people in the shires are a heathen and outlandish race. A friend asked after a certain John, who had left his Sussex village. "He be gone into one of the sheres—into foreign parts."

It must be admitted that we are often intensely stupid. A Sussex butcher is reported to have asked another: "What do those Parliament chaps mean by 'Divide, divide'?" "Why, of course it means 'Divide the taxes,' to be sure! You don't suppose that they take all that bother to get into Parliament, and don't see their way to get their money out of it?"

One day a Sussex servant-girl told me that she wanted to go into the town to buy something for her mistress. I happened to ask her what she wanted. She told me

her mistress wanted her to buy a pumpkin. I said I thought that there must be some mistake. Before the girl left the room she turned round and said that she now recollected that it was not a pumpkin, but a bumpkin, that was wanted. I answered, as gravely as I could, that her mistress had a bumpkin in the house already, and I did not think that she required another. The irony was not at all suspected, and the girl eventually discovered that "a bodkin" was the article required.

Sussex folk lay great stress upon the last syllables, which ordinary pronunciation passes lightly over. "Sure-ly, Master Small be a very old man. He lives at Arding-ly."

I am not sure, however, that some writers have not placed too great stress on the peculiarities of the Sussex peasant. For I agree with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who said that she had travelled over a good deal of the world, and thought that human beings consisted of only two classes—men and women.

A VISIT TO THE ENFIDA.

WHILE paying a visit to Tunis in the spring of the present year, I found all the world there much occupied with the affair of the Great Enfida Estate.

Most people are now familiar with the details of the case; but, for the benefit of those who are not, I may briefly state that the "Enfida" is a vast tract of land situated some distance to the south of the city of Tunis. It was formerly Crown property, and was given by the Bey to his late Minister, Kheredine Pasha, in exchange for a life pension which had been bestowed on him in recognition of his services. When Kheredine left Tunis for Constantinople, he sold this estate, as well as his other possessions in the regency, to a certain French company known as the "Société Marseillaise." And here begins the great Enfida case, which has occupied the attention of so many and such widely different persons—from the Arab shepherd wandering with his flocks over the disputed land, up to the law officers of the English Crown.

According to the Mahomedan law, when an estate is sold, any person who is part owner of the same, or who possesses property immediately adjoining it, may claim precedence over all other purchasers should he think fit to buy; but, oddly enough, he can only claim this right of pre-emption, which is called in Arabic

"Sheffaa," after the first sale of the property has been arranged and a portion of the purchase-money paid down.

Then he steps in and says: "I will give you the same price that So-and-so has paid, and I claim the right to buy."

It would be out of place here to dwell upon the facts and details of this particular case, which have been, moreover, widely made known to English readers through the medium of the Press. All the world knows, more or less, how an English subject named Levy, native of Gibraltar, having property contiguous to the Enfida, advanced his right of Sheffaa, and how it was disputed by the Société Marseillaise, and how the whole thing became a source of heart-burning and international jealousy.

But all the world does not know exactly what the Enfida is like, nor what sort of people live there, nor how they live, and therefore it is that I propose to tell what I saw there.

I had made Mr. Levy's acquaintance through some friends in Tunis, and had been much interested by him. He appeared to me to be a man of extraordinary energy and courage; keen, but, withal, very charitable and kindly; and, in fact, it is the possession of these combined qualities which has gained him the respect and cordial confidence which he enjoys among the Arabs.

One day, at Tunis, the conversation ran upon the rapid and adventurous journeys often performed by Mr. Levy and his Maltese servant, Schembri; and the incident was related how he had, on the occasion of taking possession of the Enfida, made the journey thither—which for ordinary travellers occupies the best part of two days—in less than ten hours, by sending forward relays of his famous Arab horses, and going full gallop all the way.

"How I should like to make such a journey!" exclaimed my companion, whom I will call M.

"Well, you shall if you like," replied Levy. "I am going down to-morrow, and will take you with me if you are not afraid of roughing it."

Our friends shook their heads doubtfully, for M., although not wanting in courage for a lady, is not of amazonian build, and we were warned that we should find that roughing it in Europe, to which we declared we were quite accustomed, was rather different from roughing it in Africa. In the latter continent there was, for instance, an inconvenient scarcity of roads—

things which we had perhaps hitherto considered indispensable to the performance of a long journey on wheels.

But the idea had taken possession of our minds, and when, at dinner-time the same night, a line was brought to M.: "Do you really wish to go? Tell me frankly. I start at two to-morrow," the reply, scribbled immediately on the back of the note, was: "Certainly, I mean to go; and shall bring no luggage but a hand-bag."

"That is the first point on which to tranquilise the mind of a man with whom you are going to travel," said M., displaying the wisdom of the serpent. "Now he will begin to have some confidence in me as a traveller."

Punctually at the hour named, the carriages came to the door next day. At starting, our little caravan consisted of two carriages, one a roomy vehicle of nondescript build, and the other a strong but very light victoria, hung rather high, to which four beautiful dark-grey Arab horses were harnessed abreast.

Having been told that we should sleep that night at the inn at Birbuita, we were rather surprised to see the larger carriage containing pillows, coverlets, stout burnous, a large basket of eatables, tin camp-kettle with lamp, and other preparations apparently for camping out.

But our host smiled and said that the traveller who did not take his own supper and bed with him to the "inn" at Birbuita might chance to fare badly.

On leaving Tunis, we proceeded for some distance along a tolerably good road to a place called Hammam-el-Iff, where there are mineral springs, much frequented from January until about April, both by Moors and Europeans. There are bathing-houses and drinking-fountains at this place; the waters, of which there are two or three qualities, being used internally and externally.

Near this spot we met a string of camels, whose burden, glittering and shining with the slow rocking movement of the animals, drew an exclamation of admiration from us. It looked at a little distance like fine old majolica ware, the predominating colours being the beautiful harmonious greens and exquisite yellows which we see in the best specimens. But it was neither more nor less than common native pottery, fashioned in the rudest manner and glazed with lead. This pottery is made at a little place called Nabel, which supplies all the country round.

I have said that it was rudely fashioned, but I should add that in many instances the forms could hardly have been improved upon, having evidently been reproduced on the old models for hundreds, nay, thousands of years, and some of these being the simplest and most elegant forms of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman art.

A mountain of beautiful and peculiar form, which had for some time seemed quite near us, but was still, in reality, many miles from this point, contains valuable lead mines. Indeed, the mineral riches of all this part of the regency are very considerable.

Presently we crossed a stony track, which we were surprised to hear bore the name of Wad-Meliân (in Arabic, "The Full River").

"I should never have guessed it to be a river," said M., "still less a full one!"

But we were informed that it had been full enough, not many weeks before, to sweep away in its current a carriage and a pair of horses, and to drown the driver.

In all the regency of Tunis there is but one river, properly so called; that is to say, but one which never runs quite dry—the Medjerda, which, rising in the mountains of Algeria, and emptying itself into the sea east of Biserta, lay far away from our present route. But of these water-courses, which are full and even overflowing in the rainy season (in those years when, happily for the country, there is a rainy season), there are many.

The apparently inexhaustible fertility of this portion of North Africa seems as great as it was two thousand years ago, when Carthage was the granary of half the world. No scientific farming is employed, the ground is just scratched, and the seed sown, and then, if there is rain, up comes the harvest abundantly. That is the sole condition, that it should rain in the winter and early spring.

The spring of this year was exceptionally wet, and when we had grumbled and shivered a little, not expecting grey skies in Africa, we had been told that it was a fortune to the country, for that a dry winter meant great scarcity, and two or three successive dry seasons meant famine. Hence there are numerous local sayings and proverbs having reference to the desired blessing, one of which struck me as being a good specimen of the Arab sense of humour and irony, which is very keen: "If it rains every day, it is too much, but every other day is not enough." The more matter-of-fact spirits will often

repeat: "In Tunis we want nothing but rain and peace."

Soon after leaving Hamman-el-Iff the road changes for the worse, or rather there is no longer any road at all, as we understand the word in Europe, and the gallant little horses spring forward over large loose stones, heavy sandy ruts, and anon flounder through tracts of mud. Such alternations, continued for miles together, would have tried the courage of most horses that I know, but to these appear trifles not to be considered in the day's work, and on we galloped with unabated speed.

The monotonous treeless landscape of this part of Africa, with its lines of mother-of-pearl coloured mountains in the far distance, has a certain melancholy charm of its own, and as we gradually drew away from any human habitation, or, indeed, from any sign of man's handiwork, except the tomb of a saint occasionally gleaming whitely from out a thicket of prickly pears, we could enjoy undisturbed the beautifying influence of the sunset light on everything. How precious then became every hillock and furze-bush—almost every pebble!—with its patch of shadow so intensely blue or purple that it was difficult to believe it a mere effect of light and shade, and not a stain of actual colour on the ground.

Night had already fallen when we reached Birbuita, so that we did not then see the ancient well from which it takes its name. Birbuita signifies "the Chamber in the Well;" and there is, in fact, close to the caravanserai a large and very deep well, containing an inner chamber, the masonry of which is of great antiquity.

The necessity for our host's provident precautions soon became manifest.

On the carriage stopping, Arabs came forth with lights to welcome us, and we were conducted up a rough stone staircase, to a kind of little inner court, open to the sky. The doors of our various sleeping-apartments opened into this court, and in one of them we ate our supper. The chambers had bare walls, roughly white-washed, a floor of beaten earth, and, for all furniture, two wooden benches, on which were spread some rough Bedouin coverlets. A rickety table was soon produced, however, and one chair, into which M. was unanimously voted. We made our coffee and ate our supper merrily by the light of candles which we had brought with us, and which were made to stand

upright by the simple process of melting the flat end sufficiently to make it stick firmly to the table.

We were tired with the long afternoon's jolting, and the fresh March evening air had disposed us for sleep, to which we looked forward all the more complacently for knowing that we were to be called again at three. But here we had, indeed, reckoned without our host—I should rather say our numerous hosts—of fleas! I have a certain acquaintance with the fleas of several European countries, and had always, when calmly reviewing the subject in my own mind, been disposed to award the palm to those of Rome and Venice; the former for their attack in compact heavy bodies, and the latter for unexampled agility and power of surprise. But both must sink into insignificance before the fleas of Birbuita. We had eschewed the Bedouin coverlets, retaining only our own cloaks and burnous; but the Birbuitan flea has a peculiar gift of remaining on a bare wooden plank invisible to the naked eye, until the unwary traveller stretches himself thereon to slumber. Then the attack begins from all sides at once, with a vigour, a determination, and a continual pouring in of fresh troops, which soon convince the victim that there is no middle course between martyrdom and flight. There was another slight drawback to perfect tranquillity in the shape of numerous unknown insects of gigantic size, and with an undue allowance of legs, which patrolled the walls and the floor.

These, we were told, would not attack us, but they exercised a horrible fascination over poor M., who declared that she felt obliged to watch them all night to see what their intentions might really be; and that, as far as preventing sleep was concerned, they were "even worse than the fleas." In short, we found that a night at Birbuita was a thing to be remembered.

Our fitful slumbers were put an end to in the morning by a horrible roaring and growling. What was it? Not lions, surely? M. had expressed a wish to enter the lion country, but had been told there were none nearer than the Algerian frontier, quite away from our present route, and that even there they were not plentiful. It appeared improbable that they had come into the interior of the regency, out of compliment to us. No; it could not be lions. Besides, the noise seemed to be quite close to us. We listened again, and seemed to catch a familiar note. Oh! of

course; camels! We ought to have recognised the sound with which we had become tolerably familiar in Egypt; but we had never before been suddenly aroused by it at half-past three a.m., nor had we ever heard it on quite such a grand scale. Descending to the lower storey by the bright African starlight, we found two large courtyards, surrounded by open arcades, tenanted by a caravan which had arrived during the night.

The drivers were rousing and reloading their camels, and many of the latter were objecting to being afoot again so early.

Whoever has heard the harsh roar of a camel when angry, or when calling to its companions, can imagine the effect produced by a couple of dozen or so, in an echoing courtyard surrounded by open arches.

We started again when the stars were disappearing and the sky whitening for the dawn; and at first we seemed to be speeding forward as in a dream, over the level country. We could not perceive that we were following any road; the faint track beaten out by the feet of passing caravans, or occasional horsemen, was not yet visible; no sign of life was around us; the cold still air made us glad to lie back in the carriage, wrapped in our fur-lined cloaks; yet away we flew, as if under the spell of a dream-impulse, the endless plain seeming to draw us on and on.

Suddenly the clear sky turns to a yellowish-white, a dazzling spark appears on the horizon, and then upcomes the bright sun in his strength, and all is changed. The myriad wild flowers of the African plain lift their heads, and turn their bright faces to the east; a light breeze springs up and waves the patches of green corn—already knee-deep; birds run along the sandy ground, from which they are hardly distinguishable in colour, or flutter to the thorn-bushes, which in the distance assume the most delicate lilac-tints, although at this time of year they have neither flower nor leaf; and the mother-of-pearl coloured mountains far away become more opalescent than before.

The track led us past some ruins of great antiquity, known to the Arabs as The Tower of Five Lights, and again, further on, we saw the fragments of a bridge, or rather bridges, for two lines of ruined arches can just be traced, and the remains are called by the Arabs The Old Bridges. These span a wide tract of ground which now only dips slightly from the level, but

where formerly there was, probably, a stream of some volume. All the world knows what treasures for the antiquarian lie scattered over this part of Africa, but we had not the necessary antiquarian lore, nor, upon this occasion, the time to examine the ruins which lay in our path. Our goal was Dar-el-Bey, the scene of the now historical dispute; and about an hour's brisk trot from Birbuita, we crossed the famous "neutral line," and entered on the Enfida territory. The estate was here bounded, far away on our left, by the high road to Susa, and still farther away on our right, by the distant range of mountains. There was no visible line of demarcation where we passed the "neutral line, one metre in width" (which Kheredine drew round the territory in order to neutralise the right of Sheffaa, and which was, in its turn, neutralised by the fact of Mr. Levy possessing olive gardens and other properties within the boundaries), but its limits are as well known and, to native eyes, as clearly defined as if marked out by the highest of hedges.

So this is the Enfida! A vast level plain of rich alluvial soil* stretching as far as, and farther than, the eye can reach. The land is nearly all good and capable of cultivation, but every dip or hollow which causes water to lie in the rainy season is priceless. On such spots you may gather in, if you choose, three harvests in the year. But the greater portion of the vast territory is let out to small Arab cultivators who, once assured of enough food for the coming winter, are content to fold their hands until seed-time shall come round again. The ground is let out by the "méschia," which is as much ground as a pair of horses or oxen, or one camel, can plough in a season.

In the case of Government concessions, or land sold to foreigners, the méschia is calculated to be ten hectares. In small properties, where there are wells on the estates, the measurement is made with cords, but, as may be imagined, the méschia is of very uncertain extent.

We passed one or two ancient stone wells, in which some muddy or brackish water may always be found, but they are very few and far between, and this scarcity of water explains the absence of any settled communities in all this fertile district, and makes the necessity of tent life for the

tillers of the soil at once apparent. In very dry seasons, large tracts must remain altogether uncultivated; and when the tenant-farmer may find it necessary from one season to another to seek "fresh fields and pastures new," and to go many miles in search of them, it is evidently desirable that not only the man but his house should be moveable. Dotted here and there over the immense plain, we saw little groups of black Bedouin tents, for at that time of year, although the corn is all sown and springing, there is still here and there a good deal of fresh pasture and food for the oxen and camels which have ploughed the land, and for countless herds of sheep. These we came upon from time to time, in care of a solitary shepherd or herdsman, with his one garment of coarse brown or white woollen stuff, and the gun slung behind his shoulder, and leaning on a long pointed staff, looking exactly like a figure out of an illustrated family Bible.

As our object was not to traverse the Enfida in all its length and breadth, we embraced the offer made to us of turning off to visit the property of Mr. Levy which adjoins it, which is known as the Suàch, from the name of a saint whose tomb is on the property. Nothing is more striking in these sparsely-inhabited districts, than the number of these edifices and the immense veneration in which they are held by all. It is considered that it must bring good fortune even to an unbeliever to possess one of these relics on his estate, but woe be unto him who should destroy or desecrate it. At the little group of huts which form the central farm-buildings on the Suàch estate we found an interesting patriarchal group, the head of which was a woman. In a country where the habits and religion of the people make the subjection, and one might say, the nullity of women a matter of course, it was curious to find how by sheer force of character and native intelligence, the old woman in question—she was seventy years of age, and a great-grandmother—ruled absolutely over her surroundings.

At first sight she was simply a brown, wrinkled, grey-haired hag; dressed in a single garment of dark-blue cotton stuffs, with a kerchief twisted round her head, and a larger one of a thin black material crossing it on the top of the head, and falling behind on to the shoulders, like a veil. But on studying the face a little, the remains of great beauty were visible in the delicate high profile and

* Enfida is derived from "En faid," the deposit left by a river, or land on which a river has overflowed.

intense dark eye; while the grace and freedom of her movements, and their elasticity in spite of her seventy years, were admirable. After partaking of some simple refreshment, we were asked to go round to see all the family, and some younger women came shyly peeping round the wall of a rough farmyard adjoining the house. Bedouin women in the country do not go veiled, although they always draw the flowing ends of their headdress over the lower part of the face on the approach of a man not belonging to their tribe or family. M.'s arrival had excited quite a sensation among the women, and she was dragged off to be shown the interior of their dwellings. Their pride in living in a stone house seemed to be very great; a small recess with a low stone bench, serving for a bed-place, being evidently considered the height of city luxury. M. afterwards confessed, with some reluctance, that the polite reserve which we had hitherto admired among the Arabs, by no means extended to those of her own sex. They crowded eagerly round, examining her dress in all its details; lifting her veil, and even pulling at her hair to see if it were real, and to ascertain its length. Her gloves were especial objects of curiosity, and when it was found that they could be removed, she was begged to take them off. The hands thus disclosed happening to be small and delicate, and probably looking doubly so by contrast with their surroundings, there was a general exclamation, and one of the women, suddenly pushing up M.'s sleeve, laid her own brown tattooed hand and arm beside those of her English visitor. One of the young men of the family, who was standing in the doorway, gravely said something in Arabic which caused a shout of laughter. But perceiving that this close personal inspection was beginning to be embarrassing to the Ingleez, he immediately afterwards begged that his remark might be translated, lest M. should suppose his criticism to have been unfavourable. What he had said was: "Aye, aye, these are the hands to go and cut thorns with!" Cutting thorns is some of the hardest and roughest work which an Arab woman has to undertake. And he added, that "any joke served to amuse those good-for-nothing women, who certainly did not always make good use of their own hands." But the objects of his rebuke received it with smiles, and little tosses of the head, which indicated that they had read aright a certain twinkle of his

eye, which had also been very plain to us.

We now resumed our journey; and after crossing a little river called the Elmgengin, which divides the Suàeh estate from that of the Enfida, found ourselves once more upon the disputed territory.

From time to time we met small groups of mounted Arabs, and sometimes a single horseman, who, having spied the carriage from a distance almost incredible to our eyes, would come dashing across the plain to exchange greetings with its owner, and to ask the news. This, I observe, the Arab never loses an opportunity of doing, and this may serve to account for the almost miraculous way in which news travels in these regions, destitute as they are of railways, telegraphs, and even roads. On another occasion, far away in the direction of the mountains inhabited by the Khoomeer* tribes, I found the natives perfectly well informed of what was going on in Tunis, as well as in other parts of the regency.

In the presence of these knights errant M. was again able to indulge in enthusiastic admiration of the native good manners. And it was, indeed, very noticeable, that although the advent of a European woman in those parts was an unheard-of circumstance, she was never once regarded with anything like a fixed attention likely to be embarrassing, nor even with apparent curiosity. The politeness of the Arab has certainly not been overrated. And we found that the country Arab, the Bedouin, has even finer and more dignified manners than his brethren of the town.

It appeared, however, that our nationality was invariably demanded of our host, and as invariably, on its transpiring that we were Ingleez, and that we had come especially to see the Enfida, a desire was manifested to make us welcome, and to show us all possible cordiality.

The Arabs inhabiting the Enfida are known under the collective name of Oualed-es-Said,† and are subdivided into several tribes. The chief of one of these, a certain Mohamed-ben-et-Tabet, sheik of the Oualed Abdallah, interested us considerably. Not to speak of wonderful exploits in "reeving" or "lifting" the cattle and camels of any tribe with whom

* The true sound of this word it is impossible to represent in English letters. The Kh stands for a strong guttural. The name of the tribes has been incorrectly written in most European publications, following the French orthography, as Kroumir.

† Sons of the Happy.

he was at variance, which were recounted to us, and which are all fair in Arab warfare, he had distinguished himself during the revolution of '64, fighting on the side of the Bey's government, and had rendered invaluable services in bringing the revolted tribes to order, by his dashing bravery and great personal influence.

He was a fine intelligent-looking man, with a remarkably winning smile, and certainly gave us the impression that he would be no contemptible ally.

After the first compliments he wished us to be told that if the English and French fought about the Enfida (an idea which was rather prevalent among the Arabs then), he, Mohamed, should fight with the English. We asked him "Why?" and he promptly said, because the English fought for justice and were willing to abide by the Bey's laws, that they did not come into the country wishing to seize it for their own, but would live side by side with the Arab like friends. He added abruptly: "Why don't you ask something of our Bey? The French are always asking, and are never content, but the Bey would grant more willingly anything which the English might ask, because we like to see you in our country."

Journeying onward, with Mohamed and one or two of his friends now cantering by the side of the carriage, we soon came in sight of a white speck—the famous Dar-el-Bey, the only stone building on the Enfida estate. It is, as its name imports, "the house of the Bey," and is one of several similar buildings scattered over the country, where the representatives of his highness put up when visiting remote districts for the collection of taxes, or the administration of justice.

On nearer approach we saw that it was a flat-roofed square building, with a little tower at each corner, the whole brilliantly white, making the large arched door and small square windows in the outer wall look black by comparison. A smaller building near at hand contained the well for supplying the house, on the flat roof of which a blindfolded horse was pacing round and round, attached to a large horizontal wheel, which was part of the machinery for pumping up the water.

We could not enter Dar-el-Bey, accompanied as we then were, for it was occupied by some of the Frenchmen who had assisted in forcibly expelling therefrom Mr. Levy's servant, Schembri, whom he

had left in possession; and we saw these men jealously eyeing our party from a little distance. We were hospitably entertained at luncheon under the goat's-hair-cloth tent of some of our Arab friends, the meal comprising some fresh milk, cheeses, and excellent coffee; and M., enthroned on a pile of cushions and burnous, handing round "the knife" to cut cheese, bread, and meat, alternately, declared that it was by far the best picnic she had ever assisted at, and that a tent had all kinds of advantages over a house!

Our return journey to Tunis differed only slightly from the outward one; one of the few incidents worth noting being that of an Arab woman who made her appearance at Birbuita, having come some distance from her tents, to see and touch the hand of the Englishwoman who had been to visit the Enfida.

PLAYER KINGS AND QUEENS.

THE players who personate kings are not always kings among the players. It often devolves, indeed, upon the actors of quite subordinate rank to represent the potentates of the drama. Such characters, for instance, as King Cymbeline and King Duncan can rarely have been undertaken by performers of any great distinction. Upon the stage Prince Hamlet is, of course, a far more important personage than King Claudius. One Sparks, a tragedian of the last century, long enjoyed the reputation of being the only actor "who did not make an insipid figure" in the part of Hamlet's uncle. A critic wrote of Mr. Sparks that he was "great in the soliloquy, respectable in every passion of the least importance, and, when stabbed, peculiarly happy in falling from the throne." This is something to be said of a player. Few representatives of Claudius, however, can have been so successful as Mr. Sparks in obtaining critical recognition of their exertions in the character. The king in Hamlet is generally held to be "a wretched part for an actor."

It was customary for the players to assign the characters of the kings of the theatre to one particular member of their company, endowed, probably, with physical advantages of an imposing kind, a certain natural majesty of aspect and of action. To old-fashioned tragedy, kings were as necessary as to packs of cards. The dramatic king might be an actual figure

borrowed from history, or a mere creation of the poet, such as the king in *The Maid's Tragedy*, of Beaumont and Fletcher, or in the *Love's Labour's Lost*, of Shakespeare. "He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me," says Hamlet upon the announcement of the arrival at Elsinore of the tragedians of the city. Some critics have been disposed to hold that the prince's speech had sardonic reference to the king then occupying the throne of Denmark. It is to be observed, however, that Hamlet proceeds to enumerate, as though greeting them with equal cordiality, the other members of the dramatic company: the adventurous knight, the lover, the humorous man, the clown, and the lady. And upon the entrance, in accordance with the stage direction, of "four or five players," "You are welcome, masters; welcome all," he cries, while particularly recognising one of the troop as his "old friend," and pleasantly noting the growth of his beard since last they had met. Was this the actor who was subsequently to personate the king in the tragedy of *The Mousetrap*—the image of a murder done in Vienna—the story extant and written in very choice Italian, Gonzago being the duke's name, and his wife's Baptista? It may be remarked that *The Mousetrap* was not an original work; that even in the time of King Claudius, adaptations were already in vogue at the performances before the court.

No doubt players and playwrights brought kings and queens upon the stage because the public enjoyed the proceeding, and demanded entertainment of the sort. Majesty has its theatrical side. Sovereigns are a portion of the pageantry of history; their careers, characters, deeds, and misdeeds becoming lawful subjects for dramatic exhibition and manipulation. Of the long list of monarchs who have, from time to time, sat upon the English throne, nearly all have found counterfeit presentment in the theatre. The illustrious, indeed, have always to pay the penalties attaching to their condition, to endure the fierce glare of publicity, and the expedients fame adopts to perpetuate their memories; to submit themselves to the arts, in turn, of the portrait-painter, the statuary, the modeller in wax, and the theatrical performer.

Of the early monarchs who have appeared upon the scene, we owe to Shakespeare not only Cymbeline and Duncan, but also Lear,

the greatest of stage kings. Dryden produced a "dramatic opera," entitled, *King Arthur*, the British Worthy, Purcell supplying the music. The work has departed from the theatre long since, yet the grand scena, "Come if you dare," still lingers in concert-rooms, a favourite song with heroic tenors. *Bonduca* is a fine tragedy by Beaumont and Fletcher, the same royal heroine, under the name of Boadicea, appearing also in plays by Leonidas Glover and Charles Hopkins. Athelwold is a tragedy by Aaron Hill. Mason's *Elfrida* was presented upon the scene in an operatic form, with music by Giardini. *Edgar*, the English Monarch, and *King Edgar and Alfreda*, are plays written in the seventeenth century by Rymer and Ravenscroft respectively. *Edwy and Elgiva* is the title of an unsuccessful play by Madame D'Arblay. Sheridan Knowles dealt dramatically with the history of Alfred the Great, Mr. Macready personating that illustrious English monarch on the stage of Drury Lane, but the work did not enjoy many representations. And in Mrs. Barbauld's *Evenings at Home*, it need hardly be said, there will be found a little drama suited to performance by juvenile actors to overflowing nurseries, setting forth Alfred's misadventures in the neat-herd's hut, and his complete failure as a baker. Sir Henry Taylor's poetic drama of *Edwin the Fair* has escaped the footlights. Mr. Heraud has written sundry plays dealing with early British history, introducing royal personages of exceeding antiquity.

The Laureate's Harold has not yet obtained representation, nor has William the Conqueror appeared very distinctly upon the mimic scene. Cumberland produced a play called *The Battle of Hastings*, and there is a drama by Boyce having Harold for its title; but in neither of these works does the great Norman find occupation. He is constantly mentioned by the other personages, but he is not permitted corporeal introduction to the audience. William Rufus wears theatre shape only in a forgotten tragedy by Mr. Fitzball, produced long since at Covent Garden Theatre, and bearing the title of *Walter Tyrrell*. Of Henry the First and King Stephen the stage would seem to know nothing beyond what is related of the latter in Iago's drinking-song that proclaims him "a worthy peer," and specifies the exact cost of a certain important portion of his dress. For dramatic portrayal of Henry the Second we must turn to Addison's opera of

Rosamund and to a play by Hawkins, called *Henry and Rosamund*, published in 1749; but, as the title-page announces, "not acted, from the managers fearing that many passages would be applied to the unfortunate differences between George the Second and Frederick Prince of Wales." However, the play came upon the stage some five-and-twenty years later, when it was found that the significance of the work had been over-valued. *Henry and Rosamund* did not impress the public much or enjoy many representations. The pathetic legend of *Fair Rosamund* is scarcely known to the modern theatre, except in the form of burlesque or pantomime. In a travesty of the story by Mr. Burnand the performance of the character of *Queen Eleanor* by the late Mr. Robson at the Olympic Theatre provoked extraordinary applause. *King John* lives for ever in Shakespeare; but for the king's great brother and predecessor, strangely enough, the stage has done little: *Cœur de Lion* has inspired no poetic dramatist of repute. The royal crusader has been seen in the theatre only in adaptations of *Ivanhoe* and the *Talisman* of Scott; in a musical *Cœur de Lion* by Burgoyne, at Drury Lane, in 1786, when John Kemble played the king and attempted a song with only partial success; in another musical *Cœur de Lion* by Mac Nally, produced at Covent Garden the same year; and in the later opera of *Maid Marian*, by Planché and Bishop; Richard being then personated by Mr. T. P. Cooke, an actor but rarely entrusted with royal characters. *Henry the Third* knew for a while theatrical existence in a poetic five-act play, called *Thomas à Becket*, written by Douglas Jerrold, and produced upon the Surrey stage in 1830. Concerning *Edward the First* there is extant an early play by George Peale, bearing date 1593. *Edward the Second* owes dramatic existence to Marlowe's mighty lines. Of *Edward the Third* a glimpse is obtained in Ben Jonson's incomplete tragedy, *Mortimer's Fall*. A play called *Edward the Third*, with the *Fall of Mortimer, Earl of March*, attributed to Bancroft, appeared in 1690. We are now among the kings of Shakespeare; their names need not be enumerated.

To *Edward the Fourth* Heywood has devoted a play in two parts. The *Richard the Third* of the theatre has been too often Colley Cibber's rather than Shakespeare's. But what a mark the monarch has made in histrionic annals! What great

actors have delighted to assume the part, and what innumerable little ones! The closing scenes of the tragedy bring the *Earl of Richmond* for awhile in front of the footlights. For a full-length theatrical portrait of *King Henry the Seventh*, we have to turn to Macklin's sorry play concerning the story of *Perkin Warbeck*, and entitled oddly enough, the historical period being considered, *The Popish Impostor*. But the work was hurriedly written and produced in 1746, with a hope that the public might apply the subject to the case of the young Pretender. The dulness of the treatment, however, outweighed the appositeness of the theme, and after a few performances of *The Popish Impostor* the theatre knew it no more. In addition to Shakespeare's portraiture of *King Henry the Eighth*, other presentments of the monarch have occurred in Mr. Tom Taylor's poetic tragedy of *Anna Boleyn*, in Mr. Raleigh's play of *Queen and Cardinal*, and in various melodramas, especially relative to the *Windsor Forest Fables of Herne the Hunter*. Pantomime and burlesque have also laid hands very freely indeed upon the person of *Bluff King Hal*; and Italian Opera has even pressed him into its service. Signori Lablache and Tamburini were wont to find fine opportunities for the display of their art when personating the portly *Enrico* of Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*. *Henry's son, Edward the Sixth*, appears not to have been of the slightest histrionic service.

The eldest daughter of *King Henry the Eighth* lived upon the stage in Tennyson's tragedy of *Queen Mary*. Until the advent of that work her majesty had hardly been seen in the theatre except, perhaps, in Mr. Tom Taylor's melodrama, *Twixt Axe and Crown*, founded in great part upon a German original by Madame Birch-Pfeiffer, which in its turn may have owed something to Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's popular novel, *The Tower of London*. The queen was also the heroine of Victor Hugo's great tragic play, *Marie Tudor*, and occasionally that play in a translated or adapted form has been seen upon the English stage. Years since it furnished Balfe with a libretto, and the Surrey Theatre with a melodrama. But the venue of the subject, so to speak, has always been changed; it was recognised that Victor Hugo's views of English history could not be made acceptable to an English audience; the play was made available here by altering its background, the plot was appropriated

but assigned a more remote situation; Queen Mary was made to assume the guise of a foreign sovereign—a Swedish queen or a Russian czarina. Queen Elizabeth, although for humorous reasons she was excluded from Mr. Puff's tragedy, *The Spanish Armada*, has trod the stage upon many occasions. Shakespeare exhibited her christening procession. She was seen as the Lady Elizabeth both in Tennyson's *Queen Mary*, and in Mr. Tom Taylor's *'Twixt Axe and Crown*. She appeared in a variety of seventeenth century tragedies: *The Albion Queens*, or, *the Death of Mary Queen of Scots*, and *The Unhappy Favourite*, or, *the Earl of Essex*, both works being by John Banks, and three plays dealing with the career of the Earl of Essex, by James Ralph, Henry Jones, and Henry Brooke respectively, all borrowed in part from the earlier production by John Banks. Schiller's *Mary Stuart* brings Elizabeth upon the scene, but only as a secondary character. For Madame Ristori, however, who had shone as *Mary Stuart* in an Italian version of Schiller's play, Signor Giacometti provided a tragedy, *Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra*, of which our virgin queen was quite the leading personage; and translations of the work have been seen upon the English stage. Elizabeth, of course, finds a part in all dramatic versions of Scott's *Kenilworth*, both serious and burlesque, and, no doubt, has figured in various minor plays and burlettas of which fame has kept no account. For the queen is, theatrically speaking, a strong and striking part which affords its representatives excellent histrionic opportunities. The great Mrs. Barry was a famous Elizabeth, and assuming that character, was wont to wear right royally the coronation robes of James the Second's queen; for, in times past, the kings and queens by divine right often bestowed their cast clothes and discarded finery upon their illegitimate kindred of the theatre. Mrs. Porter was also a distinguished Elizabeth in Banks's *Unhappy Favourite*; the play seems to have quitted the stage with that admired actress of the eighteenth century.

The sovereigns after Elizabeth have been less signally represented in the theatre. With the coming of the Stuarts, the drama began to decline in literary rank, and stage portraits to be limned by less able hands. History ceased to occupy the scene in the old grand way; poetry ebbed away from the playhouses, and plays sank to a

prosaic level. The blank verse now is often found to halt, and a bar-sinister blemishes the drama's coat of arms, betraying its illegitimacy. The James the First of the players is mainly derived from Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel*, rudely moulded into a dramatic form, although a more poetic play by the Rev. James White, dealing with the monarch as James the Sixth of Scotland, enjoyed favour for a while during Mr. Phelps's tenancy and management of Sadler's Wells. John Kemble now and then appeared as Charles the First, looking the part admirably as his portraits manifest, in a dreary tragedy by Havard the actor; Miss Mitford also produced a play having the hapless king for its hero. In later times Mr. Irving has portrayed Charles with special success in a tragedy by Mr. Wills. Cromwell hardly comes of right into this list, for his was not a crowned head. It may be noted, however, that he has often been seen upon the stage; as the king's rival in Mr. Wills's *Charles the First*, and also in a drama called *Buckingham* by the same writer; in a poetic tragedy by the late Colonel A. B. Richards; in theatrical versions of *Woodstock*, and probably in divers forgotten melodramas. M. Victor Hugo's colossal play of *Cromwell* may also be mentioned, and Alexandre Dumas's portraiture of both Charles and Cromwell in his *Vingt Ans Après*, and the play founded upon that historical romance.

Charles the Second has paced the stage in many works of slight constitution and small pretence, but no poetic dramatist has laboured on his account. He was a king much more suited to the purposes of comedy, or even of farce, than of tragedy. He could hardly look for grave or reverent treatment at the hands of the players, or, indeed, of any other class. Charles Kemble, however, endowed the Merry Monarch with grace, dignity, and good looks he could scarcely claim as strictly his due in the farce called *Charles the Second*, which Howard Payne borrowed from the little French drama *La Jeunesse de Henri V*. The same theme also furnished Drury Lane with a ballet, *Betty*, or the *Wags of Wapping*, in which Mdlle. Sophie Fuoco was wont to dance, and Mr. George Macfarren with the libretto of his most successful opera. Charles has appeared in the plays which Douglas Jerrold, and, at a later date, Mr. Wills have founded upon the adventures of Nell Gwynne, and Mr. Charles Reade once pressed the

monarch into a forcible drama, *The King's Rival*, concerning the loves of Miss Stewart (the original Britannia of our coinage) and the Duke of Richmond, and bringing Mr. Pepys upon the stage to provide Mr. Toole with one of his earliest parts in a London theatre. And, of course, King Charles has been seen in stage versions of *Woodstock* and *Peveril of the Peak*, and in melodramatic traffickings with such subjects as *Old St. Paul's*, *the Plague* and *the Fire*, *Whitehall* and *Whitefriars*. Nor should the king's presence be forgotten in Mr. Planché's dainty little comedy of *Court Beauties*, with its living copies of the Hampton Court pictures by Lely and Kneller. Altogether, Charles the Second has been shone upon by the stage lamps as often, perhaps, as any other sovereign, although he has never been allotted such important histrionic duties and responsibilities as Poetry and Tragedy toil to provide.

The sovereigns after Charles have rarely shown themselves or been shown upon the scene. It would be difficult to bring home to the players any acquaintance with James the Second or with his son the Old Pretender. The romantic adventures of Prince Charles Edward, however, have been sometimes converted to dramatic use, if the stage has nothing known of that last of the Stuarts, the Cardinal of York, whom the inveterate Jacobites were pleased to entitle Henry the Ninth of England. Versions of *Waverley* at one time possessed the theatre, and Jacobite plots have been of service to many playwrights. In these works the young chevalier has now and then shown himself, although he may never have required to be personated by actors of the first class. With William and Mary the stage can boast little intimacy, though occasional dealing with the Massacre of Glencoe may have brought the king more or less near to the playhouse, and in Mr. Tom Taylor's melodrama of *Clancarty* the king himself for some few minutes was visible upon the scene. In his famous *Verre d'Eau*, M. Scribe dealt very freely with our good Queen Anne. Yet when the play was suited to our stage the dramatist's portrayal of her majesty was found not recognisable; it was deemed expedient to destroy the nationality of the sovereign; she was presented as the ruler of a foreign realm—German, or Spanish, or Portuguese. In the opera of *Marta*, a queen appears who is understood to be Queen Anne, but who is allowed to say and do little enough upon

the stage. *The Heart of Midlothian* dramatised exhibited, for a scene or two, a stage presentment of Queen Caroline, the wife of George the Second. The theatre—that is, the English theatre—knows no royalty of later date, if we may pass over Elliston's personation of George the Fourth when the coronation procession of that sovereign was brought upon the stage of Drury Lane as a spectacle. Parisian audiences have seen our Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth, conducting himself very strangely indeed in dramas purporting to relate the stories of Edmund Kean, of Sheridan, or of Caroline of Brunswick. In an English version of the Kean of Alexandre Dumas, it was found necessary to convert the "Prince de Galles" of the original into a German princeling or grand duke.

The House of Hanover has not been brought upon our stage. It has been deemed expedient to consider the susceptibilities of the reigning family, or it may have been held that the Royal Georges do not present themselves as likely subjects for dramatic or histrionic treatment. Perhaps the more a ruler is constitutional, the less he is available for theatrical purposes. The stage loves a tyrant monarch whose will is law, whose proceedings are absolute and arbitrary. Under a parliamentary government, the player-king has but a poor part. The sovereign who can do no wrong, who can only act through his ministers, who can take little personal share or responsibility in the transactions of his reign, whose only speech is a speech from the throne, written for him by his premier, would figure but inefficiently in the theatre. Actors of position would probably refuse the part as "out of their line" or fit only for the subordinate members of the company. Moreover, the prejudices and prescriptions of the Lord Chamberlain have to be considered and conciliated, and that officer of state is known to be curiously sensitive concerning plays which approach modern events of political import or introduce august or eminent personages. It is, indeed, forbidden to represent living characters upon the stage, although the intention may be never so complimentary. The list of theatrical crowned heads is not likely, therefore, to be immediately increased by portrayals of our modern monarchs, although new personations of past kings and queens may, from time to time, be given to the stage.

THE QUESTION OF GAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HONY.

CHAPTER XXXIX. FACE TO FACE.

THE west lodge of Chesney Manor faced the prettily laid-out enclosure, within which stood the Catholic church and the house which Mr. Warrender had built for the use of the officiating priest. From the little garden, with its privet hedges, and the rustic porch, the west gate was plainly to be seen, and there was also a view of a picturesque bit of the park. The site of the church and the cottage had formerly made a portion of a fine wood which skirted a gentle curve past a long stretch of rising ground, and the small clearing was backed and bounded on both sides by the wood; leafless now, but still beautiful. The sun was shining on the cottage and the garden, and the long narrow windows of the little church were glittering in its rays. The doors of both church and cottage were open, and there was an unusual stir about the quiet scene. A couple of wheelbarrows under the charge of a couple of boys, and a light cart, drawn by an unmistakably pet donkey—the Jack so well beloved of Mrs. Masters's children—were stationed at the side of the church nearest to the cottage, and a tall grey-haired man, wearing a long black cassock and a black velvet skull-cap, and carrying a stumpy book under his arm, was superintending the unloading of the donkey-cart by Jack's driver. The contents of the three vehicles were flowers in pots, long shining garlands of holly and ivy, and other winter greenery, and these were all taken into the church.

"We are to go back for another load," said Jack's driver, "and I was to tell your reverence that Miss Rhodes and the young ladies are coming down at two o'clock."

Away went the man with the cart and the boys with the barrows, and the priest going with them to shut the gate, observed that a gentleman was standing on the pathway at a little distance. Not knowing whether the stranger meant to come in, or to pass on, the priest did not close the gate upon the barrows, but stood at it, waiting. There was a loitering uncertain air about this person, but the priest's attitude seemed to decide him, and, lifting his hat, he said:

"Mr. Moore, I think?"

"That is my name," answered the priest. "You wish to see me? Will you walk in?"

"Thank you," said the stranger, complying with the invitation; "I am glad of an

opportunity of making your acquaintance. My name is Horndean."

Some desultory remarks followed, and Mr. Moore was leading the way to his house when Mr. Horndean, pausing at the open door of the church, asked permission to enter. They went in, and while the stranger looked about him at the unfamiliar scene, the priest knelt for a few moments in front of the altar.

The church was empty, save for a boy in the long coat of a sacristan who was busy about the altar-ornaments; and after a casual examination of its simple architecture and decoration, Mr. Horndean's inspection came to an end. Mr. Moore politely invited him into the adjoining house, but he preferred the open air, and was careful, while talking to the priest, not to lose sight of the gate and west avenue of Chesney Manor. Something was said of the season, and the decoration of the church, and Mr. Horndean politely expressed a hope that in future Mr. Moore would lay the shrubberies and gardens of Horndean under contribution.

"I am bountifully supplied for Christmas by Chesney Manor," said Mr. Moore; "but I am obliged for your kind offer, and may avail myself of it at Easter. You do not remain at Horndean for Christmas, I believe?"

"No. I am going away again, but soon to return. Then I hope we shall be good neighbours."

All this time he was intently watching the west gate of Chesney Manor.

Mr. Moore made a civil reply, and was secretly wondering what had brought Mr. Horndean, whom he had not once seen during the months of his sojourn at Horndean, to the retired nook at the Chesney west gate, when his unaccountable visitor took an abrupt leave of him, and walked away towards the skirt of the wood. At the same moment Mr. Moore caught sight of a group moving along the avenue of Chesney Manor, and immediately crossed the road to the west lodge to meet Miss Rhodes and her little pupils. They preceded the re-laden donkey-cart and wheelbarrows; and they were accompanied by their nurse. There was a good deal of news for Mr. Moore: Uncle John was coming presently, they might stay until it was growing dark, and mamma had ordered almost all the camelias to be cut for uncle's church on Christmas Day.

Miss Rhodes was rather silent and apathetic, and when she had hung up a few wreaths and given the boy in the long coat some directions, she excused herself on the

plea of having to get back to Mrs. Masters, and leaving the children with their nurse to await Mr. Warrender's arrival, she went away, accompanied to the gate by Mr. Moore. A side path through a plantation extending on the right of the gate lodge, led by a circuitous route to the house, and this was the way that Helen selected, with the object of avoiding Mr. Warrender. This had become her chief solicitude; not that anything on his part had made her position more difficult than before, but because she found the pain of it, the sense that to her would be due the breaking up of that happy home, the acute disappointment of her kind and generous friends, almost intolerable. This had such complete possession of her mind that the incident of the morning had faded in comparison; the thing was a puzzle, it might be a danger, but it was not that which was almost choking her; it was not that which made her feel the house a prison, and the faces she loved terrible. That morning, Helen had resolved upon appealing to Jane, and as she walked through the plantation, breathing freely because she was alone, and might indulge in all the trouble of her mind, undisturbed by a solicitous look to cut her as if with a keen reproach, she tried to arrange the sentences in which she should tell her friend how all that had been done for her peace and protection had come to nought.

"What wonder," she said to herself bitterly, and with smarting tears rolling slowly over her cheeks, "if they think me an unlucky, uncanny creature; not fit to help myself, and marring every endeavour to help me! What wonder if they should blame me because he loves me, if they should think that I have forgotten the wretched truth, and led him into this great mistake, evil, and sorrow."

She had been so absorbed in her thoughts, she had so entirely yielded to the relief of solitude, that she had not heeded the slight rustling on the side of the plantation near the park fence, which had accompanied her own steps, and now, seeing a neatly trimmed log of timber by the inner side of the path a little ahead of her, she quickened her steps, and seating herself upon it, gave unrestrained way to her tears. Presently they were checked, her startled attention was attracted by a stir among the trees in front of her, and a little packet fell at her feet. She started up, and looked around her in some alarm, but there was no one in sight, and she picked up the missile. It was addressed, in pencil, to "Miss Rhodes," and the sight

of the handwriting made her feel deadly faint. She sat down again, from sheer inability to stand, and, trembling from head to foot, she broke the seal. Not a word was written on the paper, but it enclosed the Apollo pin! The pin which Frank Lisle had given her, and she had returned to him with the false wedding-ring, the lying symbol of their pretended marriage; the pin which she knew had been in his hands since then! In a moment she understood that this was an announcement of his presence, of his proximity; that the mystery of the visitor at Horndean, who was not the Frank Lisle of her own sad story, but bore his name, was about to be cleared up. By whom? Whose hand was it by which her false lover had sent her that token of her old servitude? The pretty delicate ornament lay in her lap and her eyes gazed at it as though it were some loathsome object; her head reeled, that terrible vertigo which had once or twice before come to her with a shock, seized hold upon her; she stretched her hands down at either side of her, and tried to clutch the rugged bark of the log on which she was sitting, while the scene grew dim and distant, and a black pall hung itself before her eyes. The agony of surprise and terror might have lasted an age, or an instant, she knew not; with a deep gasping sigh she tried to rise to her feet, and fly from the spot, but her knees refused to support her, and she sank down again on the log. Only a few moments of this seemingly endless suffering passed, when Helen, looking up in deadly fear, saw, as if through a mist, a man standing before her. The man was Frank Lisle!

She uttered a dreadful, low, gasping cry, and hid her face in her hands.

"Don't be frightened," he said, and he, too, was pale, and his voice was strange; "and pray let me speak to you. I must. It is absolutely necessary for us both that I should. There is nothing to fear. For Heaven's sake do not shake like that."

She put a strong constraint upon herself and forced her lips to form words.

"What do you want with me? Why do you come here?"

"I want nothing but your forgiveness. I come here because I am forced to do so; because the truth must be told between you and me; because you must be made aware of who I am."

"Who are you?"

"I am Fredrick Lorton Horndean."

She stared at him in blank terror and amazement; she uttered a faint sound, but

no articulate words ; once more the blackness came before her eyes, and she would have fallen to the ground but for his sustaining arm. He held her in no gentle clasp ; there was not the slightest suggestion of a caress in his touch ; it was merely the aid of strength to weakness ; and she rallied instantly, and shrank away from him with a movement which he did not attempt to contest.

"You are better now," he said, "and you will listen to me. It shall be for the last time. And you will believe what I say, I am sure, villain as you must hold me to be, and as I suppose I am. It was only last night that I learned, by a letter from Mrs. Stephenson, that you were living with Mrs. Masters at Chesney Manor. To-day, I came down to the church here, thinking that I might find some means of sending the token that would reveal my presence to you, and then write and entreat you to see me without any one's knowledge ; but the priest was there, and he saw me. I had to talk to him, and to give up that plan. There was nothing for it but to follow you, and risk it."

She was listening to him, but it was as if in a dream. The crowd of recollections was too great, its whirl was too bewildering ; her brain seemed to be burst and shattered by them ; she could only realise that this man was Frank, and that she was suffering horrible pain.

"I am here to tell you the truth, and first, that I did not desert you as you believed."

Ah, yes ; her mind was getting a little clearer. This was the man by whose false name she had been called ; for whose coming she had vainly watched and waited through all those dreadful weeks ; who had utterly wrecked her life. She made no attempt to speak, and she closed her eyes and covered them with her hands. Nevertheless he knew that she was listening to him.

"No, as Heaven is my witness, I did not. When I left you, I meant to return as I had promised and arranged ; but I was seized with sudden illness the next day, and for several weeks I was either unconscious or helpless, and nobody knew where I was. When I returned to Paris, you were gone to England, I was told ; at all events, you had placed yourself under the protection of your friends, and withdrawn yourself from mine. I don't excuse myself, I only explain. Circumstances hindered me from trying to get you back. It was better for us both."

"Did you mean to marry me when you returned to Paris ?"

He hesitated, and with his hesitation her emotion vanished. She was quite calm as she waited for his reply.

"I—I will go back to the beginning, and tell you the truth. The day I met you at the Louvre, when I put you into a carriage, you gave as your address my sister's house. She and I had quarrelled, and I knew nothing of her doings just then ; my curiosity was excited about her, my admiration was roused by you——" She shrank so plainly from these words that he hurriedly begged her pardon and continued : "I contrived to meet you again, and as I did not want my sister to find out anything about me, and did want to do her an ill turn, I called myself by my friend Lisle's name, and tried to win your confidence in a false character."

"And succeeded. It was not very brave ; I was only a girl, a miserable dependent in your sister's house."

"Don't think that I don't know how cowardly it was ; but the wretched little excuse there was to offer I could not make now without offending you. I was living very recklessly at that time, gambling, and drinking, and doing all the things for doing which my guardian, Mr. Horndean, had so severely condemned me, and which were very likely to cost me the inheritance that he had promised me. There was just one thing which would have made my loss of it quite certain—a marriage unapproved by Mr. Horndean. That was the risk I could not incur, the penalty I could not face ; in that you have the explanation of my conduct to you, execrable, I admit. It was not a deliberate plot ; that is all I have to say for myself. When I left you at Neuilly to go to England, I was in hopes that the old man was dying, and that all would be safe. Had I reached England then, and had he died, I would have returned and made you my wife."

Mr. Horndean believed what he said. Needless to add that Helen believed it. But, while the assertion gave him a sensation of comfortable self-approval, it merely awoke in her the heartfelt sentiment : "Thank God for all that has happened, because it was not that."

"I need not repeat what did occur. Before Mr. Horndean died, you were gone, and then, I confess, I saw the extreme folly of what I had done, and I was glad, very glad, you had found honourable protection. We had both escaped a very great evil."

It had never, perhaps, befallen Frederick Lorton in his life before to have to say

anything so difficult of utterance as those latter sentences ; the meanness, the cruelty, and the falsehood they revealed were as evident to himself as to the girl who listened to him. But that girl was no longer the weak and childish creature whom he had deceived so easily. Nobler associations, and the forcing school of suffering had instructed her. She raised her head with supreme dignity, and said in a tone of cool command :

“ Pass on from that part of your explanation, if you please.”

He gave her a startled look, but he obeyed her.

“ Your letter convinced me that the best safety for both of us was in leaving things as they were. I was summoned to England. Mr. Horndean was dead ; by the terms of his will I should have been disinherited if I had been a married man at the time of his death. And now, I have indeed to crave your pardon ; for I know I ought to have sought you out when I became my own master, and made you my wife, but——”

She calmly interrupted him.

“ You had ceased to wish to do so, Mr. Horndean. I have at least reason to be grateful to you that you did not inflict that worst of injuries upon me. You need tell me no more ; I know that you are about to marry Miss Chevenix, whom I have seen, and all the consequences to me of that marriage are clearly before my mind.”

“ To you ! Surely it is impossible that you——” He hesitated, the strife of his contending passions was great.

“ You would say that I have no part in the matter—that it is impossible I should love you still. You are right, that is quite impossible ; that, with all its suffering, has long been over. And I forgive you, quite fully, and freely ; you will be a very happy man if my wishes can avail. But there are consequences to me. I cannot remain here. I can neither reveal your secret, nor carry on false pretences to my friends. Miss Chevenix and Mrs. Townley Gore must soon learn that I am here ; and besides—don't mistake me—this must be the last meeting between you and me.”

He was ashamed of himself—he was sorry for what he had done—he would have given a good deal of money never to have seen the face of Helen Rhodes, but a great irrepresible joy was awakened

in him by her words. She had said in a few words all that he had been laboriously planning how to say in many. The importance to him of secrecy, which he was at a loss how to insinuate without insult to her, had been perceived by her unassisted intelligence. He was saved, free, relieved from all dread of his beautiful Beatrix's jealousy, anger, or suspicion ; the haunting ghosts of the last night were laid.

And Helen ? What of her ? Only the old question, What was to become of her ? He said something of her future being his care, but she put it aside with indifference that was hardly even disdainful, and simply reiterating her assurance that he was forgiven, and that she would have left Chesney Manor before he brought his bride to Horndean, she begged him to leave her.

“ I must have a little time to recover myself,” she said, “ and I shall be missed at the house. Good-bye, Mr. Horndean.”

Even to his perception, so dimmed by vice, so dulled by selfishness, the nobility of the girl was striking. He felt something as near to reverence as he was capable of feeling, as he bowed low and turned away into the plantation. There was one point of resemblance in the respective states of mind of Helen and himself ; it was the impossibility that both felt of realising their former relation to each other. Between Frederick Lorton and the pure, gentle, lovely image of the girl whom he had loved and left so lightly, there interposed itself the splendid picture of Beatrix, the grand passion of his hitherto wasted life. Did anything come between her and the image of her false lost lover, as he was when Helen had loved and believed in him, to blur and confuse it in her mind's eye as she sat for a while where he had left her, trying to think, but fast losing the coherence and resolution which had come to her aid while he was there, and with a terrible consciousness of physical illness stealing over her ?

If there was any such thing, Helen did not know it.

When she reached the house she was surprised to find Mrs. Masters in the hall, and on the look-out for her.

A glance at her showed Helen that something unusual had happened.

“ A charming surprise for you,” said Mrs. Masters, taking her arm and giving it a warning squeeze. “ Jane Merrick is here !”

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER VII. NO BETTER THAN A WOMAN.

"If this is some trick of the admiral's," was Doyle's second thought about the letter, "to try to get more money than he bargained for out of a weak girl, I must show him that his fool half is bigger than his knave half after all." But second thoughts are notoriously those which men use to blind themselves to yet more unpleasant ones, and Mrs. Hassock's hints had troubled him in a way he was ashamed to own. He did not really think that the letter had come from the admiral. He had certainly seen nothing about Phoebe that looked either sly or flighty; but then, when he came to think of it, what had he seen about her at all? As much as she had seen about him. He had never had reason to believe in girls. Why should he believe in her, without any reason at all? He felt like a member of the Charity Organisation Society who has thrown half-a-crown to a chance beggar.

Like a sensible man, however, he knocked his worry about a strange girl on the head as hard as he could, and ate his lunch before he spoke to her. Moreover, he gave her every chance of eating hers, and, not being a Mrs. Hassock, did not notice that she looked flushed and lunched entirely on a tumbler of water. But he lost no time over the meal. It was still Phoebe who was afraid of him, and not he of Phoebe.

"You had a letter to-day," said he. "Who was it from?"

Then Phoebe, taken by surprise, suddenly turned as hot as fire, and blushed so crimson that even he could see.

"I ask you," said he, with an answering frown, "because, if it is from the ad—any of the Nelsons, I have a right to know if there has been any breach of our bargain. You know what it was—he sold his right to see you, or speak or write to you, or have any communication with you of any kind. And I distinctly understood that you had no other friends. Who was it from?"

He did not mean in the least to speak severely, or to put on any tyrant's airs. But he was as anxious and as uncomfortable as if Phoebe had really been his daughter, and he was doubly troubled by an anxiety that he himself could not understand—he did not feel merely like a man whose only trouble is a chivalrous responsibility for a girl who has to look to him as her only friend and champion. It was as if he were personally and in his own rights aggrieved. So he seemed—so Phoebe thought—as if he knew more than he pretended about her letter, and was making tyrannical use of parental authority. She had read of the sacred rights of correspondence, and had never known a man who was above a stratagem—except Phil. Except him, she had never known a gentleman in her life; and she had never known a lady at all.

For everything she had been prepared but for the plain question, "You have a letter. Who is it from?" He waited for her answer, but none came. It seemed to him as if she were hanging her head in a sort of obstinate shame.

"Phoebe," said he, with weight in every word, "when I claimed you as my daughter I made a resolve—to trust you, through and through. It was an experiment—but worth trying. People don't hide things unless

they're wrong." And he was not more wrong than everybody who talks of people as if all the world were one man, and that man, he. "You dare not tell me who has written you a letter that, if there is no harm, I may see, and if there is harm, I ought to see?" Mrs. Hassock was right—her master did not know much about girls.

But what magic is there in the word "Dare?"

She looked up, and straight. "It is from Count Stanislas Adrianski," said she.

"And who the dev— Who on earth is Count Stanislas Adrianski?" exclaimed Doyle. But he was half relieved, for he had begun to fear that she might be going to tell him a lie, just as if she had been brought up all her life among women.

All Phoebe's plans, and dreams, and visions felt confounded and overthrown. She was afraid of her father, and had done that terrible thing—she had dragged out into daylight the name of a secret dream. But how was the chosen of a hero, who knew how to love to the point of murder and suicide, to fail in courage for his sake when she was dared? That would have been the very shame of shames. Well—the deed was done now; and she was bound, for honour's sake, to love and be faithful to Stanislas, even if she had not hitherto been unable to let him drop out of her mind. If he had been but a barber's block, it was all the same. She would otherwise be no better than an anonymous Second Lady.

"Who on earth is Count Stanislas Adrianski?" asked her father again.

"He is a patriot—a nobleman—a Pole," began Phoebe, doing her best with a part which she had been allowed no time to study, and trying to put fitting warmth into her words.

"Patriot—nobleman—Pole! and shabby," he went on, quoting Mrs. Hassock's description, "and with long hair. I know—I know. Well?"

"Yes," said Phoebe, "he wears his hair long. And patriots cannot afford fine clothes."

It was almost the first time he had heard what might pass for a reflection from her. To say anything of the sort was so unlike Phoebe that he could not help glancing at her sharply, as if to see what her eyes rather than her lips were saying. But her eyes, as usual, were mysteriously dumb. "Yes," he said, in almost a growl, "when they can afford fine clothes, there's no more need for patriotism—whatever that may be. You're right there. And how long

have you known this patriot, nobleman, and Pole?"

"I have known him long enough," said Phoebe, finding the right words at last, "to know that he is a true hero; greater than if he was as rich—as rich—as we." She sighed. Riches are a curse, according to the heroic creed.

"There is one thing I will not stand—I will have no quotations from that Haunted Grange. The author should have been hanged in the first chapter—and I don't know that he'd have come to the worst end for him, after all. I don't want to know that you've known him long enough. I want to know how many weeks—days—hours."

"For a long time," said Phoebe. "He lived next door to us—at home."

"A friend of the ad— of the Nelsons? I see. To communicate with you by deputy was not in the letter of the bargain. It is not a bad notion—for a knave."

Then Phoebe fired up with real warmth—this was not merely poetical injustice, but real. "He was no friend of fa— of my friends; I don't suppose he had ever spoken them a word. He was my friend."

"And where used you to meet him, then?"

"I used to be sometimes in our garden—and—"

"And your—friends knew nothing of your acquaintance with this nobleman?"

"No."

"Is this the first letter he has written to you?"

"Yes."

"And you have never seen him since you have been with me?"

"No," she said, crumbling up the remains of her bread, and in a nervous manner that made her seem sullen. Doyle could not bring himself to demand to see the letter—indeed, he hardly knew if the just rights of a father extended so far, and, if they did, it could only be in the case of a real father, and not of a sham one. "That is," she added, suddenly and quickly, "once—"

"You have seen him then? Since you have been with me? Where?"

"At the play—at Olga."

"You should not have said 'No,' even at first, Phoebe. Did he know you were going there?"

"He no more thought to see me than I thought to see him! He did not even speak to me—not even when you wounded his pride by throwing him money for opening

the cab-door. He was in the orchestra, playing one of the violins—at least a sort of violin. I suppose he has to earn his bread while he is waiting——”

“Count, Pole, patriot, fiddler! Yes; I have some hazy remembrance of giving a penny to a fellow with a patched head, at the theatre doors. So that was Count Stanislas Adrianski. Now I want you to understand me, Phœbe. I am older than you, and I don't need to see your letter to know what it means when a foreign count who has to fiddle for a living writes secret letters to a girl who, as you say, appears to be a rich one. I don't need magic to guess that there is a post-script asking for a small loan—Holloa!”

His exclamation was brought out by a sudden change—volcanic is the only word for it—that came over Phœbe. Something like a real woman seemed to take fire in her at last, and to show itself in eyes that for once looked living flame. Instead of flushing, she turned pale.

“There, then!” she exclaimed. “Read his letter, and see what he says to me!”

“‘Angle’—‘Ancle’—‘Angel.’ What's this?” He read the letter through, without another word. “Infernal rant! He deserves a horse-whip—and I expect it wouldn't be a new feeling. Well, after this precious stuff, there's one good thing left. You know what to think of your Polish count now. A hero indeed, to threaten and bully a girl. He's like a thing out of a French novel. Of course you won't answer him, Phœbe. Leave him to me.”

“Oh, father! you don't understand! I must answer him. I am ashamed of myself——”

“I'm glad of that—for I must say you ought to be, of such a friend. But——”

“I am ashamed of myself—for having been false, and forgetful, and——and—— But that's over now. He is not like other men. No, I can't, because things are changed with me, give up a man because he happens to be friendless, and unfortunate, and poor. That would be shame! Papa——”

“Well?”

“I have promised to be the wife of Stanislas Adrianski.”

“The wife of the fiddler who wrote that letter! You?”

But he was not amazed. A knife seemed to go to his heart; but only because, as he bitterly told himself, nothing was more natural; he ought to have foreseen something of the sort long ago. Girls will be girls—credulous, stubborn, sly. Mrs.

Hassock had been right after all. It was as if a last illusion had gone. But he had made himself responsible for her life; and, worthy or unworthy, from this pitfall she must be saved. For he was shrewd enough to have formed a very clear idea as to what sort of creature this Adrianski would prove to be.

“Phœbe,” he said, very gravely and sorrowfully, but much less unkindly, “I suppose you would tell me that if a father has nothing to do with the growth of his daughter, he must take all he finds. And as you don't see for yourself what sort of a fellow this is, I suppose I might as well tell what he is to the winds. But all this is nonsense, all the same. I don't want to see the fellow. I'll write him a line from myself, to say that he is welcome to your hand if he likes to take you without a penny. And then—exit Count Adrianski.”

She looked round for a moment at her new home and the comforts that had become a second life to her, and then back, with a shudder, at the sordid and slipshod years that she had left behind her. She was not one of those heroines of high life who do not know what poverty and struggle really mean, and so choose them eagerly, and without even the sense of sacrifice. Nor did the companionship of Stanislas in her poverty appear the all-sufficient consolation that she knew it ought to be. But it was too late for such thoughts now. Here were the heroine, the lover, the tyrant father. To withdraw, or even to palter with the obvious demands of dramatic honour, would be degradation, and loss of self-respect for ever. Stanislas must be a hero; she must love him; she must treat her father like her enemy. In effect, though she wished in her heart of hearts that Stanislas had never reappeared, though she knew, in the same way, that her father was no enemy, and though she was more than half frightened, she was called upon to rebel.

“He would know how to answer that!” said she. “And—and—I love him—passionately, of course; and of course I would follow him, poor as he is, to the end of the world.”

Doyle should have known that girls who have the ghost of a notion of what love and passion mean do not find their names so ready to their tongues, or talk about following men to the end of the world. He might have read the wholeness of her heart in the very turn of the phrase. But he was much too nearly cut to the quick of his own heart to judge fairly. So here

was the end of the girl whom he meant to remain as he thought he had found her—not much of a companion, and with not many thoughts or ideas, but honest, modest, and pure. He thought he began to guess what was meant by the unfathomable depths of her eyes, by her silence, and want of interest in outer things. She was only too real a woman after all. Whether he liked her the worse for that, in his heart, who can tell? But that he was bitterly disappointed by the discovery he honestly believed. "She is in love with the black-guard," he thought with an inward groan. "And she's capable of going off with him, as penniless as she came to me, if I say another word. And 'set a thousand guards upon her, love will find out the way.' Stella all over again! Know one, know all!"

They were still sitting opposite one another in silence at the table, when the servant brought in a card, and gave it to Doyle. And he read thereon, "Sir Charles Bassett, Bart., Cautleigh Hall."

Doyle went into the drawing-room too full of his scene with Phoebe to wonder what so unlooked-for and so unwelcome a visit might mean. But the baronet, unaffected by so stiff and cold a reception on the part of his old friend, came forward with a hearty smile and held out his hand warmly.

"So you are Jack Doyle!" said he. "I heard of my son's meeting you by chance; and I was down in my own country—but here I am! Why, we all thought you dead, and here you are what was never foretold of you—a Nabob; but no less the old Jack Doyle. Why didn't you drop me a line? Or have you turned proud? You used not to be the man to forget an old friend. If I hadn't the misfortune to be a widower, I'd have brought Lady Bassett to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Doyle. But——"

"There is no Mrs. Doyle," said he shortly. Oddly enough, now that the two had met, they were recovering the airs of the Charley Bassett and the Jack Doyle of old. And yet neither in the one case nor in the other did the note ring wholly true.

"I'm sorry, old fellow. Of Miss Doyle, then. Before we say anything more will you dine with me at the club at seven? I'll get Urquhart to meet us, and my son. I wish I could ask Miss Doyle; but we might manage to include her in something else another time."

Doyle had already prejudiced himself

against his old friend, and there was something in Bassett's manner which prevented even old associations from turning prejudice into liking. Was he not the man who, with all his airs of bonhomie, and in spite of all his brag and his wealth, had left Phoebe to grow up into what she had grown?

"Thank you," he said, "I never dine from home. India and age have given me whims, and the right to indulge them——"

"And to be a bigger bear than ever," said Sir Charles with a smile. But it was the most outward of smiles. Why should plain Jack Doyle behave in this more than bearish fashion to an old friend who had never done him wrong? But if he were Rayner Bassett, then the motive of his behaviour was only too clear. One does not dine with a man whom one is about to rob of his last penny; at least unless he were less of a gentleman than the very worst of the Bassetts could be suspected of trying to be. "Then when I'm next in town, the mountain must come to Mahomet—I must dine with you. Is Miss Doyle at home? And would she mind my having one glimpse of Jack Doyle's daughter before I take my leave?"

"I'm afraid she has a bad headache," said Doyle with an inconsistent, almost repentant desire to treat Phoebe gently now that she was not present to enrage him with her newly-discovered perversities.

This time Sir Charles meant to smile, but it was with his lips only, while his eyes frowned. "Ah, this trying weather, I suppose," said he. "When do you think of leaving town? And where shall you go?"

"Probably nowhere," said Doyle. "Why should anyone leave home who is not obliged?"

"Why not? Besides, London is never home. If Miss Doyle has headaches, she has all the more need to go away now and then. I have it," he said, by way of a new test. "I am going to have a rather full house at Christmas. Suppose you and Miss Doyle come down for as long as you like and can, and make it fuller still. An English country house would be a new experience to our young Indian, I suppose?"

"Impossible," said Doyle; "quite impossible. I am a business man——"

"And so am I. But I'm not too busy to remember my friends. Well, if you can't, you can't, I suppose, unless you can manage to change your mind. But, if you can't, surely Miss Doyle can? Pray, old fellow, just for the sake of old times, don't

make me feel ashamed. Not to have either of you in my house, after a lifetime! You ought to have come to me at once. But better late than never. Come now. Why, Doyle, if I had visited India—I or my son—while you had been living there, I should have stayed there, or made him stay there, half the time. Would you have allowed us to go elsewhere?"

Doyle would have refused the offer to make one of a strange company in a country house, had Sir Charles Bassett been really the Charley of old; but a sudden thought flashed into his mind.

He had been more impressed by Mrs. Hassock's words of wisdom than he knew. What wonder was it that a girl, ill brought up, or ill grown up, with neither work nor pleasure to occupy her, should take to poison for want of other food? She had owned—as he remembered now—to having let Stanislas pass out of her life until she had seen him by chance and received his letter. Of course; it was just like every woman—out of sight, out of mind. He felt that he was understanding her better and better every hour. A few weeks in Lincolnshire, amid wholly new scenes, would soon blot out every remembrance of her native London, of the Nelsons, and of Stanislas Adrianski. She would run no risk of meeting with a soul who knew her, and the county ladies were less likely to harm her morals, it seemed, than solitude. Open attack is better than a secret mine. To accept this invitation could do no harm; to reject it might be a golden opportunity for a change of life thrown away. Of course it would be easy to him, if not a downright relief, to part from a girl who had hitherto been so little of a companion. And besides, thought he, Bassett would have a right to her company if he pleased, and if he knew—according to the bond.

"You are right, Bassett," he said more cordially, "and it is kind and friendly of you towards my girl. Things are dull for her here, I'm very much afraid. I can't come myself, but as to her—will you let me think it over, and write in a day or two? It is something of a step, for a girl——"

"Out of her shell? Yes, and the sooner she makes it the better. There'll be other ladies, and we'll show her that India isn't the best country in the world, after all. This is Monday—let me hear by Wednesday," said he, "and let it be yes. Nothing else will do. Or, stay; Mrs. Urquhart is coming down on Thursday. Let her be chaperon . . . I wonder what this move

means," thought he as he took his leave. "It's what I expected—but not quite in the same way. But whether better or worse, I'm hanged if I know. But one thing is certain—Ralph's son unborn shall be Sir Charles Bassett of Cautleigh Hall, without having so much as a shadow to fear."

"Phoebe," said Doyle, remembering that Friday was the day fixed by Stanislas for their rendezvous, "you will, on Thursday, start on a visit, without me, to Sir Charles Bassett, at Cautleigh Hall, in Lincolnshire. I don't know how long you may stay. It will be good and pleasant for you. You will easily get all you want in two days—and you had better take Mrs. Hassock, I suppose. Sir Charles suggested your going with another lady, but I would rather have things my way."

So Phoebe thought; and she knew as well as he why she was being sent away. It made her all the more bound to loyalty, and to meet her plighted lover in spite of all the powers on earth or elsewhere.

And so that evening they sat as wide apart as two people can be. He was the domestic tyrant, she the girl who has to be crushed out of a maze of folly with a strong hand.

"He is a—father!" thought Jack Doyle's daughter.

"She is no better than a—woman," sighed Jack Doyle.

PATRICK'S SUNDAY OUT.

IT is Sunday afternoon, a drowsy lethargy is stealing over the senses. All the world has taken its early dinner; all the world feels less and less inclined to turn out, as the day, never very bright, grows dull and yellow by degrees. A double-shotted knock at the door is startling under such circumstances, for surely the only people abroad to-day are those who have business in the way of Sunday-schools or religious meetings, or pleasure in the form of your Sunday out and a sweetheart to meet you. The visitor turns out to be Bob, the Irish cousin, a youth of erratic tendencies and rather of the stormy petrel order, making his appearance in domestic circles chiefly in troubled times, say of weddings or funerals. And his visit at such an hour causes the more surprise as it is due to Robert to say that, forgetful in many things, he generally bears in mind the accustomed meal-times of his friends and relations.

To-day, however, Bob's mind is not running on the commissariat. He declines refreshment altogether on the ground that he must keep his brain clear for the meeting. What! is Bob among the prophets? Hardly so yet; it is the Irish meeting, he means, the demonstration that is coming off this afternoon in Hyde Park. Bob carries a neat little oak sapling under his arm, and his only difficulty is that, "if there did be a row," he will hardly know for which side to flourish his stick. It would be for Ould Ireland, sure enough, although he did not hold with the people who would take the bread out of the mouth of his family.

Robert, by the way, is a thirteenth son, nothing like so lucky as a seventh, and his father before him laboured under the same disadvantage; so that as the Boyles of Ballifoyle have always been a wonderfully prolific race, poor Bob is at present about the hundred and fifty-fifth in line of succession to the family estate, while every revolving year pushes him further away. Bob may, therefore, watch the progress of the Land Act without any burning sense of personal wrong. His sympathies are concerned rather than his interests. Had Master Robert been a little more up in Spenser and Chaucer he would now be reading Bell's Life in barracks as a subaltern bold in the British army. If, during the heat of an examination, he had limited the supply of Y's in "mallady," Bob might at this day be sitting out a shower of stones in his native land as a lieutenant of police. While now, sure his cousin Jack Boyle, of the Inishowen Gazette, has written to him to send an account of the demonstration, a glowing, a patriotic description with plenty of big letters and burning words; two columns of it, at a guinea a col. "An' what will I do?" asks Bob. Why, as the Government won't give him two guineas to write the other way, clearly take the chance that offers. Well, that was what he had made up his mind to do, and has slept not a wink in the night for thinking of it; but never a word can he find to say. But then, it is suggested for his comfort, that the meeting is still to come, and he can't be expected, as yet, to write his graphic description beforehand; that only comes with practice and long experience. But Robert is not to be comforted in that way. It will be just the same, he feels, when the business is over. Two lines would hold all that he will have to say about it, and he has counted the words in a column of

the newspaper, and two columns would be just three thousand words. And three thousand words when he could put the whole business into thirty. But, as Bob modestly remarks, two heads are better than one, and, perhaps, with somebody to give him a start, he would warm to his work as he went on.

But time is getting on, and if Bob means to make anything of his "special," we must start. The Inishowen Gazette does not pay expenses, and so we don't hail a hansom at the corner, but step out sturdily towards the Park. Something in the air seems to presage that this is going to be a big thing.

Even in Shepherd's Bush there begins an intermittent stream of people, their faces set in the same direction. Every big shop contributes its quota of young fellows, each side street brings its man. The corner men have taken to the open, and as the public-houses begin to close for the afternoon, their customers too seem to feel the influence of the current, and drift away with us. Where the road narrows by Notting Hill Gate, tramp, tramp, tramp, we hear the echoing footsteps all marching one way. Bayswater sees us in serried columns, and we pour into Kensington Gardens in one continued stream. Nursemaids with perambulators, entangled in the torrent, scramble out as best they can; soon all the colour—smart bonnets and bright baby's cloaks—is squeezed out of us, and we trail along a dark and gloomy-looking crowd. About us lie fallen giants of trees uprooted by the late storm, their roots sticking up like the feet of the slain; but for the railings and the trim gravel paths, we might be wandering through some forest with mysterious glades that lose themselves in the yellow haze. Here and there, a few denizens of the neighbourhood eye us with curiosity quite unmixed with approval: an old lady with her poodle, an artist hurrying across to visit friendly studios, or a vieille moustache with varnished boots, who measures us with a somewhat professional eye. But if we are dark and portentous in the mass, individually that is not by any means our complexion. The talk is light and cheerful as was Christian's when he walked with Hopeful, but certainly not about such high matters; nothing about Ireland, nor coercion, nor Parnell, but just the vastly more interesting matters of our daily lives; the crushing, but, perhaps, imaginary repartee we delivered to the old

man when he jawed us for being late at the shop, the trifling indiscretion of over-night in the way of four-ale. Stay, there is one enthusiast, an old gentleman with waving grey hair, his trousers tucked up, and his side-spring boots making great play upon the track. He hasn't missed a manifestation for half a century, and he sniffs the breeze like an old war-horse as he declares that this promises to be one of the most remarkable of the lot. "Not even the Garibaldi one—or let's see, was it Garibaldi?" and with that his piping voice is lost in the distance.

There is a good deal of the wild heath about the appearance of Hyde Park this afternoon. The horizon lost in mist, with ancient stag-headed trees rising black against the murky light, and everywhere dark columns of men tramping along to lose themselves in the gathered masses. Then there is a gleam through the trees—it might be the sea that we are coming to; it is only the Serpentine, but the haze suggests illimitable distance. Only now we can make out dark figures on the opposite side. The terrace at the end, where the river loses itself in a drain-pipe, and where there is an open space that affords a little vantage-ground to spectators, is crowded by a dense mass of people who have taken up positions in good time; but here along the drive the crowd is not so thick. People circulate freely, attracted into masses only when something is going on.

Here is the opportunity of the street-boy, and for a little while an urchin of tender years, his features concealed by a comic mask, entertains a gathering of some thousands of spectators. He has climbed upon a deserted band-stand and mounted upon a chair. He rehearses pantomimically the gestures of a popular speaker. He folds his ragged jacket about him with dignity; he smites his breast; he wags his arms; his audience is convulsed, especially when he feigns a slip from the tribune and falls deftly flat on his back on the platform. But still more delightful is the unrehearsed effect that follows when a policeman's helmet is visible making its way through the crowd, and the boy darts helter-skelter from his eminence, and with a clump of other boys, skirls away into obscurity. Everybody laughs over this little incident with intense enjoyment. It is so rare to come across anything laughable on a Sunday afternoon. Do we take our pleasures sadly? I don't think we should if we had

any pleasures to take. There is a capacity for enjoyment about this English crowd that is vastly encouraging. Even the heavy-armed policeman sees the humour of the situation, and smiles in acknowledgment of the applause that greets him. The only serious face is Bob's—poor Bob, with the pressure of two columns of printed matter on his brain. "Would I make a point of that for Jack Boyle, now?" he whispers uneasily. "Police interference; disturbance caused by Gladstone's myrmidons, eh?"

But what an audience is waiting here for anybody who may want one! From the vantage-ground of an old chair, a wave of the arms would bring a thousand people about you, and people who would listen, too, if you had anything to say, either funny or spiteful. But not in the way of preaching. At the first sign of "earnestness" the crowd disperses. Even the evangelist who cultivates the appearance of an American desperado is speedily detected and abandoned by his audience.

So far the play has gone on merrily; only, where is our Hamlet? We are all here but the Irish, for, excepting my companion Bob, and an old applewoman who was wandering about bewildered with excitement and asking, "Where are me countrymen?"—with these exceptions, not an unmistakably Irish face have I seen. But here are three of them at last, decent-looking bodies of the Roman broken-nosed variety, with the vividest of green sprigs on two manly breasts and one womanly ditto. Not the poor old shamrock—that seems to have been discarded by the patriots of the day, possibly as associated too closely in past times with the English rose. It is not the rose, they may say, but has been near it. Well, this worthy couple and their friend, who might just have been dropped down here from Shannon's shore, are rather bashful over their green emblems, but stick to them bravely, taking in good part the unceasing chaff of passers-by. But soon they may hold up their heads, for the cry is raised, "They are coming"—meaning the Irish—and the distant rub-a-dub of a drum can faintly be heard. And so we draw ourselves up in line along the rails to wait for the procession. But, as their chariot-wheels still tarry, we while away the time with such small diversions as offer—'Arry's hat propelled here and there with sticks, as in the game of Les Graces; the mock procession of the street-boys adorned with green leaves.

The aspect of things at this moment is strange and stirring. Looking towards Hyde Park Corner, under the trees, not yet leafless, but thinned by autumn gusts, the fallen leaves seemed to have turned to men, while in the open space by the entrance has gathered a dense crowd—to us partly lost in haze—a crowd that, with a constant movement of its particles, appears to bubble and thrill like some volcanic crater charged almost to overflow. And just now there is a sudden ebullition, and something slops over from the crater, and rolls down the track towards us. In a moment the lines of spectators thicken. Is it the head of the procession? No, it is a pony-cart full of people, with a score or so more hanging on to the sides. The crowd rather resents the unpretentious nature of this beginning; but still it is a beginning, for some long deal staves sticking out of the pony-cart are clearly to mark so many points in the coming demonstration. And now a horseman is seen cantering up the drive. "Here's the 'ead of 'em all," is now the cry—"ere's the field-marshal!" But the field-marshal turns out to be a fresh-coloured young man, on a tall bony chestnut, who is evidently taken unawares by the crowd, and whose one desire seems to be to get out of it as soon as possible. But up that way the crowd is too thick to get through, and presently the youth comes flying back like Johnny Gilpin, his horse at the bolt, while the people rise at him as he passes, and the boys throw their caps or anything else that comes to hand at horse and rider. Verily a crowd is cruel. If that young fellow were thrown and broke his neck, I believe that the catastrophe would be hailed with a general roar of delight.

For some time now the crater has been almost at rest, but then a most violent paroxysm seizes it, and a banner is seen over the heads of the crowd—a banner that wavers to and fro, and seems to make no progress. There is a cry, indeed, that the procession is going the other way, and at that ensues a general stampe of spectators, who presently come running back again. For the banner has straightened itself up; a brass band bursts forth into gruff music, and the procession rolls forward.

If there were any misgivings as to the reception that Patrick might get in the park, those misgivings are soon dissipated. There is no antipathy to the poor boy, that is evident, neither is there much affec-

tion for him. The crowd takes a chaffy, cheerful attitude, devoid alike of rancour or enthusiasm. And, for his part, Pat trudges along, looking neither to the right nor the left. Ah! the stout boys of other days, where are they? the strapping fellows from dock or riverside, the sturdy navvy and the man who bore the hod. The land knows them no more, and in their stead we have these lean and hungry-looking folk. Patrick is thin and weak, undersized, and certainly not handsome; downcast, depressed, and yet with lines about the mouth and chin that speak of a stiff unyielding obstinacy. On they march, four abreast, in some loose kind of order, each division headed by its artillery, in the way of a wagonette-load of orators, banners in front, and the music, the men weary with their long tramp from Poplar or Bermondsey. There are women, too, who have left their wash-tubs and their ironing-boards to step out for Ould Ireland, here along the avenue, where a few short weeks ago the rank, and wealth, and beauty of Old England lolled in its carriages, or lounged upon the turf. And our army has its commissariat in the shape of old women with sweetstuffs and apples; its camp-followers too, girls whose hearts seem to be as light as their characters. Moll from Wapping and Sue from Shadwell, and contadinas bred and born in Whitechapel, brighten up the sombre scene with their gay scarves, and freely exchange badinage in the limited but forcible vocabulary of the people. A regular March to Finchley, if there were only some Hogarth here to fix the varying humour of the scene.

Clearly Bob is a good deal moved at the sight of his countrymen thus tramping along, thousand after thousand. To him the music speaks in a voice I cannot hear; the silken banners show a sight I cannot see.

The harp of Erin is unstrung; this is what I gather from the silken pictures as they file past; and Erin herself sits lonely among the mountains watching for the rising of the sun of freedom. She, only wants her own—Ireland for the Irish. Exactly, and why not Wales for the Welsh, Mona for the Manicheans, and Shetland for the hardy Shetlanders? This I suggest playfully to Bob, but he pooch-poochs the suggestion. His eyes are dilated, his cheek flushed. "They're me countrymen," he mutters between his teeth. And the "Land League of Poplar," forsooth! How much land do your countrymen occupy

about Poplar, Bob? And "No evictions! No rack rents!" It would be more sensible to cry: "No overcrowding! No fever-dens! No slums!" What interest can these other poor fellows have in the land except in the trifle that may stick to their spades? But Bob is deaf to all these remarks, he is borne away by the sympathy excited by the moving crowds—these exiles and strangers who weep by the muddy waters of Thames. And by-and-by, as a detachment tramps past sturdier and more light-hearted than the rest, and the braying of the band in front of them ceases, and the men break into song—The Wearing of the Green, a trivial but taking tune—presto! Bob has disappeared. "I'm with the boys," he cried, and vaulted over the rails, and when next I see him he is sharing a sprig of brightest verdure with some conspirator in a green scarf, and marching away with the rest.

For a good hour the procession marches past, still with banners varying from silken tapestry to calico and green paper. Only one is at all of a truculent nature, and that belongs to some English club—a club that threatens death to tyrants, but that has, perhaps, not gone far in the slaughter of them as yet. And when the ear is wearied with The Wearing of the Green, the drums and fifes are ready with Rory O'More, and after that we are reminded how dark was the hour When to Eveleen's Bower.

And, indeed, the hour is already darkening, when, with a gasp or two of belated banners and stray pilgrims, the procession dies away, and the spectators close up and follow the tail of the demonstration to its rendezvous on the banks of the Serpentine. Here the speakers are already at work, each from his wagonette. There are six fountains of eloquence in full play, and each of the tribunes is surrounded by a dense mass of sympathisers. Every sentence brings a cheer, in which the next sentence is drowned—metaphors naturally get a little mixed when the subject is an Irish demonstration—but now and then a word reaches the outer circle of listeners, and nine cases out of ten that word is "Gladstoan," pronounced in a rancorous manner, that leads one to think that in the centre of that sympathising circle some one of that name is, as a neighbour observes, "getting it 'ot." But there will be no wigs on the green after all; the crowd that surrounds and far outnumber the demonstrators is good-humoured and pacific. You

might raise a cheer among them for a popular music-hall vocalist, but I doubt whether it would be possible to get one for the most distinguished performer in the halls of Westminster. And thus the enormous crowd of onlookers is not attracted powerfully to any particular centre, but circulates freely all along the line. Here and there a thin line of roughs cut their way headlong through the mass, but fail to create any disorder. And, indeed, to-day the roughs seem overpowered and cowed by the multitudes of decently dressed and orderly people who surround them. It would not be difficult, one would think, to lynch a rough or two in the present attitude of men's minds towards the fraternity, and, perhaps, the vagabonds realise the possibility and keep themselves quiet.

The shades of evening are coming on, and the sky seems to close in upon and surround the gathered multitudes, but with a last effort the sun, sending a sort of yellow glow through the haze, throws a solemn light upon everything; on the listening devotees, on the trees with strange black figures of men perched among their branches, on myriads of white faces interested and expectant. It strikes one with wonder, almost with awe, so weird and solemn is the scene. And with this last grand effect the whole business seems to culminate. For by this time the speeches have been made, the resolutions have been passed, and the only question now is, how to get out of the park as quickly as possible. The gas-lamps now are twinkling through the trees, and along the lines of the massive buildings which border the park. And so we flow out, a mighty stream of people, into Piccadilly, already pretty well crowded; with cabs and omnibuses passing slowly along and picking up stragglers here and there. But I don't think that Pat will take a hansom back to Poplar, but will trudge patiently along the weary miles—palaces at one end and hovels at the other. And let us hope that Biddy will have a bit of supper ready for him, and that both he and she will abstain from too plenteous a toasting of the "wearers of the green."

As for Bob, I haven't seen a feather of him, since he boldly leaped the Rubicon and abandoned Ballifoye and its interests for the pleasures and perils of patriotism. But I have just received a copy of the Inishowen Gazette, with two columns and a little over, of a glowing description from Our Special Correspondent of the gathering of that Sunday. Bob must have seen a

great deal more than I did, for I read: "The ribald English mob was scattered like chaff by the serried ranks of the gallant sons of Erin." And again: "The police made a desperate attempt to reach the speaker, whose fiery denunciations must have withered the souls of the myrmidons of Gladstone; but their attacks were like the spray that dashes against the rock."

Now a man who can reach these heights at a first attempt, will surely travel far before he reaches the end of his journey.

OUR POULTRY SUPPLY.

"HAVE you no cocks and hens in England," French people often ask me, "that you are obliged to import eggs by millions, not to mention chickens in summer, turkeys in winter, and old hens for the soup-pot all the year round—and that into London alone? Don't people keep fowls in England?"

"You forget," I answer, "that London alone has four millions of inhabitants at the lowest figure, and that there are mouths and stomachs requiring to be fed in other parts of the land—indeed, throughout it. For each inhabitant of London to be able to eat an egg only once a week for his Sunday's breakfast, just reckon how many millions of eggs per annum that would require. And we can't keep cocks and hens in London, except as you keep canary birds; that is, for the sake of their prettiness and for their song. But it is not everybody in London who can indulge in the luxury of being awakened every morning by a crowing cock, and of gathering eggs announced by the cackle of a hen. Certainly, a few hens, rare ones, do exist within the conventional circumference of the metropolis—for London, you know, having luckily no octroi duty, has no actual and definite barrier or limit; but the produce of those cherished hens is absolutely infinitesimal, a vanishing quantity, when compared with the wants of the many-headed public. You would be surprised, or rather you would not believe, were I to tell you the price which a genuine fresh-laid egg will fetch in winter. Consequently, the Londoners get their eggs and poultry from wherever they are obtainable, and one of the egg-producing places within easy reach is the north of France."

An official report sent to our Government a few years ago, accounted for the great production of eggs in the department of the

Pas-de-Calais by the presence of a peculiar sand, or grit, which enables the hens there to lay more copiously than ours. But it is not that, neither is it our foggy and inclement climate, as many Frenchmen, who have never crossed the Channel, believe. A great part of England (the midland and southern counties) is just as favourable to poultry-rearing as the north of France, whence we receive the most. Wales and Western England are rainy; but so is Brittany. Ireland, if less suitable for cocks and hens (which are fond of sunshine, and should have a fair proportion of grain in their diet), might rear any number of ducks, which are saleable as well as eatable, and which, under an ever-dripping sky, would find naturally-provided food in abundance. Though St. Patrick banished frogs and toads from the Emerald Isle, he has permitted the presence of slugs, snails, and earthworms. And then, that affectionate, hardy, clean-feeding, much misunderstood bird, the goose, asks for no more than grass to thrive on. Many a coarse pasture, swampy waste, or rough hill-side would support whole families of geese, whose eggs, delicate though large, and whose goslings, arrived at the stage of green-goosehood, would be cheerfully paid for and eaten here, were more sent to the English markets. Scotland is equally adapted to the rearing of the web-footed birds which come to our tables.

No; neither defective sand, soil, food, breed, nor climate is the real cause of our insufficient production of native poultry. The grand reason, the whole secret, why the French are able to supply us out of their own superfluity lies in the subdivision of landed property in France. Each small farmer, each peasant proprietor, keeps up a full stock of cocks and hens; and though it sounds a paradox, it is a truth, that a small farm will maintain as many head of poultry as a large one. Fowls, to be healthily as well as cheaply kept, must have "a run," including, if possible, a portion of grass land, whose radius is not large, and within whose invisible but well-defined limits they wander and forage for themselves. A thousand fowls will hardly go further afield in search of food than a hundred will; they are therefore more crowded within their run, and fewer waifs, strays, and windfalls must necessarily accrue to the share of each. For the hen is the most perfect of all living save-alls, especially when she has a brood of chicks. Not a scrap of anything eatable

that is thrown out of the house does she suffer to be wasted; not an insect, not an ant's egg, not a sprouting weed-seed escapes her sharp eye: and she teaches her young ones to observe and practise the same vigilant economy. Where hens are not present about and around a country habitation, sparrows fatten and multiply on many of those nutritious atoms; so that nothing in Nature is absolutely lost. What is missed by one consumer falls to the share of another. But sparrows fail to render as great service as hens in destroying small vermin and the germs of noxious plants, while they do a great deal of mischief which cannot be prevented.

An English gentleman farming a thousand acres, rears enough poultry, perhaps not enough, to furnish forth his family table, and no other poultry is reared elsewhere on that thousand-acre farm. Ten French farmers, owning or hiring (perhaps both combined) a hundred acres each, will send more than ten times as much feathered stock and produce to market. The thousand-acred farmer could not, even if he would, raise in his yard as much poultry as that, because fowls will not bear overcrowding, and there would be too many of them to share the same run with advantage.

Moreover, social habits and ideas in England are adverse to poultry-keeping, except as a sometimes expensive "fancy." Like all live stock, poultry, to be a source of profit, must have the benefit of the master's or the mistress's eye. Would the thousand-acred farmer's lady do actual work in her poultry-yard? Would she herself, with her own fair hands, or even with a boy's or a girl's assistance, gather eggs in dusty fowl-houses; satisfy the desire of hens wanting to sit; rise with the dawn to prepare and give their needful food to broods of newly-hatched chicks, staying with them till they had finished eating, to prevent their being robbed by their greedy elders? Would she, every evening, tell her tale of younglings, not "under the hawthorn in the dale," but in unpicturesque outhouses and sheds? Would she personally attend to the fattening of fowls? Would she know how to kill, and pluck, and truss them? No; she would generally think such tasks beneath her. Instead of being a poultry-mistress, she would keep a poultry-maid; which is not the same thing.

Without either blaming or praising the respective ways and notions of country-

people of the two nations, their difference may be stated without offence. The French are a saving people. In France, it is enough to be rich and to be known to be rich. I call those rich who have money to spare at the end of the year. There is no obligation to advertise one's wealth to the world by outward show; keeping up appearances, by dress and so on, without available funds to back them, does not obtain approval, but the contrary. No one loses in public estimation by living quietly within his income. Industrious habits, hard manual labour even—by educated women too—imply no inferiority. Instead of looking about for lady-helps, they prefer being ladies who help themselves. Spendthrifts, "mangeurs d'argent," they despise. A wealthy French farmer's wife will take her own poultry to market, and effect the sale thereof in person. She will thus act as her own middleman, and thereby pocket a middleman's profits. Assuredly it cannot be denied that the national love of saving is occasionally carried too far; but if French economy often degenerates into avarice, on the other hand English expensiveness and display sometimes lead to straitened circumstances. At any rate, immense farms and high ideas of agricultural gentility are incompatible with obtaining a large national poultry produce.

It is a matter of philosophy and taste whether life is rendered happier by making a great show, with every nerve strained to get two ends to meet, sometimes submitting to domestic privations which would be humiliating were they known out of doors, with never a year's income before you at your banker's; or by living modestly, enjoying every reasonable comfort, but still laying by money every year; paying moderate rent if the house is not your own, with useful though unpretentious equipage; no more servants than can do their work; no more cats than catch mice; few needless changes in the ladies' outward and visible dress; and not a single debt at the end of the year. In England, in professional life especially, you can hardly do this, for fear of Mrs. Grundy. In provincial France, at least, you can, and be thought all the better of for it.

I had heard great talk of a farm in the department of the Pas-de-Calais, occupied by M. Félix Robbe, of St. Blaise, where more than five hundred chickens were said to be enjoying life, after having been brought into the world by means of an artificial incubator. Poultry hatched and

reared by machinery made a strong impression on the popular mind, profoundly incredulous as to the usefulness of anything that was new, and entertaining a horror of what it calls "inventions"—pronounced in a tone of utter contempt. In this case, nobody doubted the fact of M. Robbe's producing chickens without the intervention of a hen, but they spoke of it as an extraordinary and unheard-of innovation, almost amounting to a miracle, their reading not being sufficiently extensive to comprise an account of the egg-hatching ovens which existed in Egypt before they were born.

I also had my doubts; and, as seeing is believing, I sought permission (most kindly granted) to visit the farm. I found, in front of the house, an extensive orchard, (called, in the patois of the place, a "bogard," the spelling uncertain) richly carpeted with grass, shaded by fruit-trees not too thickly planted, with a ditch here, a pond there, and now and then a bit of bush or hedge-row; everything, in short, to make it a perfect fowls' paradise. The surface of this home-park lawn was studded with a number of moveable sentry-boxes, each with wire-net enclosure attached to it, so that the whole can be easily, and frequently shifted to fresh patches of grass; each box being the temporary home of a nursing mother and her brood of weaklings. Older and stronger chickens, in numbers not less than those reported to me, were running about at large, following their own devices, and capable of taking care of themselves, unchecked by any maternal restraint.

"And all these five or six hundred chickens were hatched by your incubator?" I enquired.

"Oh no; very few of them," M. Robbe replied with a laugh. "Fame has greatly exaggerated its doings. It is not even at work at present, but I will show it to you all the same. We only use it in winter or early spring, before the hens are inclined to sit, or when eggs of any particularly desirable breed of fowls, or of game and aviary birds, fall in my way, and we have no mother to give them to. Here, outside the door, in the sunshine, something like a miniature greenhouse, with a central source of warmth, surrounded by little cloth curtains, beneath which the chicks soon learn to retire when they feel chilly, is the artificial mother which supplements the incubator. My wife is employing it for these little foundling partridges which she wants to bring up."

"And your heating agent?" I asked.

"Boiling water, renewed twice in the twenty-four hours, both for this and the incubator, which is indoors here; but I fancy something better might be contrived with a lamp to keep up the requisite constant temperature of forty degrees centigrade. You see that the whole apparatus is not a cumbersome piece of furniture, its dimensions being only about a cubic English yard, and, mounted on this low table or gipsy stand, it is easily managed. The drawer at the bottom receives the eggs, which must be turned twice a day; a hen might turn them oftener, at her discretion. The warmth is thus communicated from above, as it should be. These holes are ventilators of the egg-drawer. By a recent improvement, vapour from the hot water is made to enter the egg-drawer, and so to moisten the egg-shells and imitate the humidity given out in the shape of perspiration by the hen. In fact, the dryness attendant on artificial hatching is one of the drawbacks from its success. For example, we obtain better results when the incubator is worked in a cowhouse or stable than in a living-room, on account of the latter's drier atmosphere."

"And the proportion of chickens to eggs, in either case?"

"Sixty per cent. is the most I have ever had; but one ought not to reckon on more than forty-five or fifty per cent."

"A peasant hen-wife would hardly be satisfied with that."

"No; besides which, the chicks hatched without a mother are not so solid and robust, when they leave the shell, as those naturally incubated. Vive la poule! [Long live the hen!] We cannot rival her in the long run, although we may do without her now and then. This couveuse artificielle was supplied by Messieurs Raullier et Arnoult, of Gambais, Seine-et-Oise, and obtained a first prize at the Paris Exhibition of 1878.* It is patented, and has since been improved; but I don't think it will ever enable us to dispense with the feathered incubators whom Nature has given us, and who are much less troublesome to manage."

SNOW-FLAKE.

WE parted in the winter;
And from the distant hill,
She watched my ship sail outward
O'er the waters cold and still.

* English makers supply artificial incubators which profess to do their work extremely well.

I could not see the tear-drop
That glistened in her eye;
Nor her dainty kerchief waving,
Against the frosty sky.
But I knew her heart was breathing
A gentle word of prayer;
I knew her eye was streaming,
And her kerchief waving there.
I said before I left her,
"Farewell, my love, farewell;
I am sailing to the sunshine,
And the land where myrtles dwell;
But still my longing fancy,
Will turn to rest with thee;
My Snow-flake on the mountain,
Is more than all to me!"

You know how the pure snow melteth,
When the winter's cold is sped;
Ay, so before that ship returned,
My sweet Snow-flake was dead.

THE HOLY CITY OF KAIROUÂN.

THE eyes of the whole civilised world have been turned by recent events with a deep and painful interest towards Kairouân.

The writer's memories of the Holy City go back but a few months, and the faithful description of a day and night passed within its walls may, therefore, be of interest. But, as I have no expectation of numbering among my readers the omniscient schoolboy of Lord Macaulay, it may be well to begin with stating a few facts about the place, and giving the reasons which render all good Mahomedans determined to die in defending it rather than suffer the desecration of their holy places by their French "protectors."

Kairouân* was founded about twelve centuries ago by the immediate followers of the Prophet Mahomet, it having been at first a halting-place for some scattered parties of his adherents whom his death had dispersed. Kairouân is the same word which we have corrupted into caravan—a body of travellers—and thus the derivation of the city's name is obvious. The bones of many of those who spoke and lived and fought with the Prophet, have lain within the city undisturbed through all these twelve hundred years, in spite of the varying fortunes of cause and of country. It is easy to understand how the presence of these relics renders the city which contains them holy; and so jealously guarded is the sanctity of their precincts, that very few Christians have ever been admitted within the walls. The few European travellers who have entered Kairouân have (with one solitary exception)

been authorised to do so by the reigning sovereign of the country, have been the bearers of letters of recommendation to the Governor of the Holy City, and have been accompanied to its gates by a mounted escort, and in later times usually, as an additional security, by a dragoman of the consul of their own nation. The writer is the solitary exception.

Kairouân was formerly the capital of all the Barbary States. It is built entirely of brick, with the exception of the great mosque, of which I shall have to speak presently. The city walls, which are thick and strong, are of the same material. As a defence against modern artillery, they are probably not worth speaking of at all; but without that, even a strong and well-armed force would find it difficult to make Kairouân open its gates, if a handful of determined defenders had resolved to keep them closed.

The population is about fifteen thousand souls, but there is this peculiarity about the place, that by day there are always nearly double that number within its walls. Kairouân is in the centre of a district containing the flower of the tribes; the busiest, the best mounted, the most prosperous; who throng its streets from dawn to dark, bringing their own products for sale, and buying largely of the goods manufactured in the city.

It is, in fact, not only a Holy City, but, for the Arabs, a great business centre.

There is an important market there for sheep, cattle, and all beasts of draught or burthen, especially camels; and this is held daily in a great open square in the city, and not on one day in the week only, as is the case in most of the Tunisian towns or villages where such markets are held.

The staple products of the town are articles in brass and copper, woollen goods, and hand-made carpets of fine quality. For these Kairouân has been celebrated almost from the time of its foundation twelve centuries back. Among the tombs of Kairouân, some of which are fine edifices externally, but which, of course, no Christian is allowed to approach, are those of the barber of the Prophet, and of the niece of Sidi Ameer, Mahomet's trusted minister and friend.

It is unnecessary to enter here upon the circumstances which had led me into the interior within a day's journey of Kairouân. Let it suffice that I had rather unexpectedly the opportunity offered me of entering the Holy City as no European

* The English pronunciation of this combination of letters comes nearest to the sound of the name as spoken by the Arabs themselves.

woman had ever entered it before, accompanied, it is true, by a person well known and respected amongst the tribes, but without formal permit or official escort of any kind. I was told that I should be the second Christian woman who had ever been there at all, the first having been an Italian lady, whose party had obtained the necessary "amra" from the Bey's government, and letters of recommendation from the representatives of their own, and were accompanied by a guard of soldiers.

I will confess that, apart from the great interest of seeing the ancient and faithful city and its inhabitants, my imagination was fired by the idea of doing what no one else had done, and I resolved to accept the attendant risk, if any there should be. It would not have been difficult for me, as it chanced, to go there specially recommended from the highest quarters, and with a mounted guard, but the originality of the little adventure proposed to me made it irresistibly attractive. So I resolved to go first, and listen to the opinions of my friends in Tunis afterwards.

The point from which I started for Kairouan lay out of the line of what is called by courtesy the "high road" thither. As a matter of fact, road there is none; but the broad beaten track leading from the Holy City to Susa and other coast towns, and thence to Tunis, is from the frequent passage of caravans, herds of oxen, and parties of Arabs, mounted and afoot, easy to trace out and follow, and in some parts tolerably firm and hard for the passage of wheels. But my route to Kairouan lay across the open country.

The spring was sufficiently advanced for the winter rains to have soaked into the ground, and the numerous little water-courses which had to be traversed had already shrunk so as to be crossed without wetting an axletree. But there were considerable spaces of deep sticky mud left on either side of these streams, of which the banks were sometimes steep, and our driver was frequently obliged to descend, and, baring his legs to the thigh, wade cautiously until he found a sufficiently firm bottom for our light carriage to pass over in safety. Then, climbing to the box again, he would crack his whip, and drawing it once sharply across the backs of our gallant little Arab horses, and uttering at the same time a peculiar cry which they evidently understood, always dashed over at full gallop.

I have no doubt it was the only chance of getting across many of these soft places

at all, for sometimes, in spite of all previous precautions, the vehicle would tilt over to one side and appear disposed to stick fast, or one of the horses would suddenly sink up to its knees in the treacherous mud, and be dragged out again almost instantaneously by the impetuous rush of its companions.

At other times we cantered along over long stretches of soft undulating turf, as elastic and velvety as an English sheep-park, and this would have been delightful but for the stones and the bramble thickets. To avoid all these was impossible; we should have been picking our way in and out among them at the rate of a mile an hour of real progress, so we bumped and jumped and scrambled over or through these obstacles, neither horses nor driver having any idea of not going as straight as they could.

Proceeding in this way over a long stretch of grass-land my attention was attracted by some remarkable lines of huge stones, irregularly piled, and stretching away in a long double row for an immense distance. "These must be the remains of the walls of some considerable city," I observed; "how strange that no other ruins are to be seen near them!" My companion smiled, saying: "We will approach them nearer presently, and you will see that those stones are not hewn by the hand of man, and never formed part of any wall; or if they did it must have been one of Titanic architecture." In fact, I soon found that my eye had been deceived by the distance, and by having no point of comparison, and that the blocks of stone were of great size and irregularly shaped, as if just blasted from the bed of a quarry.

They lay, however, piled up in two long rows, and bore a striking resemblance to two lines of gigantic ruined walls, one behind the other.

"No," resumed my companion; "the presence of those stones in the midst of this grassy plain, which stretches, as you see, for miles, is a mystery to us. The Arabs account for it thus: They say that when the followers and friends of Mahomet halted in these plains, not long after the Prophet's death, they made a permanent station where now stands the Holy City, and finally determined to build a walled town on the spot and to settle there. There are, as you will see, no stone quarries within many miles, but they built their city of bricks, the materials for which were at hand, and surrounded it with a

strong and thick wall, also of bricks. But it was felt that the Great Mosque should be of nobler materials, and it was evidently the will of Allah that it should be so; for, moved by the yearnings of the faithful, these very stones that you see, detached themselves from their beds in the mountains far away yonder, and came rolling across the plain towards the Holy City. But in the meantime the faith and energy of its founders had been rewarded by a miracle still more extraordinary. The stones for the construction of the mosque had fallen direct from heaven upon the spot where they were wanted, and the progress of this advancing wave of granite was suddenly arrested where you see it."

The Arab imagination has seized on and profited by the idea which is conveyed by the sight of these stones, and after hearing the legend, it seemed that one could almost see them advancing over the plain in two long, serried, undulating lines.

I may here mention that the Great Mosque was, it is believed, really constructed from the remains of a Roman village near at hand; but if so the Moorish builders certainly made the most of their materials, as it is said to contain no fewer than five hundred granite columns. The account of its splendours must be received on the authority of the Arabs, no Christian having ever been allowed to enter it.

The country, up to the very gates of Kairouân, is wild and uncultivated, and we became somewhat anxious as the evening began to close in, and our progress was retarded by the increasing frequency of marshy and muddy places intersected by the shallow streams I have spoken of (which are all dry in summer), for, if we did not arrive before the gates were closed, there was little hope of obtaining an entrance, and the prospect of remaining in the carriage all night outside the walls was not agreeable. Then the horses were to be thought of. They had been going on without halt or breathing space, except such as were imposed on us by the natural obstacles of the country, since morning, with no other refreshment than a drink at some muddy stream, and were covered with mud and sweat. They still pricked their ears and responded gallantly to any call upon them, but from what I have seen of the Arab horse in his own country, I believe they will always do so until they actually drop dead. Our off horse had evidently sprained himself in one of those scrambles up the muddy banks of one of

the many rivulets we had crossed, and it became important to have him attended to.

At last, through the gathering darkness, we descried the white domes and cupolas of the saintly city, and about an hour and a half later, it now being quite dark, drew up beneath its walls.

As well as I could make out, there seemed to be a sort of suburb at this point, lying between the main wall of the city and an outer one, but I do not know if the latter encircles the whole town. Luckily for me, my conductor had friends at hand. Shelter was soon found for the carriage and horses, and we were admitted by a postern into a narrow lane lying between the two walls I have described.

"I meant to take you to the governor's house, where you would have been asked to stay as a matter of course," said my guide; "but it is too late now. However, it does not matter. Luckily, I have other friends close here, who will be equally glad to see us."

We walked a few hundred yards, attended by some Arabs to whom my conductor was evidently well known, and presently stopped before a large door in a blank wall, having a smaller door in the middle of it, through which I was invited to pass. I found myself in a large entrance porch, having seats on each side, and opening into an inner court, which could be dimly seen by the light of a lantern carried by a servant. My friend left me here for a few minutes, and presently returned in company with the master of the house, who bade me welcome with all the courtesy and grace, combined with a grave sincerity of manner, which distinguish the Arab gentleman, who in all those respects is by far the finest gentleman I know. So perfect was the manner of my reception, that I was able to throw off, almost immediately, the embarrassment consequent on intruding into the house of a total stranger at a late hour of the night and under such strange circumstances, and could enjoy quietly observing a Kairouân interior while looking forward with a tranquil mind to supper and bed.

I was conducted by my host himself to the door of his wife's apartments, which ran along one side of an inner court, approached by a narrow passage leading from the courtyard I had already dimly seen. Here I was consigned to the care of a woman, who, drawing aside two heavy curtains, one within the other, motioned me to go forward. I found myself in a

small brilliantly-lighted apartment of the usual shape—that is, an oblong, with a small square added on to the middle of it, the recess thus formed, which faced me as I entered, having a divan running round it. At either end of the oblong, to my right and left, were broad well-cushioned divans, and behind one of these, again, a deep curtained recess in the wall, containing a bed. The walls and floor of the room were hidden entirely behind hangings and carpets of native manufacture, admirably harmonious in colour; and there were mirrors and other ornaments. The atmosphere was highly perfumed; little sticks of some sweet-smelling wood were smouldering on the top of a small charcoal brazier, and the light from a single swinging lamp, as well as from several thick candles of pure yellow wax, fell full on the figure of the mistress of this charming little nest, who had risen, and was standing to receive me.

My amiable and courteous host would, I fear, think it a bad return for his frank and perfect hospitality that I should describe the perfections of this pretty lady for the benefit of unbelievers, or that I should even mention her at all to those of the male sex, to do so being a decided breach of Mussulman good manners. But, as I cannot suppose he will ever be pained by the knowledge of my indiscretion, I will tell my readers exactly what I saw.

The figure which came forward to receive me was that of a very pretty young woman of about two-and-twenty, somewhat too fat for the European standard of beauty, but by no means shapeless and unwieldy, as oriental beauties so often are. Her complexion, in that brilliant artificial light, and with that richly-coloured background, looked as fair as that of a European, and the fine colour in her lips and cheeks did not appear to owe anything to art. I learnt afterwards that the women of Kairouan are famous for their good complexions. Her hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes were jet black, the latter tinted underneath with kohl, and her small even teeth were dazzlingly white. She wore a loose jacket of yellow silk, with wide hanging sleeves. This was open in front, displaying the edge of a silken vest of various colours, and under that again a garment of white cambric, cunningly embroidered at the edges. Instead of the ungraceful half-fitting trouser which I had invariably seen in the harems of Tunis, she wore a "foutah," an oblong piece of striped silk,

which, taken by the two upper ends and tied round the waist, forms a graceful if somewhat scanty skirt, as the Moorish women know how to arrange it; and from under this peeped out her bare feet and ankles, the latter adorned with heavy ornamental rings of solid silver, and the toe-nails, heel, and outer edge of the foot tinted with henna. Her bare arms and throat were laden with ornaments of gold, coral, amber, etc., and her hands, like her feet, were stained with henna. A bright-coloured silk kerchief almost concealed the glossy black hair, large ear-rings fell almost on to the shoulders, and a voluminous veil of thin striped silken material, depending from a pointed head ornament, fell gracefully behind like a mantle. Coming from the cold, and mud, and darkness of the plains into this nest of light, warmth, and perfume, and into the presence of this dazzling apparition, was one of the strangest and pleasantest contrasts I ever remember to have enjoyed. Unfortunately, my few words of Arabic do not carry me further than the first necessary compliments; but I was soon seated in the post of honour, relieved of my travelling wraps, and regaled with fragrant coffee, while a meal was being prepared in another part of the house.

It is not to be supposed that my own person and dress were less keenly observed by my fair hostess than were hers by me. Indeed, I was to her an absolute and startling novelty; whilst I, on my side, had already seen several oriental interiors. She intimated to me that she greatly admired my watch and chain, and a plain locket that I wore, as well as my silk fur-lined cloak, and the ribbons and trimmings of my dress. But my boots and gloves I could see were regarded with more curiosity than admiration. The veil of white gauze on my travelling-hat was much approved of, and I was signed to show how I adjusted it for going out. Perceiving a rather scandalised look among the attendants at its semi-transparency, I showed them how one of the long ends could be drawn forward in a double thickness so as completely to conceal the lower part of the face; after which I evidently rose a little in the general estimation.

In my quality of foreigner, to whom their more modest and civilised customs were unknown, I was invited to eat my supper with the gentlemen in quite another part of the house; my friend having

explained to our host that the highest ladies in England could remain unveiled, and could sit down to eat with men in no way related to them, without the smallest loss of caste. But I noticed that my host seemed to make it a point of politeness scarcely to glance at me, although showing every desire to do the honours of his table. And even the servants waiting on us—though I could feel that they were gazing at me with the greatest curiosity—immediately withdrew their eyes on meeting mine. The man who poured water over my hands at the conclusion of the meal said something in a low tone, which made the others smile. But my friend explained to me afterwards that the only criticism the servant had permitted himself was that when the hands were white and pink like that, he thought they looked better without henna after all.

I was shown into a great chamber with a tiled floor on which pretty carpets were strewn, a divan and other furniture, all scrupulously neat and clean, and an immense bed in which all the Seven Sleepers might have sought repose at one time. The sheets and pillow-cases were of exquisite fineness, and edged with delicate embroidery; and they had just been sprinkled with rose and orange-flower water. The delicate perfume did not quite reconcile me to the idea of damp sheets. But the sprinkling had been but light, I suppose, and no ill effects followed. My attention was particularly called to a wonderful array of bolts and bars, strong enough for a prison, by which I could secure both doors and windows from the inside; and then I was left to repose.

I was astir again early, as my conductor had promised me a walk through the streets of the city, repeatedly assuring me that he would answer for my safety. This naturally gave me the conviction that there might be some risk attending the experiment; and my excitement and curiosity rose accordingly. I had been told at Tunis by a European gentleman high in office, that during the tenure of the same office by his father—a man of great influence and distinction—he, then a youth, had expressed a great desire to visit the fanatical city, and permission to do so was accorded to him. But although he came with all the prestige of the Bey's order and the official rank of his father, and was, moreover, accompanied by a guard, he narrowly escaped a disagreeable adventure. It got wind in the place that

a bath used by the Mussulmen was being privately prepared for him, to the temporary exclusion of other bathers; and the people assembled and began to throw stones at him. They might have proceeded to extremities as their blood warmed, had he not taken refuge in the governor's house. It might be supposed, therefore, that the sudden, and hitherto undreamed-of apparition of a woman in European dress, and on foot, would make some commotion; and I felt that it was just a chance whether such a desecration of the Holy City might, or might not, be actively resented. My guide, it is true, was well known and respected. But, notwithstanding his continued assurances that I was quite safe by his side, he made a point of our going out very early, before the business of the city should be fairly astir.

We sallied forth, accordingly, immediately after sunrise, and passed through one of the big gates, which were just opened, into the central portion of the city. We traversed some narrow streets chiefly tenanted by braziers and coppersmiths, most of whom were already hammering and tinkering away merrily as they sat at their open shop-fronts, and then made our way towards the camel market, a great open space near another of the city gates. Here there were already a good number of camels and other beasts for sale; and, for the information of the curious, I may mention that that morning the price of a good camel was from four hundred to five hundred piastres.* There were also some wonderful specimens of the long-tailed African sheep, and I saw a few very fine horses. People come from long distances to buy horses at Kairouan, especially for breeding purposes, this part of the regency not having yet been swept of all its best horses by dealers who supply remounts for the Algerian cavalry, as has been the case in other districts. I could not admire these equine beauties at my leisure, however, for, long before we reached this point, our movements began to be impeded, and my view intercepted by an ever-thickening crowd. No insult of any kind was offered us, but the curiosity of the population—and especially of the boys—to behold me more closely became rather oppressive.†

* The Tunisian piastre is worth about sixpence-halfpenny of our money.

† Since writing the above, I have read in an Italian publication an account of the totally different experience of the Italian lady to whom I

Near this spot my friend stopped to speak to a gentleman richly dressed and armed, who proved to be the governor's brother. To him, after a few words of explanation, I was presented, and he insisted on leaving one of his attendants with us, whose long cane, flourished in the thick of my juvenile following, secured me breathing space. But men stood upon their shop benches to see me pass, and many left their work, and ran to swell the ranks.

To escape this for a moment we turned into the gate-house near at hand. Here the government tax on all sales of beasts is collected; the animals which pass into the market being registered, and both buyer and seller coming afterwards to this office to declare the price of the beasts which have changed hands.

As we made our way to the carpet bazaar, where I desired to purchase some of the beautiful manufactures of the place, followed as before, our attendant said suddenly to my companion: "What is the lady laughing at? Is it that she thinks our people so unmannerly?" I hastened to assure him that I was only smiling at a boy who had just run under my arm to get a good front view of me, because I found that boys were the same all the world over; and that in point of manners, I considered a Kairouan crowd might compare favourably with a London one; which, remembering the merciless way in which the Chinese ambassadors and their suite were mobbed in our streets, I could really say with a clear conscience.

Indeed, the self-restraint of the Arab in these matters, so long as his religious fanaticism is not too roughly handled, was borne in upon me by a little incident, after which I could not help thinking to myself that if the facts could have been made

alluded as being—with myself—one of the only three Christian women who have ever visited Kairouan. The third was an English lady of rank, whom my description of my visit chiefly induced to make the journey; she and her husband travelled with the "amra" of the Bey, were furnished with letters to the governor, in whose house they were guests, and were escorted by the consular dragoman and a mounted guard. The Italian lady was similarly protected, and was, moreover, accompanied by a party of male friends. Notwithstanding all this, she was assailed in the streets by curses and contumelious words, stones were thrown, and knives were brandished. It is clear to me that she owed this disagreeable reception mainly to her own impudence in appearing in the streets totally unveiled. It must be remembered that this seemed in the eyes of the inhabitants of this secluded Moslem city, as great an outrage against public decency as would the apparition of a foreign woman walking in our English thoroughfares only half dressed.

equal, and the absolute strangeness of the apparition as great, it would have been worse in London.

A little fellow, who was backing away before me in order to lose nothing of the wonderful sight, was sharply asked by my friend if he had never seen a foreigner in Kairouan before.

"Yes," said the child, opening his grave black eyes, "I have seen one, but he came from Morocco, and was quite differently dressed; he had on a turban so high!"—the full stretch of his arm—"and a feather on the top." But my travelling hat with its gauze veil, and the long dust-cloak with which I had purposely covered as much of my dress as possible, made me a stranger sight to this young believer than even the man from Morocco with a turban "so high!"

The men of Kairouan appeared to me to be a shade or two darker than those of Tunis, and I think it probable that the women of the Holy City owe their comparatively fair skin to their absolute seclusion from out-door exercise, and the risks of sun and wind. I have never seen the human face and form so completely concealed by clothing, as were those of the very few women (all of the humbler class) who were to be seen in the streets. Not even an eye was visible, and it was really a puzzle how they themselves could see their way through the dense black veil or mantle which shrouded them from head to foot. The only two exceptions I saw were a very old beggar-woman, who partly drew aside her veil as she stretched forth her skinny hand for alms, and again in a by-street, a young woman who came suddenly unveiled to the door of a small house, pronouncing some words in a loud emphatic voice.

I was quite startled for the moment, but was told that in the excitement of the moment she had probably not noticed that there was a man with me, and that her speech was merely to the effect that she had heard of me in the town and had sworn to her God that she would see me close, face to face, and that she had kept her oath.

We were anxious about the horse that had hurt himself the day before, but on returning to the house I found that they had bled him above the fetlock, and that he was picking up rapidly and would soon be ready for the return journey. No surprise was expressed, although doubtless much was felt, when I mentioned my wish

to visit the stables. Our host, who was certainly as fine a specimen of an "officer and gentleman" as I ever saw, was a "Caya" of cavalry—a title which about corresponds to our lieutenant-colonel—and rode at the head of five hundred horsemen of the district, when it furnished a contingent for the Bey. I was anxious, therefore, to see his own horses, and to observe how they were kept, for I had been disagreeably impressed, as I believe all English travellers are, by the rough and even severe treatment of the horse by its Arab master.

I was guided to the basement storey, where the stables were situated, and found them to be large vaulted stone halls, with no other desirable qualification but those of being roomy and airy.

The horses which had brought us thither had been well groomed and attended to by our Maltese coachman (there seems, by the way, to be an unwritten law that all the coachmen of Tunis shall be Maltese), but the others stood with their fore-feet fastened together and secured to a cord tightly stretched along the ground. The animal's head is also tied up, and he stands on the dirty ill-drained pavement, looking as uncomfortable as possible. A small quantity of very dirty litter was swept up in one corner; but it was pretty clear that the tenants of this stable knew not what it was to have a clean bed made up for them after the day's work, nor any of those little comforts which an English horse of moderate pretensions would expect as a matter of course. I thought at first that the Caya's horses were tied up to be washed, as I noticed traces of old mud on one or two; but I was told that it was not so; they were generally kept like that when in the stable.

The horse chiefly ridden by the Caya was a beautiful grey, of unusual size for an Arab. When I went up and patted him, after the first start of surprise at my appearance, he responded in the gentlest manner to my advances, putting down his velvet nose to my hand as far as the cruel cord would let him, and turning his great pathetic dark eyes on me, as much as to say: "Yes, I perceive that you are a friend, but you see I can't return your greetings as I could wish."

I was sitting in the porch making some pencil notes, and trying in vain to get a sketch of the queer little groups of children who came peering in at me, but who vanished instantly on my looking

fixedly at them with pencil in hand, when my host and the friend who had brought me hither came and sat down near me.

Presently some gentlemen came to pay a visit to the latter; so, not wishing to scandalise anybody, I lowered my veil and drew a little apart, occupying myself with my note-book. By-and-by my friend said to me that they were observing my movements with great curiosity, although it appeared to me that they had not even glanced in my direction (as, from their point of view, it would have been most improper to appear conscious of the presence of a woman in their friend's house unless he had spoken first), and were asking him if all Englishwomen could read and write, or if I were an exception. My friend, desirous to make me shine in the eyes of the Moslem, said: "Oh, this lady can write, not one, but several languages."

So, perceiving that it pleased him to receive their compliments as the conductor of a female reading-and-writing phenomenon, I asked him to beg the Caya to pronounce his own name aloud at full length, so that I might write it in my note-book, as it was already gratefully written on my heart. And when I showed it to them, written in the Arabic character, which my slight knowledge of the language just enabled me to do, their admiration knew no bounds.

The Caya had many callers that morning, some on business, but some I could not help thinking, attracted by the report of his strange visitors. I noticed that many of the country Arabs kissed his right shoulder. This is the salutation of an inferior to a superior; but the personal dignity of these men is so great, that but for this sign, and perhaps from noticing the coarseness of their burnous and the comparative rudeness of their weapons, it seemed to me they might all have been chiefs and leaders of men.

In the course of the morning I visited the apartments of the other wife of my host. He had but two wives, although well-to-do in the world, for, be it remembered, taking a wife in Mahomedan countries involves the obligation of keeper in every comfort according to your means. This lady, although good-looking and fair-skinned, was not so young nor so handsome as my hostess of the night before. But her apartments, which were on the opposite side of the courtyard, were quite as commodious and well-furnished as those of the latter, the carpets being

especially beautiful. I afterwards learned that some of these were the handiwork of these industrious ladies themselves. The inevitable cup of coffee was again offered me while the farewell compliments were being paid; and, while I sat sipping it, a number of women whom I took to be servants or dependents of the house, came in, and sitting on the floor in a semi-circle, stared at me to their hearts' content. Early in the morning I had had coffee and tumblers of fresh goat's-milk, and delicious little crisp cakes dipped in clear honey. But now a mid-day meal was provided on a scale to satisfy the appetite of at least six times our number. I ate, as before, in the men's quarter of the house. Our host sat curled up on a cushioned divan, near to which the table was drawn. But a chair was found for me, and two forks were also produced in my honour, though I confess I availed myself but little of these "civilised" implements. I omitted to mention that, in addition to wax-candles, I found in my bedroom a common paraffin-lamp, of Birmingham manufacture. We had at our farewell repast, in addition to the national dish of kousekousou, which contains all sorts of good things, various ragouts, highly seasoned with red pepper and other spices, fowls, meat sausages, and a roast lamb capitably dressed. Then there were sweet dishes—amongst them a particularly nice kind of pudding, into whose composition entered rice, light paste, pistachio-nuts, almonds, and honey.

I could in any case only have hoped to see the outside of the numerous mosques and colleges of Kairouan, and that only from a certain distance. And as neither my own affairs or those of my conductor permitted us to prolong our stay in the city, we regretfully bade adieu to our kind host, and prepared to depart by the high road to Susa. I had especially admired one carpet in my room, of a kind which I had never seen except in Kairouan. It had no pile, and looked, in fact, like a piece of very heavy tapestry. But I felt quite confused on finding that it was to be packed in the carriage with the others which I had bought from the bazaar. "As I had liked it," said my host, "it became mine, as a matter of course!" And this, from his lips, was no mere oriental compliment, as such speeches are usually understood to be on both sides; for the gift was so kindly pressed upon me, that I felt it would have been an offence to refuse it.

The carriage was to be taken round to one of the great city gates, and I was promised that I should leave Kairouan in an even more original mode than I had entered it. Passing along within the town walls, when we arrived near the gate, my companion said: "Follow me;—but stoop your head!" He at the same time bent himself nearly double and disappeared into the wall. The aperture which had received him, was about four feet and a half high, was barely wide enough to admit one person at a time, and serpentine within the thickness of the wall; so that it certainly took nothing from the security of the city, and could be used by the inhabitants on certain occasions when the great gates were shut.

I shall never enter the gates of that city again. But the reader will understand that I often repeat in spirit that curious experience; that I think with pain of the probable fate of so many of its peaceful industrious inhabitants, and of the gallant tribes who are but gathered to defend all that they hold most sacred against what appears to them wanton and barbarous aggression; and that I shall ever have picturesque, pleasing, and grateful memories of my reception in the Holy City of Kairouan.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOXY.

CHAPTER XL. THAT NIGHT.

THE short winter's day had almost closed in before Mr. Horndean returned home, after his interview with Helen. He came out of the west gate of Chesney Manor, and found Mr. Moore at the entrance to the church. Two little girls were with him, and they regarded the stranger with solemn curiosity. He saluted Mr. Moore, and went on, taking the path through the adjoining wood to the nearest point at which Chesney Manor marched with his own grounds, and regained the house by the back way, that led past the stables. The man who had driven the dog-cart to the railway-station in the morning was lounging at the yard gate, and Mr. Horndean asked him at what hour he was to meet Mr. Lisle. He was not to go to the station, he said; Mr. Lisle preferred walking up, as it was moonlight, and there was nothing to carry.

Mr. Horndean had a good deal of time for solitary reflection before he could look for the return of his friend; more time indeed than he cared for; he regarded the

Charles with dejected apprehension. Mr. Horndean had been accustomed to put everything that was unpleasant from him as far and for as long as he could possibly manage to do so, and he hated to have to think, all by himself, of a difficulty which had somehow or other been got over. That incurable levity which comes of want of conscience was as conspicuous in him as the "inexorable ennui" which comes to all sorts and conditions of men who make themselves the chief object of existence, and he was now impatient to be rid of the impression produced by the occurrence of that day.

One of the most powerful descriptions of a state of mind ever written is that of Jonas Chuzzlewit after the murder of Tigg; there is not a turn or a touch of it that does not convince the reader of its truth; but there is one feature of that description subtle beyond all the rest. It is the murderer's measure of time; it is his thinking of the murder as an old crime, before the sun has risen whose setting light shone upon his victim while he was still a living man. In its degree, a similar experience came to Frederick Horndean. So many thoughts, remembrances, fears, and difficulties had crowded into his mind since the revelation made to him by Mrs. Stephenson's letter, that he felt as though a long time had passed. The danger was averted, the difficulty was conquered; the unpleasantness had been faced, and it was done with; the affair was an old one; he was awfully sorry about it, but it had ended well; and it would be a bore to have to think about it until all hours of night. He wished he had not arranged with Frank Lisle that he should return, but had said he would join Frank in town; an hour would see him through all his remaining business, and then he might start. He had half a mind to do this; but was restrained by the reflection that it would not do to let his friend come down to an empty house, and that he could not telegraph to him, because he did not know where he might be. The small sitting-room looked pleasant and welcoming when the master of the house re-entered it. The great pile of buildings was gloomy; no light showed outside, except that from the housekeeper's rooms, on the ground floor, on the side opposite to the long gallery; the small sitting-room looked into the paved quadrangle, and its windows were closely shuttered and curtained. All was profoundly still, and when, after he had eaten

his solitary dinner he lit a cigar and drew his chair close to the fire, Mr. Horndean knew that he had to face the thing he hated most—reflection.

It has probably occurred to every man to wonder on some one occasion of his life how he could have been such a fool on some other, and many have put that question to themselves, when "fool" was not the word they ought to have used, but one much stronger. This occurred to Helen's false lover now. He had no words in which to condemn his own "folly" with sufficient severity; but, so much may be said for him, he reflected no blame on Helen in his thoughts. He acknowledged her innocence, her gentleness, even her beauty, though its charm for him had been so brief. The "folly" had been all his own. It had been hard on her, poor girl, although, after all, everything had now arranged itself for the best, and as she was so reasonable about it all, things would come right. As for her feelings—he would rather not think of them. Finding, however, that he could not escape from the subject; that it pursued him, in the positive form which it had assumed to-day, as closely as it had pursued him in the vague form of last night; he took refuge in the persuasion that she had not really suffered much, beyond anxiety and suspense. From these he could not have saved her, and for these he was not to blame. She had not really loved him, did not indeed know what love meant, had not the faintest notion of any kind of passion, and she would be capable in the future of as much happiness as could come in this world to natures like hers, with a flavour of the angelic in them. That Helen should think the brief and blameless love-affair between herself and him—especially as not a soul who would be capable of misinterpreting it would ever know that it had existed—a barrier between her and any other man who might wish to make her his wife, was literally impossible for Mr. Horndean to imagine. He gradually ceased to dwell on Helen's share in the matter, and became entirely engrossed with his own. As he thought of this, his slumbering wrath against his sister awoke, and rose high. After all, it was her doing; it was her treatment of him, her selfishness, her heartlessness, her cool ignoring of his troubles in the plentitude and security of her own prosperous estate, which had put the first temptation in his way; and it was her cruel, unwomanly, odious treatment

of Helen Rhodes which had laid the girl open to the temptation of escape by any means. Yes, Mrs. Townley Gore was entirely to blame. And then, the subsequent conduct of his sister and that easy-going egotist, Townley Gore; never looking after the girl; never even mentioning her name, so that without his previous and private knowledge he would not have known that any such person had ever been an inmate of their house; could anything be worse than this? His sister would have been punished indeed if he had gone straight back to Paris, after Mr. Horndean's death set him free to marry whom he pleased, and brought to Horndean as his bride the girl whom his sister had oppressed. If he had never seen Beatrix, he might have done this, even though his passing caprice for Helen had so cooled and dwindled that he had been well disposed to listen to the promptings of prudence, when he found the bird flown from Neuilly; but he had fallen in love with his sister's friend, and the passion inspired by Beatrix had swept away every other thought and feeling with a rush like that of a mountain torrent. What would have happened if he had made that marriage, with its mixed motives of liking and resentment?

Helen would have been easily persuaded to excuse the deception he had practised upon her, but would she ever have been happy as the instrument of his vengeance upon his sister? Probably not—that touch of the angelic in her nature which Mr. Horndean recognised uneasily, would interfere in such a case. Nothing could be plainer than that things had happened for the best for Helen. Cruel, unwomanly, odious, such were the epithets which Mr. Horndean applied in his thoughts to the conduct of Mrs. Townley Gore towards her husband's protégée. Had she retaliated upon him with cruel, unmanly, and odious, what could he have said? He did not put that query directly to himself, and when his conscience made any sign of approaching it, he hustled it aside as importunate. Thus did the brother and the sister, in whose hands the fate of Helen Rhodes had been placed, repeat in action that defiant question of Cain, which has found unending reiteration throughout all the ages in all the generations of men: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

And then, there was Frank Lisle! Mr. Horndean disliked exceedingly the explanation that would so soon have to be made to him. In the excitement and

perplexity of that morning, when the object of chief importance was to secure the day to himself, with no one to observe his proceedings, and so to obtain a secret interview with Helen, it had been easy enough to promise to tell Frank everything. But now, when all this was done, and things had turned out so much better than he could have expected, when Helen had been so reasonable, the explanation seemed more difficult, and less necessary. Frank was the best fellow in the world, and the easiest going, but still it could not be agreeable to him to learn that his friend had borrowed his name without leave, for a purpose which he would find it difficult to justify even to the best and easiest-going of fellows. If he had only had a little more self-control, if he had not been so completely upset by that confounded woman's gushing letter about the romantic coincidence which was to bring her dear "heart-friend" in contact with the orphan girl of whom she had made "quite a heroine," he might have got rid of the unsuspecting Frank for a few hours on some easy pretext, and had no explanation to make at all. It could not be helped now, however, and Mr. Horndean had only to wish that bad quarter of an hour well over, and in the meantime to think of Beatrix.

How long the evening was! Why could he not have done with all the miserable past, and be rid of its phantoms? All was safe now, and there might surely be an end of it. He had Helen's assurance and promise, and something—perhaps that objectionable touch of the angelic about her—made him rely upon them absolutely. It was not distrust and it was not fear that troubled him. Nothing troubled him; he would not be troubled.

There was only a boy in the house, the men-servants being in London, and Mr. Horndean dismissed him early, saying that he would let Mr. Lisle in at the side door himself, and afterwards lock it. He pleased himself with picturing how bright and animated the old house would be, when he should see it next, all en fête for the reception of his beautiful bride. His fancy drew a score of pictures of her, in the fine old rooms, and he told himself anew that not one of the dead and gone Charlecote women—though several of them had been very fair—could compare with her who was so soon to be lady and mistress in the place that knew them no more. The portrait which was to be Frank Lisle's chef d'œuvre had not yet been begun. It should represent

Beatrix in her Hungarian costume, adorned with the quaint antique jewels which were to be the heirlooms of the new family.

Over the oak mantelpiece of the small sitting-room, hung one of the Charlecote pictures, and Mr. Horndean's gaze rested curiously upon it. The subject was a young woman, in the "blown-together" dress of Sir Joshua's predilection, gauzy, elegant, innocent of needlework, haply impossible, but pleasant to believe in; a woman with a sweet serious face, and lightly powdered hair, just touched here and there with jewels. By her side knelt a lovely child, its dimpled limbs resting on a satin cushion, its limpid eyes raised to the mother's face bending over it, and its little hands folded within hers. The words of the prayer seemed to breathe from the lips of the mother and the child, and the serene serious eyes of the lady to look beyond the baby-head, at the stranger within the gates of her ancestors and her descendants.

Mr. Horndean knew that picture; it was one of the best in the house, but somehow it attracted him strangely to-night. It associated itself with the image of Mr. Moore, as he had seen him kneeling in the little church, in his unaffected matter-of-course way. Man, woman, and child; the long since dead, the living and present; here was something which bound them all together, and could, if only it were real and true, take bitterness out of the brevity of life, and deprive its vicissitudes of dread. But of what this was, he knew nothing. What was that child—she died, a grandmother, before Mr. Horndean was born—saying so carefully and prettily after her mother? He could guess that at least: "Our Father Which art in Heaven"—how long it was since he had uttered those words! He went on to the end of the Lord's Prayer, and the sweet serene serious eyes of the lady in the picture seemed to dwell upon him, as in a far distant time those of his own mother had doubtless dwelt. Perhaps, after all, there was something in what people called religion; and it might be worth finding out. He wished Beatrix believed in "something"—he actually put it thus to himself in his thoughts. He had occasionally winced at her frank disdain of all belief. There was certainly a hardening influence in this utter incredulity; her disbelief in God made her distrustful of man; and then, it was "bad form" in a woman. The radiant image in his mind's eye was for a moment blurred and imperfect as this reflection occurred to

him. He did not like to pursue it any farther; he shrank from the conclusion to which it would lead him, that the love of a woman who had no God, and who looked for no future, must be of the earth, earthy. There would be time enough to think about these things. They might both change one day: she, her mind of hard and positive negation; he, his mind of not knowing and not caring: but, for the present, the life that was proven, the life that was to be seen and felt and lived, stretched out before them in a delightful vista of love, youth, health, and wealth. The foe that they must face at the end was so far off that they need not think about him, though he was the sure, the inevitable conqueror. Before they had to confront him there was a paradise to be enjoyed, and people said nobody really minded death when it came. "And after death the judgment." The words flashed into his memory, and for one moment of blinding light he saw the awful possibility that what they stated might be true, and the hideous folly of ignoring that possibility. What was the ghost of last night to the ghost that rose before him now, for literally the first time since he had laid aside childish things? He rose with a shiver, replenished the fire, muttered something about Frank Lisle's being almost due, looked at his watch—it marked half-past eleven—and crossed the room to a table on which a tray of refreshments had been left ready for the traveller. Having drunk some brandy and soda-water he resumed his cigar and his seat, meaning to listen for Frank Lisle's knock, but, after a few minutes, he fell asleep.

Mr. Horndean's was a light slumber; he was aroused from it by a noise; but not that for which he had been listening. This sound proceeded from the long gallery, or drawing-room; it was not loud, but quite distinct, and very peculiar. He looked around him for the cat, with the idea that she had been shut into the long gallery by accident, and was scratching at the more distant door; but she was asleep in her basket. Then he lighted a candle, and softly opened the door in the tapestry. A broad streak of moonlight was flung upon the floor of the long gallery from a window at one end, which was wide open. On a line with the door in the tapestry, stood a man, his back turned to Mr. Horndean, stooping over the case from which the jewels had been removed on the previous day. A small lantern placed on a table lighted the thief to his work; and a

green baize bag lay at his feet ready to receive the spoil. The man was tall and strongly built, and he was dressed in a brown velvet coat and trousers, a red waistcoat, and a wide-leaved hat of grey felt. He had removed the cover of the case, the padlock with a key in it lay on the ground, and he had unlocked and lifted the lid, and was looking eagerly into the receptacle—eagerly, but vainly. The treasure was not there, and in his fancied security the thief gave vent by a savage oath to the fury with which this discovery filled him. The next instant a stream of light came through the doorway behind him, he let the lid fall, and, turning sharply, confronted Mr. Horndean.

"Ramsden!"

The man rushed at him, knocked the candle out of his hand, pulled to the door in the tapestry with inconceivable quickness, dashed down his lantern, and made a rush for the open window. He might have effected his escape only for the moonlight, for the suddenness of his movements confused Mr. Horndean for a moment. The next he was plainly revealed, and with a shout for help, Mr. Horndean seized him, just as his foot cleared the window-sill.

There was a quick fierce struggle. The thief and his assailant were in almost equal danger; the ledge of white stone that jutted out under the windows, and formed a sort of balcony without a balustrade, only deeply grooved at the edge as a rain channel, afforded very narrow footing. Mr. Horndean had stepped over the window-sill with one foot only, the other foothold gave him the advantage. He had all but dragged the thief back into the room, when with a growl like a wild beast, the man freed his right arm, drew a short iron crowbar from his breast, and struck him a terrific blow with it upon the temple. Frederick Horndean's griping hands loosed their hold, his arms swung for an instant, and then he dropped, a limp and bleeding heap, upon the floor, across the bar of silver moonlight.

In a second the thief had set his foot upon the rope-ladder hooked into the groove in the ledge by which he had gained the window, and was rapidly descending, when two men emerged from the shadow of the house. One of these was Frank Lisle, the other was a railway porter, who carried under his arm a large parcel of toys intended for Mr. Lisle's little friends at

Chesney Manor. They caught sight of the ladder and the descending figure at the same instant, and made a simultaneous rush. As the man touched the ground they seized him.

"The organ-grinder, by Jove!" ejaculated Frank Lisle. "What have you been doing here, you scoundrel?"

The man answered only by a violent unavailing struggle, and at the same instant the crowbar dropped out of his clothes. The railway porter picked it up without loosing his grasp of their captive, and said to Mr. Lisle:

"There's been mischief, sir; there's wet on this, and—my God, there's hair. Hold him, sir, hold him, until I tie him, and then you can go and see what this means. Don't waste strength in shouting, sir."

The thief strove with them like a madman, kicking and biting, but silent, for he knew where the boy was, and that he might hear, but his fight was all in vain. They dragged him to the spot on which the porter had thrown down his burthen, they tied his hands and feet with the thick cord off the parcel of toys, and then Frank Lisle, his clothes torn, his face ghastly, and his heart sinking with a nameless fear, left him in the other's hands, and ran off towards the house door. But the porter called out to him:

"The ladder's there, sir; it will save time, if your head is steady."

He ran back, and began to climb up to the window. Amid the horror and confusion of his thoughts, there was a distinct impression, never to be lost, of the scene below: the brilliant moonlight; the scattered toys; the thief, bound and helpless, struggling no more; the alert wiry man by his side, with a close clutch upon his coat collar; the still sleep of the earth, and the pure coldness of the air of the winter night. He even observed a dark object close to the wall at the foot of the rope-ladder. This, he afterwards learned was the mock organ which had completed the make-up for the character assumed by his unconscious model.

He reached the stone ledge in safety, saw a dim object on the floor beyond the window, stepped over the sill into the room, and knelt down beside the dreadful motionless heap. The moonlight still lay clear and white along the gallery floor, and when Frank Lisle lifted the head upon his knee, and tenderly felt for the limp hand, it showed him that Frederick Horndean was stone dead.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

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PRICE TWOPENCE

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER VIII. DEATH OR GLORY.

AND Stanislas! What in the name of heroic love was Phoebe to do now?

She was to start on Thursday, and well she knew why, and well she read in her father's voice and face a decree from which there was no appeal. Friday would come, and Stanislas would wait for her at the corner, and she would not come, and then—what would happen then? But it was not so much the chances of what the newspapers call double murder and suicide that troubled her, as the mean and cowardly part she felt herself to be playing. She did not ask herself why she had not more openly defied her father, because she had learned that he was not one to be openly defied. But surely there was some effective exit from the complication open to a girl whom paternal tyranny was tearing from her lover. "Oh, if I had never seen him!" thought she, and it was the most honest wish she had ever formed—so honest that it made her ashamed of its honest treason to the man, whom dramatic duty and the whole fitness of things bade her love with all her heart and soul, if only because her love was thwarted and opposed. And Cautleigh Hall! She wished it had been a convent or a castle, but hall sounded well enough, and if it only had a moat, the situation would be complete indeed. Sir Charles Bassett would of course turn out to be some grim old feudal baron, with power to put refractory guests under lock and key. But then it was for her so to act, that these privileges should not be

thrown away upon a tame and spiritless creature who did nothing to deserve them.

One thing she could do, and that was to be as sullen as the days were just then. She could leave to Mrs. Hassock all the preparations for her journey, and affect no more interest in them than if they in no wise concerned her. The line of conduct proved much more difficult than she expected, because she really felt anything but sullen, while the prospect of her first journey into unknown regions excited her and interested her a great deal. But she had made up her mind that "Phoebe Doyle, a sullen young woman," was the description of her part, and she acted up to it as well as she was able, snubbing Mrs. Hassock at every turn, whenever there arose a question of clothes or packing, with an "I don't know," or an "It's all the same to me," which must have proved intensely aggravating to a lady's maid whose place was less worth keeping. Mrs. Hassock, however, unconscious of playing the part of duenna in a complicated drama, took Phoebe at her word, and did everything her own way. As for her father, he might have been made of granite for any effect that her new style of behaviour seemed to have upon him. He even spoke of her visit into Lincolnshire cheerfully, and as if she would find it a pleasant change. "Is he glad to be rid of me?" she asked herself, and forgot to answer that, if he were, he had plenty of cause.

By the time that Tuesday was half through, and only one whole day was left her wherein to make up her mind how she should communicate with Stanislas, and what she should say—for it is no light thing to write one's first real letter

to a great man and a hero, especially when no strong impulse finds the words—she had come to the conclusion that she must do something if she was ever to hold her head up before her looking-glass again. How would an elopement look, especially with forgiveness at the end? But then forgiveness did not seem suggested by such a father as hers. In short, she felt herself in a maze of helpless despair, such as few but children ever enter, when a letter was brought her a second time—and this time she knew the hand; and her father could not have seen this, for he had been out since breakfast-time.

"All is change!" it began. "As you love me, meet me, not on Friday, but to-day, to that corner, at Four.—A. I await, even now."

"Mrs. Hassock," exclaimed Phœbe; it was not Mrs. Hassock who had brought her this letter. "Mrs. Hassock, I can't go in my old waterproof to a Hall! It isn't fit to be seen. And there are all sorts of weather in the country, not a bit like——"

"India? No, miss. As for the waterproof, I'd have mentioned it myself, only you didn't seem to mind, so it wasn't for me to say."

"But I do mind. Of course I mind. It's not too late now. I can go and get one now, and be back by dinner-time. I shall be sure to find one that will fit me, somewhere."

"Why, she isn't the same girl," thought Mrs. Hassock, "that she was this minute ago. She didn't seem to care if her hat was crushed to ribbons; and now she must have a new cloak, or the world 'll come to an end. . . . And the rest of the packing, miss? Is there anything else particular you want done?"

"Oh, put in everything, anyhow," said Phœbe, with impolitic inconsistency, and darted off into her bedroom.

Phœbe got herself ready for walking at amazing speed, and was gone before Mrs. Hassock had time to put this and that together; and, when she did, nothing came. It was a good wholesome sign of returning moral health, when a girl took a sensible interest in sensible things. It was certainly rather foggy weather for a young lady to run her own errands, but in foggy weather she, who had once been Phœbe Burden, was at home, and had often run out, without even a bonnet, on worse days, as in the case of the candles. And the

mist was a godsend, for if she chanced to meet her father on the way to the appointed corner, and if he saw her, she knew very well that she would feel ready to sink into the ground. Had the letter come soon enough in the day to give her thinking time, she was by no means sure that she would have found the resolution to obey its summons. Happily for her heroism, it had come just when she wanted a directing impulse, and had not compelled her to pause. Now, at last, she could feel she was doing the right thing—escaping by stratagem from a father and a duenna, to a secret meeting with the hero who loved her. Even her fear was a delight in its way.

And there, sure enough, was Stanislas waiting for her under the gas-lamp at the corner. The mist was not thick enough to hide the long dark locks, the lean lank figure, and the sallow complexion of an Adrianski. He knew her too, for he came quickly forward and took her gloved hand in both of his own, which, being gloveless, looked raw and felt cold. She noticed that he was better dressed than of old, was cleaner shaved, and that he had, to his great improvement, given up the black strip of plaister which he had gained in her battle. Why did not her heart beat with joy at feeling her hand in his, at last, once more? Perhaps it was the fog—perhaps because his hands were really too damp and cold to make their grasp a pleasure. Nor did he, somehow, look quite so handsome as in the back-garden far away. Still, it was with herself that Phœbe felt disappointed, not with him.

"Ah, so you are come!" said he.

"Yes," said Phœbe.

It was not much to say, but it was her all. No; things were really not the same. The street-corner was not the back-garden, nor was Miss Doyle, the heiress, Phœbe Burden, nor was this man the Stanislas of whom she had dreamed.

"It is well," said her lover. "If you did not, there would be dreadful things. But I knew. I said to myself, 'You are Adrianski. You have the will of Mesmer. What you will, is done. You shall draw her, if you will, out of a brick wall.'"

He had certainly drawn her out of doors, she was bound to own; and if it was really by the power of his will, as his deep black eyes seemed to tell, then he had a fascination the more. Phœbe had always been deeply moved by those tales of mystery and sham-*psychology*, which glorify

what they call the will power and mystify young people into thinking themselves philosophers. But still, what was she to say! She ought to have felt herself in a seventh heaven; but she felt nothing of the kind, and wished she had not left her umbrella at home. Stanislas had none either. But then he had no feathers in his hat, so that it did not so much matter—for him.

"Mademoiselle," said Stanislas, "I did lay at your feet the heart and the sword of a brave man—of Stanislas Adrianski, in fine. You did pick them up, so to say, 'Stanislas, I am yours.' It was one evening, when I jump over the wall. Well, I watch; I wait; the days pass, and the weeks pass, and you never come. You are not ill—no, not even with joy. Simply, you go. I say, it is some mystery here; for that she does not love Adrianski—ah, say that to the pigs, but not to me. I take my violoncello on my back, and I go for a walk, like the *Trovatore*—the man which sings and plays. I take a theatre engagement—I, who am a nobleman in my own land. It is the bread of exile. But what would you? It is bread, after all. I change my lodge; for you are gone, and they are canaille. I am desperate. But an Adrianski is proud. He cannot stay to be vexed for rent so old he has forgotten. He is more proud because he is poor. I see you at 'Olga'—you! And with——"

"With my father," said Phoebe. "And indeed—indeed——"

"Ah! You are rich, mademoiselle; and I am—poor. I comprehend." He drew back, in proud humility, and sighed.

"I have told my father," said Phoebe eagerly; "I have told him that nothing—nothing like that would make any difference—none."

"You have told your father? He knows?"

"There—now you see if I have been false!" said she. She had been able to make so few points, that she could not afford to throw away the smallest chance of one.

"And what does he say—that rich Englishman?" He advanced again, and tried to recover her hand; but she managed to avoid his clasp this time. She could really believe that there was something magnetic, or mesmeric, or galvanic, or whatever the correct jargon is, about this lover of hers. He repelled her, even though she had told herself that she passionately loved him, and admired him above all the

men she had ever seen or ever would see. Raw damp hands cannot make a man the less a Count, a Hero, a Patriot, and a Pole.

"He said—no, you mustn't ask me what he said," said she; for her father's words had been of a sort to vulgarise the finest situation in the world. "But—I'm afraid—I'm certain, he does not approve."

"He will refuse the hand of an Adrianski! He should be more than prince, this milord! It is Adrianski who descends. But never mind; all right; we will see. It is not of this I come to say. Why do I see you to-day? Because, mademoiselle, because this night I leave London; because, it may be, I see you no more again."

Was it dread or hope, dismay or relief, that came over her in a wave?

"Leave—London?" faltered she.

"Yes; the theatre will change; they will have pantomime—an Adrianski does not play the jigs for a clown, a buffoon! But it is not that. I have told you I wait in my exile for what will be to come. My sword is in his sheath; it waits the word; the word comes, Draw! And out he comes."

"You mean, you are going to fight——"

"If it shall please the pigs, yes, mademoiselle. Meanwhile, I go to conjure—to conspire! I am called. No, not to you I say no more. But before many days you will hear a sound that shall shake the tyrant on his throne. It shall be the voice of the nation which will be heard. You will hear the music of the cannons, and will see the flashing of the swords, and the raining of blood; and in the middle of the battle you will hear the voice of Stanislas, and see the sword of Adrianski."

"And——"

"Yes. This night I part. Honour—glory—country, before all. I go to conspire! It may be, the fall of this head will be the sign of what shall begin. And it will be glad to fall; because you are rich, and I am poor."

Even she now forgot to notice that the mist was turning faster and faster into drizzling rain. She must send her heart to battle with this hero, that was clear.

"How can I make you believe? How can I tell you how miserable I have been—I am? How can I help you—what can I do?"

"It may be victory; it may be death; it may both—it shall be one. Make as if I am to die—for Poland; for you. Take my hand."

She could not refuse it now, and he held hers tightly.

"Say, 'Stanislas Adrianski, I love you; and I swear.'"

"You know I do——"

"Very good; that shall be that you swear. I am glad; I fear no more. And now for the pledge, the pawn, I will give you my own ring—it is cheap, but my jewels are not mine. And you will give me yours, which you will. And when you hear of the charge, you shall say, 'My ring was there!'"

There was assuredly some sort of power about the man; even his eloquence had a sort of gloomy vigour that covered the multitude of its sins. And how could she refuse what might be a doomed hero's parting prayer to the woman whom, next to honour, he adored—her first, last, only proof that she deserved his prayer? How could she bear to think of him, in the midst of secret dangers and open perils, fighting, worn out, perhaps wounded, flying, imprisoned, tortured—even slain, on the scaffold or on the field—and feel that, living, he misjudged her, and, dead, would never know what a heroine she meant to be?

I fear that to make a list of Phœbe Doyle's faults and follies, since she had become a lady, would take a long and sorry chapter. I am not her champion. She had been sly, sullen, rebellious, weak, wilful—I could easily think of a few more hard names to call her that good girls never deserve. But the light, though it had to find its way through sadly crooked chinks, flashed through her now and then, and I cannot help an instinct that it flashed through her now, though she was rebelliously meeting a forbidden lover by stealth, and though that meeting ended in her pulling off her glove and giving him what he asked for; something for nothing, like a fool; a troth-pledge to the sham hero of a half-forgotten dream. I can picture some wise and noble woman, happening (as she may happen) to find in love her highest duty, driven to meet her knight by stealth, fired with zeal for some noble cause, and proud to think that her last gift will shine in its van—and such, in faith and belief, was Phœbe Doyle.

And so, bearing with him this token of her faith, and having pressed a long kiss upon her ungloved hand, Stanislas Adrianski departed to Poland—to death, it might be; to glory it must surely be. And

so Phœbe, half wet through, and thinking many things, went home.

Thursday morning came, and now that Stanislas had changed once more from a formidable fact back into a heroic ideal of whom she would be proud to dream, the prospect of new scenes and new people began to hold out their proper promise to a healthy mind. Her father, all through breakfast, wore a more cheerful air. He went with Phœbe and Mrs. Hassock to the station, and saw them off most amiably, though he rather surprised the house-keeper by letting his only daughter leave him for the first time without giving her a kiss at parting. Perhaps they were Indian manners, thought she, and though she had seen the usual signs of affection pass between Anglo-Indians, she knew that India is a large place, and contains, no doubt, a variety of customs.

"But—miss! Your new waterproof! If we haven't left it behind, I declare!"

Phœbe felt herself turn as hot as fire, and colour up to the eyes.

"I never got it after all," said she. "I dare say the old one will do very well."

"Yes, miss. Thinking you'd no more use for it, I thought it would be a pity not to wear it out, so I thought I'd do it myself, sooner than waste a thing, which is sinful at the best of times. But, of course, you're welcome to it, as you've changed your mind. I've noticed how ladies from India are rather apt to change their minds. But it was a pity you went out in the wet for nothing. Your clothes were just as if you'd been walking about—all alone."

"I'd rather you would keep it, Mrs. Hassock," said Phœbe with a fainter flush, but a more guiltily conscious one. "I don't want one at all."

So Mrs. Hassock put this and that together again with more success than before.

The train met with no accident, so the journey from London to Quellsby, the nearest station to Cautleigh, was a necessarily uneventful one. Not even such a novice in travelling as Phœbe can get any new ideas or sensations worth mentioning from a journey in a railway train. The fields, villages, churches, and stations ran past one another in no more remarkable manner than they pass along the much-more-wonderful railroad that runs through Phœbe's native land of dreams, and though Cockneys profess to find the

country delightful, at least for a little while, I never heard of one who found its features strange. To leave London always feels like going home. It was far more exciting when the train stopped at Quellsby, an exceedingly small station, and when a footman came up to the carriage-door, and, touching his hat, enquired for Miss Doyle. This was a touch of life, for the footman was undeniably real—the most real thing she had seen since she saw her father waving his hand from the platform.

The carriage, with its pair of horses, its coachman and footman, were all that had come to meet her; but Phoebe was impressed, and Mrs. Hassock not dissatisfied with the respect paid at the station to ladies who arrived as guests at Cautleigh Hall. If Phoebe had anticipated great things from the country, she was doomed to disappointment; if she looked forward to romantic misery, she was destined to the satisfaction of her heart's desire. The seven miles from Quellsby to Cautleigh were as flat and ugly as a Dutchman would wish to see, and mainly ran through moist meadows with unpicturesque curves of wold beyond them. But Cautleigh is a pleasant old-fashioned hamlet enough, with its ancient church and its scattered cottages buried among trees. The winter sun was feebly setting, and the rooks were cawing their last word for the day, as the carriage passed the lodge-gates, and rolled smoothly along the level park drive. Phoebe was really impressed, and was shy of speaking even to Mrs. Hassock, feeling instinctively, as any woman would, that to seem impressed by such things looks ignorant and unbecoming. At last, the long avenue having been passed, the carriage drew up before the Hall itself—a new-old mansion, partly white and partly red, square, ugly, very convenient, and very large, with a terraced flower-garden in front and on one side, and a pleasant vision of fruit-walls and hothouses beyond, while the park, bounded by now bare plantations, stretched round on every side. It was cold and misty, and the afternoon was failing into twilight, so that the place looked sad and sombre, but full of dignity, and with a promise of infinite comfort within. And this, at last, was Cautleigh Hall, the principal character in this history, and yet never seen until now.

The hall bell clattered and clanged. The door opened. A young man—Phoebe remembered his face at the play-house—

came out with a couple of dogs at his heels. He raised his hat.

"Miss Doyle?" said he. "Welcome to Cautleigh, with all my heart! I'm Ralph Bassett, you know. Mr. Ralph Bassett—Miss Doyle. Our fathers were old friends, so we must be young ones. That's all your luggage? Here, Stanislas, lend a hand for the small things."

A man-servant, in plain black clothes, had followed Ralph Bassett from the door. He came forward, to take from the carriage such small things as parasols and shawls. How odd that he should answer to his name! Phoebe looked at him for that very reason. And she saw—

Stanislas Adrianski!

SOMETHING ABOUT SIGNATURES.

I AM not sure that a man's character is not indicated by his "Yours etc.," even more than by the contents of his letter. I speak, of course, of the ending to a friendly letter; for in a mere letter of business a man must be conventional, or he would be looked upon as too lively to be trusted. But in a letter of friendship, I think that a man's "subscription"—I believe that is the right word for his ending—is the real keynote to his character, and to his care for you; for in the manner of penning it, as well as in the choice of words, may be found volumes of intention, or of listlessness. I shall name half-a-dozen of my friends or acquaintances, who have vindicated this view of letter signatures; and who have added to my enjoyment (save when they have recklessly detracted from it) through from ten to thirty years of correspondence.

Horace Stapleton, who is really not a bad fellow, and whom I have known, perhaps, for twelve or fourteen years, used at one time to write to me "Yours sincerely;" and he wrote it very legibly, as if he meant it. We were never great friends, but only kindly acquaintances, having met more in business than in intimacy. Now it was at the close of the year 1878 that I received a letter from this estimable gentleman, which caused me to rub my eyes with astonishment. It was signed, "Your obedient servant." I knew the horrid meaning of those words. I have invariably observed that the more "obedient" a man is in the tone of his epistolary signature, the more you may conclude that he has hostile intentions, or at the best that

he is profoundly indifferent. This is all the more true when your "obedient servant" has been in the habit of signing himself, "Yours sincerely." That a man who has been "sincere," should on a sudden become "obedient"—downright servile in the tone of his subscription—argues certainly that he intends to be offensive, if indeed he does not purpose to quarrel with you. In this particular instance my estimate of such obedience was justified by what immediately followed. It so happened that I published my work on Gynococracy; or, *Hen Pecking Philosophically Considered*, on the same day when I received this horrid letter; and I hoped that the reviewers would speak highly of that work, and even pronounce it the great work of the year. Now, Horace Stapleton is by profession a literary man, and occasionally writes reviews of new books. To my vexation and disgust he reviewed my Gynococracy with a gay, yet malignant vituperation. He seemed to jump on the top of it, and to smash it. He even said that "there were parts of it which were readable—those parts which were, perhaps, written by some lady." This was the criticism of his "obedience;" this was the servility of my "servant." The whole review showed an animus against myself and my writings, which was consistent with such genuflectory attitude. We are good friends again now (his signatures are once more Christian), and I doubt not that when I publish my next book, "Yours sincerely" will be found to run through all his eulogy. Still, one can never quite get over the painfully chilling effect of having been once even the object of obedience. The remembrance of it makes one nervous about the future. It seems to forecast the possibility of yet another postal fragment in which rigidity may blot the final page. It even makes one open every letter with distrust. However, it does not do to be too sensitive. I am bound to say that Horace Stapleton, in all his recent communications, has written "Yours sincerely" most plainly; giving attention to his pot-hooks, and rounding his vowels, in a way that shows earnestness of will.

Tom Spasm, who is of no particular profession, and who writes to me, on an average, once a fortnight, has this delightful eccentricity of habit: that he never—not even by an accident—signs two of his letters in the same way. I have known him for twenty years; and I can conscientiously affirm that, during the

whole of that time, he has never repeated himself in signature. The most spontaneous and gushing of characters, unfettered by conventionalism or propriety, strictly moral, beyond all question, and most exemplary, but "infrenate" in the sense of being original, Tom Spasm has a fascinating habit of being himself and not somebody else. His argument as to signatures is of this kind; he says that when you write to a friend you should discard mere formality as unfriendly. If you sign yourself, he has said to me, with some grooved and rutted formula, such as a stranger or a new acquaintance might use, "you imply that you mean to imply nothing" beyond the necessities of decorous amenity. Your signature should be always the highest compliment to the individuality of the person to whom you write. You should not treat him as if he were of the herd, and could not appreciate the delicacy of invention; but you should sign yourself so as to convey the impression that your mutual sympathies are exceptional. Again, says Tom Spasm, it is obvious that every signature should be harmonious with the spirit of a letter; and that for a man to be effusive through several pages of note-paper, and then suddenly to become conventional at the close, is an offence against the congruities of the intellect, equally with those of the heart. Accordingly Tom Spasm is spasmodic. He rushes into the full swing of vitality just where most men pull up as if they were shot. His signature is the soul of his letter. It is the climax, the final burst, of his written mind. I always turn first to the end. From the end I conclude the whole tenor of that enjoyment which I am about to derive from four sides.

"Yours faithfully" is not an assurance of signature to which I attach much importance. One of the best men I know, Herbert Longley, always writes to me, year after year, "Yours faithfully." He seems to be timid about suggesting the possibility that he could ever be changeful in his relations. I have said to him: "My dear Longley, if you could vary your signature, so as to admit that there may be other graces besides faith, I should find it a relief to my accustomedness. I am bound to admit that the word 'faithfully' is an adverb which has no legitimate degrees of comparison. 'More faithfully,' or 'most faithfully,' would be inaccurate; since *fidem fallere* even once would be fatal; and to be more faithful than faithful

is impossible. But, on the other hand, to reassert what you have asserted two hundred times seems to suggest the question-ability of the unquestionable. Of course, my dear Longley, you are faithful. But why keep on perpetually telling me so? I shall begin to think that you have stereotyped your care for me; and that I need not value it because it never changes." But how can you argue with a "practical man," who is sternly yet splendidly ingenuous, and who never drinks anything but water? Herbert Longley is as faithful to sweet temperance as he is to the pure waters of friendship.

Now do not write to me "Yours etc.," I entreated of that young gentleman whose acquaintance I made down at Margate. What on earth is "etc.?" Is it haste, which is disrespectful; or want of thought, which is silly; or want of interest, which is ungracious; or rank laziness, which is whippable? The next time you write to me "Yours etc.," I will return you the Latin fragment in an envelope, and make you write it out at full length. I wonder what gender you will put it into? "Et cetera" will be a neutral tag of sentiments, which you are quite welcome to keep to yourself. "Et ceteræ" will be languid in suggestiveness, or wanting in the robustness of esteem. I would rather you put "ceterum," or "cetero," which, if it meant anything, would mean "henceforth." And, again, why will you abbreviate your words, in that odiously infinitesimal way? "Yrs," as you love to subscribe yourself, is only three-fifths of a possessive pronoun. It is the limited liability of professed esteem. And so, too, with the beginnings of your letters. "My dr.," instead of "My dear." If you cannot "dear" me in four letters, leave it alone. Positive, dear; comparative, dr.; superlative, d., is a mode of declension which is subversive. I would much rather you put nothing at all. Oh, young men—and even old men—may you be etcetera'd before I will answer your economised scribbings.

I have, however, two original friends, who mightily please me by their digressions. First, there is my old friend, Will Maynard, who never puts any subscription—that is, he never puts any to me, though I assume he treats strangers with formality. His argument is at least captivating, if not sound. He says: Why should you write as a friend through four sides, and then conclude by insisting that you are a friend; or why should you affirm that you are

"Yours sincerely" in a letter, any more than you would affirm it in conversation? You do not meet your best friend at a club, and salute him with "Yours sincerely, my dear Smith;" so why should you keep on saying it because you write, and after you have proved it by your writing? So Will Maynard never puts any subscription, but abruptly appends his whole name. My second original friend, Harry Playflower, not only never puts any subscription, but never signs even his name or his initials. His argument is in advance of Will Maynard's, or rather, it is an extension of the same plea; for he says that the whole charm of a friendly letter is in the knowledge of the friend from whom it comes; and that to suppose that your familiar, who rejoices in your sympathies, and who is the "dimidium" of your inmost soul and fancy, can want to be told who you are—after he has read you through three or four sides—is to cast doubt on the exquisiteness of the relations which is the very joy of epistolary interchange. I like mad people, when they are clever; and both these friends are as clever as they are frisky. I must, however, mention a third friend, who is also indubitably insane, but in the direction of vaedictory verbosity. I should preface that he is sixty-five years of age. When he writes me a letter, he always covers the last side with what reads like an interminable subscription. Here is one of his recent adieux: "Ever, my dear friend, with increasing regard and esteem, and with a degree of interest in your welfare which I assure you that I am not able to express, most truly, and affectionately yours; and this, too, not only in the formal senses of those words, but in their inner and deeper signification," and so on, through several lines more.

In the City, men have a way of subscribing their letters as if they took down their subscriptions out of pigeon-holes; "We remain, dear sirs, your faithful and obedient servants, Brown, Jones, Smith, and Co." And then—which is the most painful part of all—you can see that the letter has been copied, so that it may be referred to in the event of a row. I have one City friend—and a dear kind old gentleman he is—whose writing is always faint from being copied; and high up in one corner is "No. 4,768," showing that I have been carefully indexed. As he never writes to me except to say kind things, I cannot imagine why he should number his letters. Then there is my friend Walter de

Million, the rich banker, palatially mansioned in Lombard Street, who writes a beautiful, clear, prosperous hand, a hand which suggests accuracy in book-keeping, and which makes you feel: "If I should overdraw my account, that senior partner will hear of it in two seconds." De Million is a nice Consol'd-looking man, with a sort of smooth-incomed expression about the mouth; and his boots show that his brougham is carpeted, and his hat has never a hair out of its place. Whenever De Million writes to me, he signs himself persistently, "Yours truly," and never permits himself the luxury of a superlative. Now, I must confess that this "truly" annoys me. It is the hovering between formality and friendship. It keeps clear of the banking-counter and the cash-book, but it has nothing of the private room or back parlour, where I have seen the wretch drawing his big cheques. If he were to sign himself, even once, "Yours most truly"—and we were capital friends both at school and at college—I should have hopes that he would double his clerks' salary, who, I am told, would not object to the increase.

And this reference to City clerks reminds me of a peculiarity which I have not unfrequently noticed in their (City) letters. Underneath their own names, or what is called the sign manual, there comes a wild and epileptic sort of flourish, which is evidently put there for the indulgence of the imagination, and as a relief after the stilted business letter. It is the only bit of originality at their command. They are so utterly sick to death of "Dear sir-ing" and "Obedient servant-ing," that they try to find consolation in appending a lean serpent, with two spikes drawn across it obliquely. And this habit is so formed that, even in private communications, they are apt to treat their best friends to the finale. I have one youthful friend in Mincing Lane, aged nineteen, who writes to me the most admirable letters, but invariably with the serpent and the spikes, and sometimes the serpent will trail its tail all down the page, as though it would wag it to show that it is pleased.

But what annoys me, whenever I get a "business letter" (that is, a letter from some emporium or some counting-house), is that one man writes the letter, and the subscription, and another man writes only the signature. Now this makes the subscription look unmeaning. The clerk knows that it is meant to be unmeaning.

That is its definite object and purpose. And, I suppose, it is as good as any other. Besides, how can you write to a man about business—a man whom you never saw and never wish to see—and put any subscription which can mean more than this: "My sentiments are in the ratio of your payments." The proper subscription to the letter of any man of business would be, "Yours pecuniarily," or "Yours get the better of you-ingly," or "Yours within the confines of legitimate felony," or "Yours extractingly, evisceratingly, vivisectionally." "Business" being the art of transferring other peoples' money out of their possibly paid for pockets into your own, it is obvious that its literature should be expressive of its objects, and its subscriptions neatly attuned to gentle theft. "Your obedient servant" is simply absurd, if not offensive, when addressed to a man you want to rob. "Sir, I regret that I cannot consent to your terms, and, therefore, our correspondence can cease. Your obedient servant." Very obedient! It is like writing, "I have the honour to remain," as a pompous wind-up to a proud letter, which has intimated, by thinly-veiled contempt, that you think your correspondent your inferior. "Mr. Smith presents his compliments to Mr. Brown, and begs to decline his acquaintance," would not be more incongruous, in the juxtaposition of clauses, than "I won't: Your obedient servant." But then, how are you to express the idea, nil? If we were to make it bad form to use conventional expressions, or to repeat any subscription used before, we should have to endow men—and women—with imagination and with time, to an extent which would recast human life. As a rule, women are more original than men—less fettered by dry rules of conventionalism; but this is because they write few letters about business, and many letters of friendship or love. Ah! love-letters. Now let us ask this appropriate question—appropriate to the endings of private letters—does emotion aid the head in composition? I should say most emphatically it does not. Take the example I have named—the most extreme of illustrations: the subscriptions to women's—or men's—love-letters. Two or three warm superlatives, of erotic signification, with a noun or two of glowing mutuality, and there is an end of the vocabulary. Thus the copia verborum of the heart is not one page out of the dictionary of the head. The explanation I

take to be this : Emotion does not think, it only feels ; whereas friendship feels chiefly because it thinks.

Yet the principal drawback to the thinking letters of thinking men — so far as the subscriptions to their letters is concerned—is that there is generally an obvious study of the fitness of subscription, which mars its spontaneity and grace. You can almost feel the half-second of pause and consideration which has preceded the subscription selected. There is an eclectic mood and style about the writing of it. A quarter of a second more, and that “sincerely” might have had a “most,” or that “faithfully” might have been supplanted by “Yours ever.” It was a toss up whether superlative should have its play. Now I think that a good letter-writer will end a letter to a friend, so as to make the end seem like the grip of a kind hand. There will be the avoidance of mere formulæ, or of scrawl, which make an end read like, “I suppose I must put something.” Yet this “something” is generally put for the “real thing.” Just as some men shake hands with you as if it cost fourpence to do it, or as if their whole nature wore kid gloves, so some men sign their letters as if the choice of a subscription had involved them in expenditure or in bore. Such an ending can give a reader no pleasure. Heaven knows what is that gift we call instinct, by which we penetrate the inner thought of written words. Yet so it is, that not what a man writes gives us pleasure, but the unexpressed and invisible sentiment of the writer. Now the sublime art of giving pleasure by spontaneous mutuality is not a gift which is common to all mankind. It must be born in a man’s nature or it is impossible. I have received letters, with but an ordinary ending, which have made my heart thrill with gratification ; and I have received letters, with voluminous assurance, which have produced no more effect than flakes of snow. Is this because we know the writers’ natures? Yes ; but it is also because the one has spontaneity, and the other has no soul but pen and ink.

I must mention one more friend, who has a theory about subscriptions for which I think there is something to be said. I shall not give his real name, because he is a sensitive fellow ; and also for another reason I will presently tell. I will, however, try to describe his handwriting. If a spider in convulsions were to crawl into an inkpot, and then crawl over four sides

of note-paper, it would produce the same character of caligraphy as my excellent friend, say, “J. W.” Now J. W. argues that a subscription to a (friendly) letter ought to be, on principle, hard to read ; because if you leave it an open question whether you are affectionate or obedient, true, faithful, sincere, or attached, you necessarily stimulate enquiry, and, therefore, interest, and so compel your puzzled friend to care about you. On the same principle, he will argue that all the handwriting in a (friendly) letter ought to be just a trifle mysterious, because mystery has a charm for deep thinkers, and because the pleasure of reading a letter is so transient, and even momentary, when you can gallop through the lines and through the thoughts. It will be seen that J. W. is not primarily a man of business ; indeed, he is not in any business at all ; which is a happy fact for other persons besides himself. Still, J. W. has a spirit of observation, which he has put to the following novel account. (And now it will be seen why a feeling of delicacy has prevented my giving his real name.) He has been making a collection, during the last fifteen years, of what he calls, “epistolary good-byes.” He has strung together three hundred and twenty-seven signatures—or rather, subscriptions, or modes of saying farewell. He has headed these good-byes with seven distinct titles, corresponding to their care or intensity—the offensive the evasive, the formal, the complimentary, the friendly, the affectionate, the amorous. There is also an appendix—to me the most interesting—which bears the pleasant title, “The Insane.” J. W. is going to publish this collection ; and he will publish it in his own name—which is a grand one. Epistolary Good-byes, will be found shortly at Mudie’s, and will, I doubt not, be devouringly run upon.

A BREACH OF PROMISE.

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER.

THERE is a good deal of excitement in Bodmington to-day. It seems to be in the air, and the air gets into everything and every place. Bodmington is ordinarily restful, not to say monotonous. But it generally casts off sloth and bestirs itself on market-days, when it puts on a most festive and fascinating appearance for the benefit of the neighbouring farmers and their wives and daughters, who are wont to declare that there is more life in

Bodmington than in any other place they can name.

But to-day, though it is market-day, the prevalent excitement must strike the most unobservant as being something quite extraordinary and out of the common. There is quite a concourse of people assembled together at Berringer's, the chief confectioner's; the market-place is alive with animated groups who are not discussing the prices of crops and cattle; and Miss Mowbray's show-rooms are filled to overflowing.

Indeed, Miss Mowbray, the popular and tasteful little milliner, may be said to be the centre of attraction this day. She can tell more about this astounding approaching wedding, the mere rumour of which has thrown Bodmington off its balance, than anybody else, for she is confidently reported to be making the wedding-dress, some even say the whole trousseau.

She is a delightful little woman this popular little milliner, quite as pretty and charming as she was ten years ago, when she came and took the taste of Bodmington by storm in the capacity of show-woman in Mrs. Mayne's (her predecessor's) shop. A bright sweet-faced little woman of thirty-five or thereabouts, gifted with a lively voice, and endowed with an exquisitely graceful figure and way of carrying herself.

During these ten years which she has passed here, she has become quite a local power, and has more than doubled the already good business to which she succeeded on the death of her old employer, Mrs. Mayne. No dress is well reputed in Bodmington and its vicinity unless it has Miss Mowbray's indisputable stamp upon it. And the "best worn" bonnets at the local races, the "best worn" flowers at the local balls, must be arranged by Miss Mowbray, or they are regarded as worse than useless—they are actually vulgar!

She has attained this just celebrity, not only on account of "prompt attention to your highly esteemed favours," which all tradespeople pledge themselves to give, but on account of a certain sweet, blithe, gentle dignity which marks her as a gentlewoman even in the eyes of those least accustomed to the article. All—or nearly all—her customers like her, and are interested in and sympathetic with her, though they know absolutely nothing at all about her beyond this, that she lives in Bodmington and makes lovely bonnets.

But to return to the abnormal excitement which is prevailing at Bodmington to-day.

The cause of it is being fully discussed in Miss Mowbray's show-room by an eager and animated group of country ladies, who would, one and all, gain more information on the all-absorbing topic, if they were not so desirous of seeming to be able to afford a little in return.

"I couldn't have believed it possible that the first I should hear of Beatrice Alleyne's marriage would be in Berringer's shop, instead of from her own lips," buxom little Mrs. Harcourt says in aggrieved tones. "We were schoolfellows for years, and she was bridesmaid, and now I hear of her approaching marriage for the first time from strangers, who can't even tell me the name of the man."

"It's very close and underhand of Beatrice."

"It's not what I should have expected from her father's daughter; all the world was welcome to know what he did, dear old man. There was no concealment about him, but Beatrice takes after her mother, who was a nasty dark foreign-looking woman. I always say that Mrs. Alleyne's stand-off ways lost her husband the election the last time he stood. Bodmington would never have turned him out, if his wife had shown a more friendly spirit to the neighbourhood."

All the while this conversation is going on between her patronesses, Miss Mowbray is silently occupied in arranging some winter floral decorations in Mrs. Harcourt's bonnet.

This work of art accomplished, to the satisfaction of its owner, she appeals to Miss Mowbray, no longer fearing to distract the artist's attention till her own cause is served.

"They say you are making the whole of the trousseau. Is that true, Miss Mowbray?"

"Quite true, madam."

"Oh, then you can tell me more about it. Who is the gentleman, and what is his name?"

"These flowers a little more to the edge of the brim! Yes, madam. His name is Littleton."

"It's a very sudden affair, isn't it?"

"Miss Alleyne told me two months ago to prepare her trousseau, and ordered a handsome one. She evidently did not wish to have it talked about so long before, therefore I never mentioned it. But this

morning she came in, saying all the world might know it now, it was so near; and then she told me the gentleman's name."

"Will they live here? Is he rich? Has he a place of his own?"

These, and countless other questions, are poured in upon Miss Mowbray with almost ferocious velocity. But the well-bred little milliner does not allow herself to be overwhelmed by them. Calmly and quietly she answers each one in her due and appointed season, satisfying them perfectly by her manner, and leaving them to discover by-and-by that her matter has been very insufficient for their needs and desires.

Meanwhile those who have remained in the market-place and streets are faring much better, for Miss Alleyne takes her walks abroad in the afternoon through the most public places, and those who know her well enough to stop and speak find that she has put away all reticence on the subject of her marriage now.

"Yes," she confesses, "she had wished it to be kept quiet till it drew very near, for she dreaded interference from some members of her family. Mr. Littleton disliked hearing himself talked about; but now all the world was welcome to know that she was to be married next week, and that she and her husband would come back after the honeymoon and live at Bodmington Place."

"That looks as if he had no estate of his own," some of her friends conjecture as they congratulate the young owner of the pretty little estate which gives her a position among the landed gentry of the county.

But Beatrice is too happy to give a thought to their possible conjectures, or to the way in which these latter may cast a slur on the fortunes of the man whom she has enthroned in her heart.

Later in the day, when Miss Mowbray's show-rooms are comparatively deserted, Beatrice runs in to look at her wedding-dress.

A wooden frame, shaped like a headless woman, supports the snowy fabric of satin and lace as gracefully as a wooden frame can, and as the bonnie-faced brunette who is to wear it so soon stands contemplating it, the womanly desire to get and give sympathy on this sweetest of all subjects seizes her.

"Miss Mowbray," she exclaims, speaking in that quick piquant way which she has inherited from her half-Irish, half-

Spanish mother, "how is it that you, who are so—oh, ever so much prettier and more charming than I am—have not found anyone to insist upon your loving him and giving yourself up to him, as Guy Littleton does me?"

The girl—spoilt little darling of circumstances as she is—has quick perceptions and an intensely affectionate heart. Now, the moment she has uttered her thoughtless words, she bitterly repents herself of them, for Miss Mowbray's fair gentle face quivers. The nerves of it seem almost convulsed with pain. However, she recovers herself so readily, that Beatrice has no excuse for remarking upon the temporary emotion.

"If I had been fortunate as you are, Miss Alleyne, I should not be making your wedding-dress now, and as you are good enough to say I have made it better than anyone else would have done, why, we are both well satisfied, I hope, with things as they are."

"I want to ask a favour of you," Beatrice says impulsively, wheeling round. "My aunts and cousins are coming to my wedding, of course, but they don't much like the idea of my marriage, and so I don't want to have them buzzing about me in the morning before I go to church. They will be too much taken up, moreover, with their own dresses and appearance to give a thought to me. There is no one I should so much like to have with me at that time as you. Will you come and dress me? I have neither mother nor sister. Will your kind hands give the finishing touches to the last dress Beatrice Alleyne will ever wear?"

"You dear little pathetic pleader, yes," the other one responds instantaneously.

Then she remembers that she is no longer known to the world as Admiral Mowbray's daughter Ida, but merely to the Bodmington section of it as the estimable and pretty little milliner, Miss Mowbray.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Alleyne," she adds hurriedly, "I forgot for a moment that we—I mean that I—I mean"—this very resolutely—"that I shall like to dress you on your wedding-day very much indeed, for I'm going to leave Bodmington, and I shall like to feel that you are the last person I decked out."

"You are going to leave Bodmington?" Beatrice cries, aghast; "and I shall be vilely dressed by someone else, and Guy will be disgusted with my looks. No, no, Miss Mowbray, unless you're going 'to

marry and be happy ever after,' as I am, you know, you mustn't leave Bodmington."

As Miss Alleyne says this, she is flitting from frounce to flower, and Miss Mowbray is saying to herself:

"Idiot that I am; it most likely is another Guy Littleton all the time, and I am disturbing my hardly attained peace for nothing."

"Well," she says aloud, cheered by her own view of things for the moment, "since you will have it so, and since I don't suppose I should ever like another place as well, I'll promise not to leave Bodmington."

"And you'll promise to dress me on my wedding-day," Beatrice says, and then they become absorbed in far weightier matters, such as the colour and cut of the travelling costume, and the advisability of having moveable fan-shaped trains made to button on some of the superior short skirts.

Bodmington Place is crowded in the course of a few days after this with a formidable army of uncles, aunts, and cousins, not one of whom knows anything of the man who is going to carry off their niece and cousin, the little heiress of Bodmington Place, and each one of whom is consequently disposed to believe the worst about him that may be imagined of man.

It is true that up to the present time they have nothing definite to allege against him beyond the fact that he is a stranger to them. Being, as a family, of great importance to themselves and one another, they find it hard to forgive anything like ignorance of all concerning themselves on the part of an outsider. Unfortunately, ostrich-like, they forget that the ignorance may be on their own side, not on that of the offending other one. And so they tell each other in low tones that they hope for the best, of course, but expect the worst from a man who has made dear Bee's acquaintance through any other medium than the proper family one.

Meanwhile the little bride-elect goes on her way rejoicing, and is buoyantly and unconcernedly regardless of the warnings they waft towards her, and the endless way they have of going on craftily suggesting unhappy terminations to this good time she is having.

"No; she knows nothing of Guy Littleton's family, and very little of his fortunes beyond this (to her) utterly unimportant fact that the latter are as poor as they well can be; but he himself is a

darling, a king among men! fine and tall, and full of wit and valour. Very probably they"—the uncles and aunts and cousins—"will see nothing in him; they are not educated up to the point of appreciating and delighting in his vast superiority to themselves."

These, and many other similar ones, are the comments Beatrice makes to herself often, and occasionally to Miss Mowbray, anent the coming man, and the attitude her relations are prepared to assume towards him.

As the day of his destiny approaches, Mr. Littleton grows daily less and less deserving of the love and loyal confidence which Beatrice Alleyne is giving him. He has left the friends' house at which he met and won the bonnie Bee, and gone to Southsea, where he is always tolerably sure of meeting a number of old messmates and friends.

He is a naval surgeon, and he has won and deserved many professional "plums." He is very popular with men while he is with them, for he has unflagging spirits in society, and a fund of humour that is a very good thing to draw upon during a long cruise. But when he has left them for any time they say to one another that "he was a queer fish," and seem to have a keener recollection of his eccentricities and peculiarities than of his better, or even more popular, qualities.

In very truth he is a "queer fish," a far queerer one than any of them know or even imagine. For all his bonhomie and high spirits in society, he is a suffering and a haunted man; a man haunted by a horrible dread.

At divers times during his past life this awful gruesome dread has attacked and routed him, upsetting his best resolutions, sweeping away his mastery over himself, nearly destroying his social and professional prospects. Ah, he will never forget the day when the dread was stronger upon him than ever it had been before or since! till now—now on the eve of his wedding-day with Beatrice Alleyne, it is growing, growing hourly; it is stronger than ever!

As in a dream, he finds himself using the same arguments to himself, writing the same letters, doing the same to hide his flight, as he did on a former occasion.

He cannot marry, he will not marry! Who is there powerful enough in all the world to make him marry? Rather than do it he will cut the service and bury himself alive. Poor little Beatrice, why had he

let her beauty and sweetness lure him into this direful difficulty?

So to happy Beatrice, defiant of all family opposition in her love and confidence, the cruel post bears a letter written apparently by an iron hand in the coldest blood.

"A conviction that I am doing the best thing for us both in writing to tell you that I shall never see you again, instead of coming to claim you as my bride, has taken possession of me. Marry some luckier and worthier fellow, and believe me when I tell you that you are well rid of
GUY LITTLETON."

Beatrice receives this letter on her wedding-day, as her wedding-dress is being buttoned on to her by Miss Mowbray.

The stab is too sudden, too sharp, she cannot bear the anguish of it in silence. With a scream her poor loving arms go out and cling to the one from whom she is surest of sympathy, to Miss Mowbray, the milliner.

"Oh, my heart, my heart! break at once and kill me!" the poor girl wails, and then she falls frightened and half-senseless, and some of the aunts and cousins strive to "bring her to" by reminding her that "they have always said it, and always thought it."

But Miss Mowbray soon clears the room of these well-meaning ones, and proceeds to offer sharp restoratives.

"Hush!" she says; "don't wish your heart to break and kill you; your heart will do yourself and others good service yet. Let us look at this together. We shall both see it in the same light."

"No, no, no; you never knew Guy Littleton—you never learnt to think it impossible for him to lie to a woman who loved him," Beatrice cries, and for answer Miss Mowbray takes a well-worn letter from her pocket, and Beatrice reads it, and sees that it is almost word for word like the one she has just received, and that it is signed by the same man.

Then, strung up by the indignation she feels that any other woman has the same right she has to lament a wrecked love, and loathe the same wrecker, Beatrice sits down in her wedding-dress and listens to what Miss Mowbray has to tell her.

"It is just eleven years ago that this same thing happened to me," Miss Mowbray begins; "my father had just hoisted his flag at Reymouth when I came out at one of the garrison balls and being the

admiral's daughter, and young and fresh in those days, I made what they told me was a sensation. At that ball I met Mr. Littleton, he was an assistant-surgeon then, and from the time I met him I never ceased to think of him, and he never ceased his exertions to get appointed to the flag-ship.

"He succeeded at last, and soon made himself a favourite on board with everyone, especially with my dear old father. I was living with an aunt in lodgings in the town, and it came at last to be an understood thing that, when my father came to dine with us quietly, he should bring Mr. Littleton with him in preference to any of the other officers. Very soon we became engaged, and my father gave his consent freely, to everyone's surprise, for they thought he ought to have been more ambitious for me. But he thought Guy Littleton a man among men, and you may be sure I did the same.

"I don't think any girl could have been happier in her engagement than I was: it was a period of perfect poetry written in the smoothest rhyme. He treated me not only as his love and idol, but as his intellectual equal and companion, and made me believe that he should be as proud of his wife as I should be of my husband.

"Our wedding-day came. All the ships in the harbour were decked with flags, and the way to St. Andrew's Church was lined with bunting and flowers. The artillery and marine bands were sent out to play us home after the wedding, and altogether there was as much fuss made about my marriage as if I had been a little princess.

"My case was harder even than yours, I think you will admit, when I tell you that I went to the church, and waited at the altar-rails, with my string of twelve bridesmaids behind me, and my dear father by my side. We waited on and on for nearly an hour, and oh! the agony of that waiting. He never came. He never sent a word, beyond this letter, of explanation; and, can you believe it? the crowd who had assembled to cheer us, hooted and yelled at me as I was driven home.

"His leave of absence had been granted to him before in order that he might go on his wedding-tour, and that served him now. My father was too proud to attempt to stand in the way of his promotion, and he soon got another ship. I believe, at any rate, he never came back to Reymouth and from that day till the one on

which you told me of your engagement, no one has ever mentioned his name to me.

"Soon after that awful day my father died, and a few months after that I lost the little fortune he had left me by the failure of the private bank in which it was funded. Then my relations began to look coldly upon me, and to continually urge me to marry impossible people; and so, after a short struggle with my own prejudices, I determined to leave all of the old behind me, and go to work on a lower rung of the ladder of life. So I came here, and the rest you know."

"We have each had a narrow escape from a madman!" Beatrice says, and there is a stirring ring in her tones which seems to promise that there will be no weak repining on her part about this calamity which has overtaken her.

The affectionate but retrospective-minded relations are not pleasant people to face while her wound is still fresh. Nevertheless, Beatrice faces them boldly, listens to all their conjectures with patience, and steers clear of annoying them in all respects, save this one, that she will neither utter nor listen to aught that sounds like reprobation or condemnation of her renegade lover.

"He is gone, and the rest shall be silence," she says good-temperedly, but she towers above them in her generosity and power of subduing her own pain as she says it, and they obey her, and soon cease conjecturing about him.

But though Beatrice can be reticent enough when she pleases, she does not please to be reticent about her friend Miss Mowbray's real status in social life. And so soon it comes to pass that the sweet-faced milliner of Bodmington is compelled to admit herself to be as much of a gentlewoman as any of her most aristocratic customers, and though she persists in keeping the shop which has resuscitated her fortunes, still her home is with Miss Alleyne at the Place.

At least it is her home for a time, but eventually Miss Mowbray buries her dead, and listens to wooing that is, if not as fond as was Guy Littleton's, unquestionably more faithful.

He is a good sort of man, this one whom she marries; a nice gentlemanly, sensible surgeon with a fair private property, and a good professional income. It is a drawback to unqualified satisfaction in the latter, that it is derived from his post as head of a private lunatic asylum.

But his private residence is out of ear-shot of the gruesome sounds, that are being poured forth, night and day, from that weary bourne to which the mentally unblest are consigned. And the doctor's wife almost forgets the sad sights her husband must witness hourly in pursuit of his calling, so carefully is she kept apart from all that may pain and grieve her.

By-and-by, as a matter of course, Beatrice Alleyne comes to stay with her.

One night as they are dining, the servant brings a message to his master from the asylum; brings it with a superior pitying smile.

"You're sent for, sir; immediately, if you please, sir; the keepers can't manage Mr. Littleton any longer. He'll choke himself, they fear, unless you'll go and hear the defence he has prepared."

"It's a poor clever fellow, a man in my own profession, who was doing brilliantly in the naval service," Dr. Walters says in an explanatory way to his wife and her guest. "Such a nice fellow he is, too, but he has gone mad on the point of breach of promise of marriage; these things generally go the other way round; we conclude that he has been cruelly jilted, as he fancies he has jilted someone."

Hearing this they tell him their experiences—all they know of poor Guy Littleton. And this night two human guardian angels sit by the dying madman's bed, and are half recognised and wholly blessed by him.

IGNORANT FOLK.

"WHAT is the good of reading too much?" asked Louis le Grand. His majesty took care not to incur that reproach, never reading any book save his prayer-book, being as little inclined to the silent companionship of the kings of thought as the beautiful wearer of the purple of whom Victorien Sardou wrote, some twenty years ago: "She has evidently read but very little. I conversed with her last night, and really did not know what to talk about with her. Of literature she had no knowledge at all, and I believe she could not tell the century in which Corneille and Racine lived."

All things considered, Sardou had less reason for wonderment than the student whose bookseller proffered Bézique as a substitute for the Xenophon not to be found in his stock, or the American worshipper of the Swan of Avon, whose

friend guessed Shakespeare was something like parlour-croquet—a shot much wider of the mark than that of the policeman hailed by the poet Rogers in Fetter Lane with, “Can you tell me which is Dryden’s house?” who replied, “Dryden, Dryden? Is he backward with his rent?” for glorious John, likely enough, knew what it was to be in that predicament.

Many good people are woefully ignorant of dramatic literature. A lady, joining a party of friends, was told they were discussing the performance of Richard the Third at the Lyceum. “Ah,” said she, “we know the author very well; Mr. Wills, you know, who wrote Charles the First.” Equally at fault was a Pittsburgh actress, who, after examining the cast for King John posted up in the green-room, took her manager aback by demanding whose play it was, and learning it was by Shakespeare, exclaimed, “Good gracious! Has that man written another play?” When Charles Kean put the same play on his stage during the excitement created by the formation of Roman Catholic sees in England, some of the audience took offence at King John’s denunciation of papal pretensions and heartily hissed the obnoxious passages. Whether the malcontents thought the unpleasant sounds would grate on the author’s ears, it is impossible to say. It is not improbable, since a Gaiety audience showed their appreciation of Congreve’s *Love for Love*, on the first night of its revival in 1871, by calling for the author. Sophocles received the same compliment from the gods of the Dublin Theatre Royal, upon the production of an English version of *Antigone*, their clamour only being stilled by the manager appearing to explain that Sophocles was unable to bow his thanks, having unfortunately died two thousand years ago. Whereupon a voice from the upper regions cried: “Then chuck us out his mummy.”

When Thackeray visited Oxford to make arrangements for delivering his lectures on the Georges there, he had to wait upon the Vice-Chancellor to obtain his leave and license. After giving his name and explaining the object of his intrusion, the novelist had the pleasure of taking part in the following colloquy: “Have you ever written anything?” “Yes; I am the author of *Vanity Fair*.” “A Dissenter, I presume. Has *Vanity Fair* anything to do with John Bunyan’s work?” “Not exactly. I have also written *Pendennis*.” “Never heard of

those books, but no doubt they are proper works.” “I have also contributed to *Punch*.” “I have heard of *Punch*. It is, I fear, a ribald publication of some kind.” After such an experience, it did not shock the humorist to hear one waiter say to another: “That’s the celebrated Mr. Thackeray;” and, asked what the celebrated Mr. Thackeray had done, honestly own, “Blessed if I know!”

A temperance orator avowed himself convinced that, next to Beelzebub, Bacchus had brought more sin and misery on the human race than any other individual of whom the Scriptures gave any account; thereby tempting the uncharitable to infer that his knowledge of the Scriptures was on a par with that of the famous actress Champmeslé, who could not understand Racine going to the Old Testament for a tragic subject when somebody had written a new one. Another Frenchwoman of the same period demurred to Baron’s assertion that a painting they were contemplating represented the sacrifice of Iphigenia, on the ground that M. Racine’s tragedy was not ten years old, whereas the picture had been in her family’s possession for more than a century.

General Nasimoff, sometime Inspector-in-Chief of the High Imperial Schools, was scarcely the right man in the right place, if a story told of him be true. Having to visit the University of Moscow in his official capacity, the college authorities sought to do him due honour, by specially decorating their great hall for his reception, and greeting him with an ovation. Hardly, however, had the Rector Magnificus commenced his speech, ere he was interrupted by the general remarking that he saw something which outraged his idea of orderliness, and made an extremely painful impression upon him as a soldier. Pointing to a dais in the centre of the hall, the inspector-in-chief went on: “You have set up his majesty’s bust in the middle of nine plaster casts. Is that your idea of symmetry? Could you not have made the number even?” The rector explained that the obnoxious figures were the Nine Muses, arranged in a semi-circle. “What?” exclaimed the irate general. “In the fiend’s name, let no man associate his majesty’s likeness with so idiotic an arrangement! Get another figure immediately, so that there may be five on each side. We must have proper order in these matters!” leaving the astonished rector no resource but to invent a tenth muse for that

occasion only. Ancient mythology was evidently not the forte of the martial school-inspector. Neither was it the forte of the Tyrolean peasant, who turned away from a photograph of Ranch's Three Graces, with the remark, "What fools women are! Those girls have not got money enough to buy themselves clothes, yet they spend the little they have in having their photograph taken!"

A nice crop of illustrations of ignorance might be gathered by a curiosity-monger who kept his ears open, at any popular art exhibition. At the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, a family party contemplated The Bridal of Neptune in great perplexity, until one of them, a smart Massachusetts girl, said, "It's either the deluge or the bursting of the Worcester Dam." "Tain't the deluge," remarked one of her companions, "'cause that ain't the costume of the period." "Then it's the Worcester Dam, sure," was the response as they moved on. At the same show a pair of country lassies stood admiring Altmann's copy of Paul Potter's masterpiece. Referring to her catalogue, one read, "The Young Bull, after Potter." "Yes," exclaimed the other. "There's the bull, but where's Potter?" "Oh," replied her friend, pointing to the figure of the herdsman, "there he is, behind the tree." More absurdly mistaken still were two fair ones much taken with a statuette of Andromeda, labelled, "executed in terra cotta." "Where is Terra Cotta?" queried one. Said her friend: "I'm sure I don't know, but I pity the poor girl, wherever it is."

Everybody has heard of the lady claiming the Dardanelles as her intimate friends, but few are aware that an English court of law perpetrated a similar blunder. Giving judgment in a case wherein several witnesses had deposed to the delivery of certain goods to Haidan Pacha, the court said that Haidan Pacha was undoubtedly a highly-paid official, having power to bind his government. In fact, Haidan Pacha was not a man at all, but a railway-station. In justice to Sir Barnes Peacock and Sir Robert Collier it must be stated that none of the counsel engaged in the case were in a position to set them right, the error only being discovered when the trial was reported in the newspapers. Nor did the bench get much assistance from the bar in a marine insurance case concerning a ship lost in Tub Harbour, Labrador, when the judge, reduced to ask the plaintiff's counsel where Labrador was, received the

reply, "Labrador, my lord, is the place where Tub Harbour is!" Lawyers know a great deal, but they do not know everything. Dick Barton, a witness in an important marine case, tried at Boston, in America, was cross-examined by Mr. Choate. Barton had stated that the night, on which the ship of which he was mate had come to grief, was dark as pitch, and raining like seven bells. "Was there any moon that night?" asked Choate. "Yes, sir; a full moon." "Did you see it?" "Not a mite." "Then how do you know there was a moon?" "Nautical Almanac said so." "And now tell me what latitude and longitude you crossed the equator in?" "You're joking?" "No, sir, I am in earnest, and I desire you to answer me." "I sha'n't." "You refuse to answer, do you?" "Yes, because I can't." "Indeed! You are chief mate of a clipper ship, and unable to answer so simple a question?" "Yes," said the puzzled seaman, "it's the simplest question I was ever asked in my life. I thought every fool of a lawyer knew there ain't no latitude on the equator!" Mr. Choate was satisfied, if no more pleased at being put right than was the Lancashire lad whose assertion that Napoleon Bonaparte was a cannibal, had poisoned the Pope, and shot three wives, being controverted by Mr. Sala, closed the discussion with: "Thee may think thyself a mighty clever lad, and thee may know a lot about Boneyparte, but I'll jump thee for two pound!"

Soon after the arrival of the welcome news from Waterloo, a Cornish squire, meeting some miners, thought to gratify their ears by the announcement that peace had come at last, but was dumbfounded by one of them replying, "I never heerd as there'd been war yet!" Such indifference regarding what is going on in the world is nothing uncommon. Codrington, a few days after his return home as victor of Navarino, was greeted by a country acquaintance with, "How are you, Codrington? I haven't seen you for some time. Had any shooting lately?" "Yes, I have had some remarkable shooting," said the admiral as he passed on his way. At the anxious time when war or peace depended upon America's answer to England's demand for the release of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, a gentleman going into the smoking-room of a Welsh hotel was astonished to find the company there, not only unaware of the existence of the envoys of the South, but actually ignorant

that there was any trouble at all in the States—an ignorance shared by the farmer who declined to subscribe to the Lancashire Relief Fund on the plea that Lancashire folk had no business to go to war with the Yankees.

M. Thiers one day entered a cottage near Caunterets, occupied by an old man named Pérélas, and enquired if he was not at the school of the Trois Frères with Thiers. "Thiers! Thiers!" echoed the cake-seller; "yes, I remember him, a very mischievous boy." "Well," said the great little man, "I am he." The statesman's old schoolmate, not at all disturbed, asked what he was doing. "Well," said the president, "I'm doing nothing just now, but for a long time I was minister." What sort of a minister the village Nestor supposed he had been, was shown by his replying: "Ah, you were a Protestant, weren't you?"

More excusable was the ignorance of the American whose ire against Lord Shaftesbury for denouncing slavery found vent in an absurd letter to its object, winding up with: "After all, a pretty fellow you are to set up as philanthropist! We should like to know where you were when Lord Ashley was fighting the battle of English slaves in coal-pit and factory. We never heard of you then!" Still better, or worse, was the blunder committed by a stump orator inveighing against the aristocracy for insisting upon managing public affairs, and invariably muddling matters. "Look at the Cape," said he; "General Thesiger was out there doing as well as a man could do, but he couldn't be left to finish the job, they must send out a lord. Lord Chelmsford is put over Thesiger's head, and see what a mess he has got us into!"

It would be interesting to know how many of the electors of the United Kingdom have any idea of what they mean when they dub themselves Liberal or Conservative. A vast number, we fancy, are no better informed than Stephen Noyes, the Stroud voter, who deposed that he only knew of two parties, the yellows and the blues; and, being a man who could not understand, was unable to say whether Mr. Disraeli was a yellow or a blue—indeed, he had never heard that gentleman's name before. That of Mr. Gladstone was more familiar to him; he was a Liberal, he supposed. Pressed to give his notion of what Liberals were, he replied, "I think they be the best side of the party,"

under which impression he had doubtless cast his vote. Such political innocence is far more common than some people imagine.

We once interviewed an old voter in the Midlands who protested he was neither Liberal or Tory, blue or yellow; he was a cocked hat like his father and grandfather before him; but what a cocked hat might be, as to principles, was more than he or anyone else could tell us. He had seen a good many tough contests in his time, and with all his ignorance of political parties, was not so verdant as the three young fellows who once stood gazing at a placard at Wymondham, informing passers-by that the Norwich election had resulted thus:—

Tillett	5,877
Wilkinson	5,079
Majority	798

Said one: "That's about that election; there was only two on 'em got in tho'." "No," quoth the second, "that's all, the two top ones;" while the third, as he walked away, observed: "Old Majority didn't get many, did he?"

A traveller on the Ohio overheard an odd dispute between two boatmen. Said the first: "That was an awful winter, I tell you. The river was froze tight at Cincinnati, and the thermometer went down to twenty degrees below Cairo. "Below which?" queried his puzzled mate. "Below Cairo, you lubberhead! You see, when it freezes at Cairo, it must be pretty cold; so they say so many degrees below Cairo." The unconvinced one replied: "No, they don't, you've got the wrong word, it's so many degrees below Nero. I don't know what it means, but that's what they say when it's dreadful cold."

An American amateur-scientist, loud in his praises of Professor Huxley, was brought up short by his audience of one enquiring what the professor had done. "Done," said he; "why made the important discovery about protoplasm." "And what the dickens is that?" "The life principle, the starting-point of vital action, so to speak." "He discovered that, did he? He knows all about the life principle, does he? Well, see here now, can he take some of that protoplasm, and go to work and make a man, a horse, an elephant, a gnat, or a fly with it?" "No!" "Well, then, he may go to thunder with his protoplasm; it's not worth ten cents a pound, anywhere. Appears to me these scientific fellows put on a lot of big airs about nothing. Protoplasm! shouldn't wonder

if Huxley came over to get up a company to work it. Is the mine in England?" The amateur-scientist gave it up.

Many years ago, a jilted lover drowned himself at Hartlepool. The jury that sat on the body were about to return a verdict of *felo-de-se*, when one among them objected, saying: "Nay, lads, nay, that wad niver do; iverybody knows he threw hissel intel Skerno, folks wad think us all fules!" Perhaps it was some such difficulty that impelled a member of the Rhode Island Legislature, to propose that all Latin words and phrases in the statutes should be rendered into plain English. The proposition was opposed by Mr. Updike on the ground that the people were not afraid of anything they understood.

There was a man in South Kingston who was a perfect nuisance, and nobody knew how to get rid of him. One day he was hoeing corn, and seeing the sheriff approaching with a paper, asked what he had got there? Now, if he had been told it was a writ, he would not have cared; but when the sheriff told him it was a *capias satisfaciendum*, he dropped his hoe and ran, and never more was heard of. M. Delaunay, the French actor, tried a similar experiment with like success. Leaving the theatre one night, with the manuscript of a play, called *Vercingetorix*, under his arm, he was stopped at the corner of the street by a fellow intent upon robbery. "You rascal!" exclaimed the actor. "If you are not off, I'll break my *Vercingetorix* over your head!" Without further parley, the thief fled.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HONY.

CHAPTER XLII. A FATHER'S LEGACY.

MR. HORNDEAN'S letter was punctually delivered by Frank Lisle to Beatrix, in time to prevent her from suffering from the hope deferred of his arrival, and he had told her to expect Frederick on the next day but one. So great was the pleasure, the enchantment which his letter caused her, that she rejoiced at her lover's absence, just for once, because it had procured her such intense enjoyment.

"I will keep this all my life," she said—for once unlike a woman who knew the world—and she had hidden it in her bosom as the merest romantic schoolgirl

might have done. The passion of it, the fervour of it, the assurance which it conveyed of her own supreme power over this man, thrilled and fascinated the beautiful woman as the spoken words of her lover's courtship had never yet done. There seemed to be in that letter a new departure for their love, and she revelled in the thought of the spell she had laid upon him.

There was this in common between her and Frederick, that day, that as she had never been so entirely held and absorbed by his love for her, so she had never before thoroughly understood it. If he could have stood beside her, as she murmured the words upon the paper to herself, and a flush of pride and pleasure suffused her face, he might have spoken out all the fulness of his heart; there would have been no more of that strange hard mockery in her manner which embarrassed him even when he was most happy.

"I shall know how to keep him to this," she said that night, as she smoothed out the letter, warm from its contact with her fair flesh, and laid it under the tray of her dressing-box. "Our marriage shall be no commonplace companionship. We shall be rich and happy—while it lasts."

She studied her face in the glass for a few minutes very attentively, and then, having noticed the moonlight upon the staircase, she drew back a window-curtain and looked out. The sky was clear, the moon was shining bright and steady, without an intervening cloud, turning the ugly ponderous houses opposite to silver, and sending a streak of its radiance into the street.

How beautiful the night must be at Horndean, thought Beatrix, who could see, in her mind's eye, the park, with its leafless trees, and the long line of the fine old house bathed in that silver radiance! Perhaps Frederick was looking out on the beautiful night just then, and thinking of her. What a pity it was that people who were rich and happy could not live ever so much longer!

She shivered slightly, and closed the curtain. After all, moonlight was chilly and melancholy—a stupid thing. There was nothing like sleep.

The following day, which was so bright at Horndean, was almost equally fine in London; a "pet day," indeed, and so pleasant, everyone said, within so short a time of Christmas.

The luxurious and well-ordered house in

Kaiser Crescent was bright and cheerful, and all the dwellers in it were in good spirits. Things had been going very well of late with Mr. Townley Gore. He had not had the gout, he had not had worries of any kind, and he had observed with pleasure that the relations between his wife and her future sister-in-law were of a satisfactory kind.

Beatrix would hold her own with Caroline, he thought, and things would be pleasant between the two households. Perhaps it was because Mr. Townley Gore was conscious that he himself did not always hold his own with his wife, who, although she never quarrelled with him, invariably had her own way, that he was so well pleased to find Beatrix a match (and more) for Caroline.

And then, there was something very agreeable in Frederick's new position. To have an impecunious and "troublesome" brother-in-law, with an objectionable habit of turning up in a scrape, converted into a gentleman of estate with a stake in all the proprieties, and seemingly none but virtuous inclinations, is a source of satisfaction which all the world can appreciate; and Mr. Townley Gore liked very much indeed the enjoyment Horndean had to offer, with no trouble and nothing to pay. He admired Beatrix, too, and felt sure that they should always get on very well together.

Beatrix rather liked Mr. Townley Gore. He was selfish and heartless, no doubt, though less so than his wife; but selfishness and heartlessness were to her mere words, like those which expressed their opposites. Those characteristics did not affect his manners, or lessen the amusement she derived from his fluent and "knowing" talk—that of a thorough man of the world—and as she should never allow them to interfere with her comfort or her plans in any way, they could not possibly matter to her.

Mrs. Townley Gore was in the serenest spirits; her ticklish position with Frederick was becoming easier and more assured every day. She had asked him a question about the intended settlements, he had answered her briefly that there were to be none. She had replied that Beatrix was quite charmingly romantic, while secretly wondering that she should be such a fool, and the incident had ended without the slightest strain of their fraternal relations.

There were probably not to be found in all London on that bright morning three

more contented persons than Mr. and Mrs. Townley Gore and Beatrix, as they discussed after breakfast their respective plans for the day.

How handsome and how happy Beatrix looked, in her dainty morning dress, as she leaned back in her chair, fingering with a caressing touch the blossoms of a splendid bouquet (Frederick, in foreign fashion, sent her one as a love-message, every morning), and talking gaily.

The ladies' day was well filled. The morning was to be devoted to shopping; in the afternoon they were to have an inspection of the costumes for the fancy ball, and after an early dinner they were going, with friends, to the play. Mr. Townley Gore was to dine with some men at a club, on his return from a short run into Surrey to look at a pair of horses with a friend, so that he was as well pleased as were his wife and Miss Chevenix.

When Beatrix was ready to go out, and the carriage was at the door, she lingered in her room for a few minutes to glance once more over Frederick's letter, and she pulled some leaves from a rare flower in the bouquet of that morning, and placed them with it in her dressing-box. No doubt he would have written to her again last night; and she should have his letter before she went to the play. That would be delightful; she would enjoy *The Bells* all the more.

The programme of the morning was carried out exactly, and nothing occurred to ruffle the contentment of the two ladies. They returned to Kaiser Crescent to luncheon, and it was then that the first trifling contrariety of the day presented itself. Beatrix had sent her maid to Mrs. Maberley's house for something that she wanted, and she was now told that the messenger had returned, having failed to gain admittance. Thinking, as the young woman was a stranger, she had made some mistake, Beatrix questioned her. There was no mistake. The maid had gone in a cab to the right number in Hill Street; there she had knocked and rung several times, but without effect. At last a policeman appeared, and he, too, knocked and rang at the door, equally in vain. After some time a woman came up the area steps of the adjoining house, and told the policeman that "it was no good for him to go on knocking, for there was no one there." On being questioned further, she said the servants had all left the house on the previous evening, and "the lady" early in

the morning. The policeman remarked that it was a "queer start" to leave the house quite empty, to which the woman replied that very likely a charwoman had been left in charge, and that she had gone out, taking the back-door key with her, "as," she added, "a many of 'em will, and leave the 'ouse to look after itself for hours and hours; as you plicemen knows right well." The policeman acknowledged that similar breaches of faith had come within his ken, and opining that it was quite impossible to say when the charwoman might return, he advised the puzzled abigail to go home, and come again, later, on chance. Then, without taking any notice of the remark of the woman upon the area steps, "which, mind you, I don't say positive as there is a charwoman, for I haven't seen none," he smote his gloves together, and resumed his stolid walk.

Mrs. Townley Gore and Beatrix heard this account of the maid's unsuccessful mission with much surprise. They were totally at a loss to imagine what could have induced Mrs. Maberley to leave home in this sudden way, and especially to have sent away her servants in the first instance.

The whole thing was inconsistent with all that had passed during her interview with Beatrix. Was she the sort of person, Mrs. Townley Gore asked, to get into a rage with her whole household on discovering some delinquency, and turn them all out of the house? Beatrix could not tell. She could only say that her belief was, whatsoever Mrs. Maberley chose to do she would do.

"But then," she added, "that would not account for her going away herself, and going without letting me know. I arranged with her that I was to return to Hill Street on Saturday, and she asked me to invite Frederick to dine with us. It is a mystery. But no doubt she will write to explain. It will be very awkward for me if she remains away beyond Saturday."

"Why should it be awkward for you, dear Beatrix?" said Mrs. Townley Gore. "You don't want to be told, I hope, that this house is much more your home than Mrs. Maberley's?"

The afternoon passed, as the morning had done, according to the plan arranged. The modiste arrived with the dresses for the fancy ball, the Marguerite de Valois costume for Mrs. Townley Gore—with the famous pockets for the dried hearts of the lovers of that princess faithfully repro-

duced—and the Hungarian costume for Miss Chevenix. Both were eminently satisfactory—rich, correct, and becoming.

The modiste was anxious about the ornaments to be worn with the Hungarian dress; but Beatrix could reassure her. They would be quite right; and, in fact, Frank Lisle had told her, when he called yesterday, that he had succeeded in procuring all that would be necessary.

It was not until she was dressing for the early dinner that was to precede the play, that Beatrix had leisure to think again of the oddity of Mrs. Maberley's proceedings. Could she be mad? To form such an idea of the most quiet, methodical, repressed, insignificant of women, one whose voice was never raised, whose demeanour was never fluttered by an emotion, seemed the height of absurdity. And yet Beatrix did entertain it. No living creature except herself and Mrs. Maberley knew what the compact between them had been, and for the making of that compact Beatrix had never been able to discern the motive. What if it had been mere madness? What if Mrs. Maberley were only one of the many unsuspected maniacs, gifted with plausibility, who are out and about in the world? It gave her a shudder to think that such a thing was possible, that she might have been living for so long in daily contact with a madwoman, and then that was succeeded by a thrill of joy, deeper perhaps than she had ever felt before, at the thought of the release that was imminent and the brilliant future that was opening before her.

Beautifully dressed, in high spirits; though a little put out because no letter from Frederick came by the afternoon's post; Beatrix, carrying her lover's morning gift of flowers, took her place in the carriage beside Mrs. Townley Gore, and was taken to the Lyceum Theatre. Their friends had just arrived; their box was one of the best in the house; Mr. Irving threw into his performance of the part of Mathias all the weird power that has made the conscience-slain murderer one of the most memorable impersonations ever seen on any stage; the whole party looked and listened with fascinated attention. Neither Mrs. Townley Gore or Beatrix was at all likely to be unconscious of notice; on ordinary occasions each of them would have been well aware that the glasses of observers opposite were turned upon her, and that she was the subject of comment; but

it did happen this evening that neither observed those facts. For once, they were both, and equally, taken up with the play and the acting. It was fortunate for Mrs. Townley Gore's good name in the world of fashion, that attention and "earnestness" at the Lyceum are the correct thing, for there was some whispered comment about her and her companion in the boxes opposite, and in the orchestra stalls. Men left their places and talked together in doorways, and a few kindly women's faces bore an expression of concern and compassion. This was, however, quite late, after the news in the latest editions of the evening papers would have had time to reach the theatres, and it did not attract the attention of either Mrs. Townley Gore or Beatrix. Afterwards, Mrs. Townley Gore remembered that they had got their carriage up with surprising celerity, and that there had been unusual attention paid to them by the attendants; but at the time this passed unnoticed, as did the facts that although it was her own footman who stood at the door of the carriage, the seat beside the coachman was occupied by a stranger, and that the footman followed in a cab. As the carriage rolled away, some people standing in the doorway of the theatre looked at each other with a kind of horror in their faces, and one of the men said to a lady: "There is his sister, and Miss Chevenix is with her. They evidently know nothing about it."

The carriage stopped, the ladies alighted and passed into the house, followed, without their knowledge, by the man who had taken the footman's place upon the coach-box. The instant Mrs. Townley Gore entered the well-warmed, well-lighted, crimson-carpeted hall, she felt that something was wrong. There was calamity in the atmosphere. The knowledge of it was in the pale face of the servant, who advanced, and said that Mr. Townley Gore begged she would go to him at once in the library. It was not her husband then? She drew her breath more freely, but cast a startled glance at Beatrix, who had gone at once to the table, and was looking over the evening's letters in the hope of finding one from Frederick.

"Don't take Miss Chevenix with you, ma'am," whispered the servant, as he removed Mrs. Townley Gore's cloak; and without a word she crossed the hall, and entered the library.

With indescribable terror she saw her

husband rise and then reseated himself unable to advance to her, and cover his face with his hands. It was with a sickening sense of fear that she saw that there were four persons with him: Frank Lisle, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Warrender, and a stranger. The latter was a grave stern-looking person, of official aspect, and he was standing very upright by the side of Mr. Warrender.

"For God's sake, what is it?" said Mrs. Townley Gore, leaning back against the door, as Frank Lisle and Mr. Warrender came towards her. "Tell me at once; don't torture me. Is Frederick dead?"

"He is dead!"

It was Mr. Warrender who spoke; and while she breathed hard, with the gasps which are the first effect of a great shock, he placed her gently in a chair, and begged her to calm and strengthen herself to learn what they had to tell her. All this time the stranger observed the scene in an unchanged attitude, and with an unmoved face.

In a few minutes Mrs. Townley Gore was able to hear the story they had come to tell her; and she listened to it as we all listen to dreadful news, with the double feeling that it is unreal and impossible, and yet that, even while the words that convey it are being spoken, every one of the possibilities of anguish that are contained in it is present to us in all its details. She was very still, and she listened in silence as Frank Lisle broke to her the terrible truth that her brother's sudden death was not natural, but inflicted by a murderer's hand. They were all relieved when her tears came, as Frank, himself in dreadful agitation, related the capture of the murderer, red-handed; how at daybreak they had taken him to the nearest town, and charged him before the local magistrate, Mr. Osborne, with the crime. The wretch, they added, was in prison, and had made a very important statement.

It was at this moment that Mrs. Townley Gore bethought herself of Beatrix.

"Ah, that unhappy girl!" she cried. "She does not know it yet, and who is to tell her? You must," addressing her husband; "I could not." Then she started up excitedly. "If the servants know, it may reach her unawares. Pray, pray go to her."

"Don't be alarmed," said Mr. Townley Gore, "the servants have received strict orders," and here he glanced at the stranger, who nodded curtly. "Nothing

will reach her ; but, my dearest Caroline, there is more ill news to come, and we cannot spare you the hearing of it. Tell her, Lisle, and make an end of it, for pity's sake."

Then they told her that the thief and murderer, finding the game was up, had volunteered a statement which was of terrible import to Miss Chevenix. This man, James Ramsden (to whose identity the police had just gained a clue, and who was to have left the country and joined his confederates, the pretended colonel and Mrs. Ramsden (they were not his parents) abroad, after the final coup of the robbery at Horndean, acknowledged that he had stolen the Duchess of Derwent's diamonds and Lady Vane's jewels. He also declared that his confederate on those two occasions, and also in the projected jewel robbery at Horndean, was Miss Chevenix.

To Mrs. Townley Gore's exclamation of horror and incredulity, and her eager question: "You surely do not believe this monstrous lie!" no one answered with the denial she expected; and, as she looked from one to the other, with starting eyes and a face of ghastly pallor, she saw that they did believe it.

"The story," said Mr. Osborne, "is, unfortunately, as consistent as it is terrible. That Miss Chevenix is an adventuress is, I fear, beyond a doubt; the questions which we have put to Mr. Townley Gore have satisfied us of that; and the circumstances tell strongly against her. The Duchess of Derwent exhibited her diamonds to her, showed her where she kept them, and this man states that from Miss Chevenix's hands he received the key of the jewel-case, and that she furnished him with instructions how to reach the duchess's dressing-room, and removed the fastenings of the windows. The robbery was successfully perpetrated after Miss Chevenix left the house, and the proceeds were shared with her, at her own former residence in Chesterfield Street, which she had ostensibly let to the confederates. The robbery of Lady Vane's jewels was then arranged; and Miss Chevenix went on a visit to Temple Vane. The robbery would have been effected in the same way as at Derwent Castle, only that the easier method of the substitution of dummy jewel-cases was suggested by Miss Chevenix, when she found that Lady Vane was about to take her jewels to London. This man had been introduced into the house, and made

acquainted with all the localities by Miss Chevenix; when the plan was changed, the substitution was effected by her, and the jewels were handed over by her to him, at the railway-station, as he passed her on the platform, with a half-open travelling-bag in his hand."

"That at least is impossible," said Mrs. Townley Gore, "for her own pearls were stolen on the same occasion."

"So Mr. Lisle remarked to the man," said Mr. Osborne, "but he replied that the loss of the pearls was a blind. Miss Chevenix was at a loss for money to carry on her deceptive position until she could marry, and had made up her mind to sell her pearls. They also were in this man's possession, and he sold them, and she had the money, together with her share of the spoil of Lady Vane. I fear there is no way out of this explanation."

Mrs. Townley Gore answered "only by a groan.

"The Horndean robbery," continued Mr. Osborne, "was to have been the next, and it was expected to be a very rich haul. The man came down in the disguise of an organ-grinder; it was to that disguise the police got the clue; and he picked up all the necessary information. Miss Chevenix got at the keys of the collection, and at the window fastenings, just as she had done in the other instances."

"But it was all to be her own. Why should she rob herself?"

"Because she would have been denounced as an adventuress to you and your brother, if she had hesitated; and she could not have retaliated without avowing her own guilt. She did struggle and protest, but in vain; she had to submit. This was to be the last of the series of crimes. The elder confederates had cleared off with their gains—very considerable, no doubt, for Miss Chevenix was not the only tool they worked with—and Miss Chevenix was to be free from her associates."

"But how, then, did it—did this awful—did the crime occur, if she—if my brother's affianced wife"—Mrs. Townley Gore shuddered from head to foot as she uttered these words—"knew?"

"Mr. Lisle asked that question also; but there was an answer to it. Miss Chevenix did not know. When this villain found her manageable on the point of the robbery at Horndean by threats only, he left her in ignorance; he refused to tell her when he intended to act upon the

information which she had supplied. He knew nothing, so he states, and I am inclined to believe him, of Mr. Horndean's intention to come to Horndean, and he declares that he had no idea Mr. Horndean was in the house when he entered it with the purpose of committing the robbery."

"What is to become of this wretched girl?" was the first utterance of Mrs. Townley Gore, when Mr. Osborne paused. She was wonderfully calm and collected. Probably the very greatness of the shock had steadied her. "Who knows of this? Is it public property yet?"

"The murder only," answered the stranger, speaking for the first time. "That was in the evening papers."

Then Mrs. Townley Gore recalled, as if in a dream, the ease of their exit from the Lyceum Theatre, and the looks and whispers of the group in the doorway. And now the stranger struck in, with such effect that all the others subsided into the background, and Mrs. Townley Gore had a horrid consciousness that he was taking possession of her and her house, and all that was in it.

"I am Inspector Simms, of the Metropolitan Police," said the stern stranger, "and I hold a warrant, granted by Sir Gregory Grogam, for the arrest of Miss Chevenix. Mr. Osborne came up to town with these gentlemen; they got the warrant, and they communicated with Mr. Townley Gore, and here we are—I and an officer. He came back with you and the young lady from the theatre; he's in the hall now, and it's our painful duty to apprehend Miss Chevenix, here and now."

"In our house?"

"Yes, madam, in your house; and I'm sorry to say, when there's such family trouble about, the sooner the better. There's a cab waiting."

"You don't mean to say," remonstrated Mr. Townley Gore, "that you will take her away to-night? She has to be told that her affianced husband has been murdered, and that she herself is denounced by his murderer as an adventuress and a thief. You are surely not bound to remove her from my house? Take any precautions you will against her escape; I will aid them to the best of my ability; but let her remain here until to-morrow. All this may be capable of an explanation compatible with her innocence."

"It may, sir, and I do not say it is not. We are used to stranger stories than this. From what I understand, this Ramsden's

record is a precious bad one; but duty's duty. I must act on this warrant"—he produced the paper—"and it's getting late. The question is, which of you gentlemen will come with me and break it to the party?"

So far as Mr. Townley Gore was concerned, the inspector's question was answered on the instant, for, with a deep sigh, Mrs. Townley Gore fell from her chair in a dead faint, and he was fully occupied with her. After a hurried consultation, Mr. Osborne and Mr. Warrender left the room with the inspector, and passing through the hall, where the other policeman in plain clothes was on duty, they went upstairs, preceded by the frightened butler, who was told to call Miss Chevenix's maid into the passage to speak with them.

Beatrice, vexed at finding no letter from Frederick, and wondering at the delay of a summons to the pleasant little supper with which Mrs. Townley Gore always wound up an evening at the play, was sitting by the fire, thinking, now of Frederick, again of *The Bells*, and anon of Mrs. Maberley's odd freak. She was tired, hungry, and impatient, but still she was very happy. Presently she set her dressing-box upon a velvet table by the fireside, and took out the precious letter. She might have time to read it once again before the gong sounded. How sweet it smelt, with the scent of the fragrant leaves about it! As she lay back in her chair, her queenly head with its red gold crown of plaited hair against the embroidered cushion, the gleam of jewels on her fair neck and strong white arms, the blended light of wood-fire and wax candles playing on her rich dress of cream-coloured satin, she presented a perfect picture of beauty, ease, and luxuriousness. Who could have believed that the hour had struck, the fiat gone forth? A mild knock at the door of the adjoining dressing-room, to which her maid responded, did not even attract her attention. That was all for her lover's letter, as she dwelt upon it, with long sighs of happiness. She looked up at the hurried entrance of her maid, and seeing three strangers in the doorway, rose, laid the crumpled paper back in the box, closed the lid, and asked them who they were, and what their business was with her?

Frederick was dead! The man whom she had hated and defied had killed him! It was all over! Only a few minutes ago she was the happiest of

women. What was she now? The most wretched. Accused of crimes which she hardly comprehended, beyond seeing that there was no way of clearing herself from the imputation of them, had she even cared to do so; a beggar, an outcast, the most lost, ruined, forlorn wretch upon the surface of the earth soon to cover him whose hand, two days ago, had written the words that had made her heart burn within her. What did she care for any of these things, beyond the first of them! Frederick was dead! She had loved him, and now there was no such thing. She gave no thought to his sister, or to the world; the void was too utter for gradation, the ruin was too complete for stages. The dignity and composure with which she met the statement made to her by Mr. Osborne (with a due warning on the part of the inspector that she should not say anything to her own injury), made a profound impression upon the beholders.

"I have done none of these things," she said; "I don't know what you mean."

And then she left them all there in her thoughts, as matters of no account. Frederick was dead!

The inspector told her maid that she might put up a few necessaries for the use of Miss Chevenix, and he withdrew into the passage while a morning dress was being substituted for her evening attire. Through all this she was perfectly passive. Frederick was dead! All was over! She was at the foot of the wall, and facing her was the blank of nothingness.

When the gentlemen were readmitted, Mr. Osborne said to her:

"I trust that you will seek consolation in God, and that He will establish your innocence."

"You are very good, sir," was her dreary answer, "but there is no God, and my innocence does not matter to me, or to anyone left alive."

Then the good clergyman shrank away, and went to the library, and cowered there, with Mr. and Mrs. Townley Gore, waiting, with a sickening dread, for the sound of footsteps in the hall, and the departure of the wretched woman into the outer darkness.

Mrs. Townley Gore had offered, had even tried, to go to her, but she was quite unable, and Beatrix had merely said:

"See her? No. Why should I? I do not want to see anyone any more."

Only Mr. Warrender, whose gentleness and compassion could not be surpassed, and the inspector, who had never met with anything like this before, were with Beatrix, when her maid said that she was "ready." She had not asked whither they were going to take her. She was quite lost in thought, and she had not shed a tear. Her eyes burned with a feverish brilliancy, her complexion varied from a crimson flush to a waxen paleness, her hands were icy cold, and the nails were blue, but she stood steadily upon her feet, and no tears came.

When all was done, she calmly asked the inspector, "May I take some papers out of my dressing-case—only a letter or two?" He told her she might, and she quietly resumed her seat, drew the velvet table close to her, and raised the lid of the box. The letter lay on the top, but she shifted the tray, and bending her head so that it was hidden for an instant, seemed to search for something under it. The next moment she leaned back, with Frederick's letter spread out in her hand, and pressed it passionately to her lips; the action concealing her face completely. Then her hand closed and dropped, a few flower-petals fluttered to the floor, and the inspector and Mr. Warrender saw that her eyes were shut. They waited for a little, after which the inspector said, "We must go." At the same instant there was a faint sound, like the click of a lock, and the closed eyes slowly opened. The two men rushed to the side of Beatrix, but she had eluded their vigilance. The poison of which she had spoken to Mrs. Maberley as her father's "legacy," had furnished her with the means.

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CHARLES DICKENS

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1881.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY E. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER IX. MILO.

THE flats of Cantleigh Holms were a very Switzerland compared with this unbounded expanse of heath and moss which lay, far more dead and silent than the most leaden sea, under a deep blue sky without a cloud. You knew that you might ride for days together over it, and that the faint mist of the horizon would still be just as far away, and the solitude as profound. The rough and broken road, which joined the opposite points of the horizon with a line as straight as the flight of a crow, only added to the effect of loneliness, because it suggested company that seldom came. It did come, now and then; but even then in such small relays as to add to the effect of loneliness even more; for loneliness cannot be complete without the presence of some human creature to be alone therein. Had this been a year in which winter fell early, then, instead of black heath and parched moss, scattered with stunted gorse and juniper, would have been seen nothing but a vast white ocean of frozen snow, from which stood out a line of posts at regular intervals to mark the course of the hidden road; for the least infrequent traveller to be met with, summer or winter, was some official messenger in sledge or post-carriage, whom not even Nature must dare to delay. At other times, a Jew pedlar would crawl across the landscape like a snail, with his pack for a shell, or a company of gipsies would make their way over the waste by a track known to none but themselves, or a gang of wretched creatures, men and women, some

with bound wrists, would be driven, they knew not whither, like a herd of cattle before mounted drovers in uniform. However blue the sky might be, the earth was always bleak, black, and bare—except when it was white, and then it was bleaker and barer still.

Yet, though it may remain invisible for days together, even on this broad steppe there is settled life here and there, and often, perhaps, really less lonely than many who live in the hearts of great cities find their lives. The post-horses must have stages and stables, and these are the cause of dwellings which, being seldom more than a long day's gallop apart, consider themselves as neighbours, those standing next door, so to speak, even knowing one another's post-horses and drivers by sight, and one another by name. The Jew pedlars brought them wares and news from the more crowded world, and the gipsies gave them music and songs, and, except for the official messengers, for whose sake they existed, there was nobody of whom to be afraid. Civilised life there was rough and coarse, and neither sober nor clean; but it was well fed, and taken with infinite leisure.

Almost within sight of one of these timber-built shelters that stood in the very heart of the steppe was a smaller wooden building, little better than a mere ground-floor hut, with a sloping roof of planks, and a couple of windows, one on either side of the closed door. Within, it was all one chamber, in which all the furniture consisted of a very low and narrow bed, a table, a chair, and the all-important stove and flue. But there were signs of life there which did not belong to the steppe at all. The bedstead was of painted iron,

and therefore clean. The table, or at least half of it, was piled with books, instruments, writing materials, and even written papers; and yet larger and more formidable pieces of mechanism, requiring special knowledge to name or describe, leaned in a corner between two of the bare plank walls. Nor, though both windows were closed, was there that overpowering atmosphere of stifled humanity under its most unpleasant conditions which was synonymous, in that region, with being warm and comfortable. As it was, the atmosphere was not too fresh, but was thickened with nothing worse than a cloud of tolerable tobacco.

It was here that, one morning, Philip Nelson woke up—so weak, faint, and helpless that he doubted at first if he was alive. And the labour of doubting was so great, that he gave it up, and left the doubt unsolved.

At last his eyes came to conscious life; and he asked, but in a voice that seemed to him to have no sound at all:

“Are you an Englishman or a Russian? What am I doing here?”

“I’m neither—I’m a doctor,” said an Irish voice out of the tobacco smoke. “And ye’re doing nothing—ye’re getting well.”

“Ah! I have been ill, then? What does it all mean?”

“Here—drink that. I’ve been expecting ye to wake up this last hour, either dead or alive. And it means ye’re to ask no questions, but to go to sleep again, if ye want to come to life as soon as ye can.”

“I am alive, then. And, I suppose, it’s thanks to you.”

“It’s no thanks to anybody at all. It’s thanks to good luck ye didn’t fall into the hands of some necromancing impostor of a Sangrado, like what they have in these parts, that wouldn’t have left a drop of the blood in ye. So hold your tongue about thanks, if ye please, and about everything else too. Here—take another sup of this. Faith, it’s wonderful! Why ye’ve got no more fever on ye than——”

“Now look here,” said Phil, gathering his wits together as well as he was able, “I’m not going to excite myself, and I want to get well, and I’m not going to say thank you till I can say it strongly—and I can’t do that now. But the idea of my just turning round again and going to sleep with an easy mind, when—it can’t be done. If you’ll answer me six questions, I swear to go to sleep and to say nothing more till——”

“Come, be easy——”

“But I can’t, till——”

“Well, if ye can’t be easy at all, be as easy as ye can. Six questions I’ll allow ye, and not one more. Faith, I thought one time ye’d never ask a question again.”

“I am here to survey for a railway. Can you tell me what has happened, while I have been lying here?”

“There’s Number One, I’ll keep a strict count, and not allow ye one over the tale. But the idea of a man bothering about his work, the first thing! Oh, that’s taken good care of itself, ye may be sure. Work always does, if ye don’t bother it, and only lave it alone. Why, what the devil are ye up to now?”

“If you can’t tell me—if I’ve got strength to crawl, I must go and find somebody who can.”

“No—there’s no fever. I thought ’twas that devil of a fever come back again. I never said I couldn’t tell; I only bade ye not to bother, that’s all. When I found how you were took, I took the case into my own hands, and made the young gentleman that was with you do what I told. He wrote for instructions, and there’s been a rawboned devil of a Scotchman, with all the fever that’s in him gone into his hair, been out here and careerin’ all over the bogs like a house on fire—leagues away they’ll be, by now.”

“Do you mean to say,” said Phil, trying to raise himself upon his elbow, and falling back upon the bed with what a little more strength would have made a groan—“Do you mean to say that they have sent out another man to do my work while I’ve been lying here like a log—Heaven knows how long?”

“Number Two; and a wasted one too, for I’d answered that before. Of course they’ve sent out another man. And why wouldn’t they? It was I told them they must, and ’twas for your own sake I told them. Ye’ll have to clear out of this, as soon as ye stir a toe. But as for lying like a log—faith, I’ve never been medical attendant to a log, but if I had, and if it had taken to telling long yarns, it’s more of the price of timber I’d have heard, and less of Phœbe. And ’twas then I first thought I’d pull you through. It’s a good sign when a man’s raving about a young woman, instead of snakes and blackbeetles. It shows either he’s not bothered his constitution with the drink, which is the devil, or else that he’s made his head while he’s young—and that’s beating the devil

with his own stick, anyhow. But the best way's never to touch a drop—and especially when they sell ye such poison as this," said the doctor, interrupting his flow of talk to try an experiment on his own person. "T'would make the spirit of a decent potato feel like an angel in disguise."

"I suppose when a man's in a fever, he talks like a fool," said Phil rather savagely. "I see how it has been. I've been taken ill, and the result is I've lost my place, and another man has stepped into my shoes. What's the matter with me? How soon shall I be well?"

"Number Three and Number Four. As for the matter, I can tell ye the diagnosis in half a word—it's a malarious pyæmia, induced by morbid atmospheric conditions, beginning with febrile miasma, and running into typhoid. As for when ye'll be well—ye're about as well as the College of Physicians can make ye—"

"How soon shall I be at work again?"

"Number Five. Ye're some sort of an engineer. Let me see—with your constitution ye ought to be pretty fit by the time ye're home again."

"At home! I am at home."

"Then," said the doctor, trying another experiment of the effect of vodki upon an Irishman, "I'd say ye'd be setting the worms well to work in maybe a month or so. Ah, my boy; 'tis the worms are the engineers of the world."

"You mean—I must throw up my post, or die."

"Number—no; that's not a question, this time. Yes; I suppose that is about what I mean. Well, 'tis better to throw up a post than a sponge. I see the stuff ye are—a confounded beast of a Saxon, that doesn't die because he won't, and then will die because he won't say he's beat, even by Nature; but with a drop of the poetry of life in him after all. I don't know Miss Phœbe—but if she's not worth throwing up a trumpety post for, I don't know the pharmacopœia from the cerebellum."

"Will you be good enough to forget whatever I said in my dreams?"

"And why would I forget till I please, till ye get your fist back to knock it out of me? Will I think, when a man talks about Phœbe, she's his great aunt twice removed? Why, didn't ye tell the four quarters of the globe she's going to be Mrs. Nelson, and that ye knocked a fiddle to bits over the head of a steam-engine for spouting conic sections to her over a brick wall?"

"Well, it's not good to feel that one isn't master of one's brains. I don't want to die—till I've done something more than be knocked down by a fever and—fail. What's your name?"

"Number Six. My name's Ulick Ronaine."

"I've often wanted to know the name of the Good Samaritan. Now I know."

"Bless my soul, if he's not off rambling again!"

"I know how I came here. But how did you? What made you take all this trouble to cure, and nurse, and care for a stranger? What made you—"

"Seven—and eight—and nine! Ye've had your six, and that's seven too many. I'm a man of my word. I said six, and I'll not answer seven—not if 'twas to ask me if I'd be introduced to Miss Phœbe; and if there's one question would make me say Yes, that's the one. There'll be stuff in a girl that gets into the typhoid of a man like you; 'twas hard for her to get in, but I'll defy Nelaton's own self to get her out again. Here's her health, anyhow. Faith, it's a real pleasure to be able to talk about the girl of one's heart in a strange land. No; never drink, my dear boy, especially in a strange land where you don't know the cork as well as your own cradle."

He made a third and apparently crucial experiment; for a thickness was coming over his voice which might indeed be a phenomenon of the weariness of Phil Nelson's newly-awakened ears, but certainly sounded as if it were due to something more.

And gradually the voice of Dr. Ronaine became not only thicker in itself, but really more dreamlike, as Phil's senses, unused for so long to work, gave up speculating upon his situation as blank and impossible, and took refuge in torpor. For a physician who forbade talking, he set as good an example as the famous physician and bon vivant, whose panacea was starvation.

"Yes; this is the field for a big practice," said he. "Not a surgeon within hail that's got an idea beyond bleeding, nor a physician that wouldn't kill ye a dozen times before he cured ye. It's nothing but the patients it wants to be a bigger field than London, that ye might throw in, and no more find it than the poison in a homœopath's sugar-plum. I've been all over the world, pretty near, looking for a practice big enough to stretch one's legs in, and there's something wrong with them all—either there's ten doctors to one patient or else there's one

patient to ten doctors, and I won't know which means most ruin. But I'll find it some day, never fear. It's getting bewildering to think of the arrears of fees I'm owed by the world!"

"Of course, of course," said Phil, dropping into confusion and forgetfulness, and echoing the last words he heard; "what will your fee be?"

"Phoebe again!" said the doctor. "I'll begin to think there's heart-trouble; he'd better have took to the drink, after all. But this has been a big case, anyhow. I'll put twenty guineas into the box for the little girl. The bottle empty? Faith, that's queer, when 'twas more than half full not an hour ago. 'Tis the evaporation, I suppose; I'll have to put in a ground glass stopper next time. But I must get a taste of something—that patient of mine has talked me as dry as a fish out of water. He won't hurt for the minute it'll take me to get a makeshift of that thief of a postmaster's infernal vodki. I'm afraid I'll have to borrow from the little girl's money-box again—but I can put it down, and as I'm going to put in twenty guineas, 'twill be a gain of over twenty pounds to the little girl. 'Ulick Ronaine, M.D.; Dr. to Zenobia, nine hundred and eighty-three pounds, four shillings and fivepence-half-penny.' Faith, ye're an heiress—'tis a lucky godfather ye found in me, anyhow."

It was thus that Philip Nelson came to life again; and it was with the name of Phoebe on his lips, and for the first conscious thought in his brain. Of course he knew that the thought was really more mad than his delirium had been, and hoped that so extreme a proof of feebleness was only a part of the intolerable bodily weakness that would no doubt pass away at last in due time. He was very far indeed from being one of those lovers who hug their chains, and revel in despair, and are proud of constancy. Such things seemed to belong to the rhyming nonsense and stage-business that Phil Nelson scorned with all his heart and soul. When he went to Russia in that sudden way, he had meant to be a man, and to break the growth of useless and wasted feelings in two. There was the work of his life before him—why should he, like a hero of one of Phoebe's story-books, throw it all up in a pet because a girl did not care for him, and make a conceited merit of laziness and uselessness for the rest of his days?

And, so far, he had certainly done very well. He had written home a few rather

short and formal letters to the father who, he knew very well, neither understood nor cared to understand any of his concerns, but he had received none in return, nor, knowing his father's manners and customs, had not been in the least disappointed at receiving none from him any more than from Phoebe. The receipt of a letter from either would have been matter for surprise. He had certainly received a dozen lines from Dick, combining eleven of tomfoolery with one of sense in the form of a request for a small loan. That had been the whole extent of his home news. His work had been both new enough and hard enough to interest him and absorb him wholly; he felt he had been doing it well, and went at it harder than there was any need to go. He did not even do it with the conscious desire of revenging himself upon a girl, by some day posing before her as a great and rich man whom she had lost by her short-sighted folly. Had he been capable of such a plan, it would have lost him the self-respect needful to make it succeed.

Even so did Milo the wrestler know that he could break in two any tree that the forest held. And one day he saw an oak sapling, but scorned to break what to him would have been but mere child's play—he would let it grow for a while. And then, when the time came for him to rend it, for his honour's sake, he found he had waited too long; the oak had not been waiting to grow—and we know the end. Phoebe's weak hand still held Philip as the oak tree held Milo. And if anybody wonders how a hand like Phoebe's should hold a heart like Phil's, then let him wonder at the story of the oak sapling and the wrestler, and at all Nature and human nature besides. Weak things are the only things that are strong. The ivy is the real oak, after all; and it is the oak himself who clings.

So he lay there in his hut in the middle of a steppe of which nobody at home cared to remember the name; his very whereabouts being of personal interest to none but a drunken Samaritan; picturing, in spite of his reason, the life of Phoebe Burden. He saw her wasting the precious hours of the days, and the precious days of life, over fancies less excusable than fevers, and despicable dreams. He saw the vision of an impossible marriage, in which she would have made him miserable, and he her. He asked himself, sixty times a minute, how and why he could ever have lost his head—he did not call it his heart—

to such a child, who could no more see the beauty of the forty-eighth proposition of Euclid than he could see why a story should be written in three volumes instead of the obviously more appropriate number of none. He despised himself for feeling himself such a fool about such a girl—a child with wonderful eyes and magnetic lips which nevertheless did not keep her from back-garden flirtations with fiddlers, or billiard-markers, or pickpockets, or whatever was plain English for Stanislas Adrianski. And yet coming back to life had meant coming back to her. Could it mean that life and Phoebe were one? That would be terrible indeed.

"Here—take down this," said the doctor, after what had seemed to Phil only one long restless thought, but which must—since it was broad daylight and since he remembered nothing outside himself—have run into another long sleep which might have been for days for anything he could tell. "'Tis chicken tea; we must begin to put the life into ye. And I'll tell ye what we'll do—for to think of your staying on here, and hanging about your work like the ghost ye are, is nonsense that I won't stand, as a medical adviser that's just at present able to floor ten of ye. I'll take ye home with me, as soon as ye're able to floor a fly."

The doctor was not a pleasant-looking nurse this morning, for he was ugly by nature, and his eyes, clothes, hair, and skin told tales of a night not wholly devoted to professional duties and charities. The post-house was not without attractions where it was the only substitute for tavern, club, and theatre. But Phil could not help being struck by a delicacy and gentleness of touch, almost womanlike in its simplicity, and curiously contradicted by a decision of manner which, under all the other circumstances, could only be due to the doctor's having so far been faithful to his own principles as to have made his own head when he was young.

"Thank you," said Phil. But it was less for the offer than out of a general sort of gratitude which must needs speak, though too proud, shy, and reticent to run into a gush of words.

"Ye've got enough cash, I suppose," said the doctor, "to take ye home?"

"I suppose so—though now I've got to throw this up, I don't suppose the firm will care to keep on a man who can do nothing better than break down, and is bowled over by a breath of bad air. And

what you must have been spending for me, I don't know. But I suppose there'll be enough left to carry us back to London—if that's where you want to go. If you'll hand me that leather case, I'll soon see."

"Now of all the stupid, thick-headed numskulls of the world, give me a Saxon to beat them all! As if I'd finger the penny of a soul that's down on his luck—let alone a fine young fellow like you. If ye were a duke, now—that might be another pair of brogues. I thought ye might want a touch of help yourself; and though my own fortune's in a state of arrear, there's a little girl of mine that's good enough to let me borrow of her at a pinch, till I'll pay her back, with good interest, all in good time. I was reckoning only last night she's worth near a thousand pounds; not a bad notion for a fine young fellow like you, that would turn a paltry thousand into a plum, in the twinkling of half an eye. If ye can't have Miss Phoebe, have a try for Zenobia, my boy—a girl with a thousand pounds to her back isn't to be sneezed at, as I'm old enough to know."

MAGOG ON THE MARCH.

It was in the nature of things that when I took up a position by the railings of Palace Yard, convenient for the Lord Mayor's Show, and stuck to it with sundry chance companions for an hour by the palace clock; it was in the nature of things and quite to be expected, I say, that at the last moment, when every other corner was occupied, the police, who had during that hour gazed complacently and benignantly upon us, should form up, shoulder to shoulder, and clear us out, as they call it, in a gay and light-hearted manner.

We had discussed the possibility of such a clearance, but Old Experience, in the form of a blear-eyed veteran who had seen scores of Lord Mayor's Shows, had declared that we were safe. "We aint in nobody's way here," he pronounced. No more we were, but even our insignificance did not save us. Neither did our valour. "They'll have a job to move me along out of this," pronounced a jaunty young copying clerk of fifty, or so. But alas! he made no more of a stand than the rest of us, but just marched off to the rear with no better chance of a good view of the procession than those who had hurried up at the last moment.

And yet, although fruitless, that hour of

expectation was not an unpleasant one. A cheerful day, first of all, with such sunshine as we get in November, a sky almost blue, at all events a bluish-grey, softening down into haze. Pigeons flutter in the air and circle about the pinnacles of the big Palace of Palaver; flags stir briskly in the air, the royal standard waves over the long roof-line of the Abbey, while from little Saint Margaret below comes the jocund sound of bells. The great open space is filled with sunlight, in which the black statues look their very blackest, with a kind of sternly moral air about them as much as to say: "Spectator, in our lives we were full of good things. We were statesmen, we were ministers, we were high and mighty lords. But behold us here exposed to the winds of heaven, to the blacks from the chimneys, to the disrespectful remarks of little boys. Go, and thank Heaven for your lowly lot!"

Old Experience knows all about the statues. "That's Lord Palmerston," he said; "he was one of 'em," vaguely, as appreciating his greatness, although the sharp features of it had been rubbed away by time. But about the Lord Mayor the veteran's impressions were vivid and distinct. He knew all about him, from his first appearance before the Chancellor, how many hob-nails were counted out, and how he was now coming to be sworn in "afore the Chief Baron, leastways there aint no Chief Baron now." And yet there was no sadness in his voice as he recorded the demise of the ancient Court of Exchequer. Perhaps the poor man had never had taxes that he could not pay, had never been threatened with exchequer process, or served with exchequer writ; or he might have consoled himself with the thought that the thing under any other name will cost as much, and be every bit as unpleasant. But there are other reminders of the changes that time is bringing.

"And he won't come any more, not the Lord Mayor won't," adds the lawyer's clerk. "He can do his swearing at home after this." Yes, it is a melancholy thought that perhaps this is the last time his lordship will come in all his pride along our Appian Way. For by this time next year surely all the legal birds will have settled in their new rookery, and the Lord Mayor may step in among them without passing the City bounds. And is it this "for the last time" that brings such crowds of people to see the sight? They come pouring in upon this great place — ranging

up along the kerbstones, piling themselves up on the refuges, thus making islands of people in the midst of the converging rivers of traffic—a traffic of vans and waggons and loaded omnibuses, of coroneted carriages, of costers' carts, of newspaper-carts, a torrent that flows all the more fiercely that its time for flowing is limited. And we have got such excellent places to see it all, the lawyer's clerk congratulates us all round once more, we, the original clique, disregarding the chance crowd that has gathered about us—the "percession" coming along, its turning into the yard, the "saloot" to the American flag. "And what's more, we aint in nobody's way here," adds the veteran. When forthwith out of the gates marches a serried phalanx of policemen, which drives us before it with loud cries, as drovers with a flock of sheep. The same with the refuges crowded with people—no refuge for them—the same with the standers on the kerbs. And yet we were a harmless happy lot—happy till the expulsion, that is; and if anybody had taken the trouble to mark out with a bit of chalk where we might stand, we would have toed that chalk-line most religiously. And so we are driven about up and down till we find a gap to slink through and get behind everybody else.

Sweet are the uses of adversity. I am no longer one of a select clique excellently placed, and conscious of superiority. I am one of the great mob, their elbows are in my ribs, my heart beats with theirs, as the banners wave, as the bells ring out volleys of welcome, high over the great vague symphony of the crowd, as the pressure tightens and relieves. "Jes' let me squeeze in under your arm, gov'nor," cries a young lady, small and sharp in frame as well as features. "You can see over my 'ead, old man," apologetically from some ninth part of a man, and small at that, who is wiring his way to the front. And there are young women behind who are skirmishing around with kitchen chairs and a plank or two. "Who's for a stand—a fine strong stand?" They have brought the best part of their furniture out with them, these young women, for fear of housebreakers perhaps, and mean to turn an honest penny with it if only the police will let them, but they won't. There is a fiendish young man in blue who works round the corner upon them every five minutes. It is a difficult thing to disappear into space with kitchen chairs and an eight-foot plank, but these young people

manage it somehow, and are back again next moment with the cry, "Who's for a stand?" Now and then a hansom draws up, and loving couples get out and squeeze their way through the jealous front rankers, and presently appear on balconies above. And now among the parliamentary pinnacles, so much alike, each with its vane pointing a different way, appear certain cautiously moving figures, while the embasures of the battlements which surround the Law Courts are filled with human heads. Who would have thought that the Lord Mayor would draw like this? But something to see and nothing to pay, with a fine day for the purpose, will set all London upon the swarm. If the men won't work, the women are quite right not to weep, but rather to turn out for the show. And they bring the children with them, and baby too, who gets turned inside out almost in the crowd, and has to be rescued by a stout good-natured policeman.

But they are all stout, these policemen—good-natured, too, in a supercilious contemptuous way. "Ah, we couldn't do without 'em, you know," cries an old dame who has got a good place. But a good many of us look as if we should like to try. Not that little flock of gaol-birds who are coasting past—they exchange amenities with our guardians as if they were the best friends in the world.

By this time the wheeled-traffic has ceased, and the barrows of the costers file reluctantly away. After one loud jumble the bells stop altogether, and the sound of martial music is in the air. If you were unacquainted with the institutions of our country, you might think our Lord Mayor was like those other mayors of our uncritical school-days, those Pepins and the rest, so martial are his surroundings. But his army is like that of Gerolstein, all band and drum-major. Heavens, how many bands are there? Surely all the band power of the British Army? But the same feeling comes over me as in the circus processions. Is not this a little too diffused? The carriages of common councilmen pall somewhat upon the imagination; now if you had them all together—the council, that is—in one triumphal car, the effect would be more concentrated. But the firemen are fine, and the fire steeds are strong and sturdy, and the engines bright and polished. The country firemen, too, are good, volunteers for the most part, looking out fiercely from under their brass helmets, which somehow suggest warriors of ancient Greece.

and there is a mounted officer in a helmet of burnished silver, who might have come straight out of the Iliad. After all, the boys take the best: the sailor laddies from the training-ships marching along with their bands, a naval brigade in miniature: and as they pass us, our ranks are violently shaken, and a woman streams to the front breathless and dishevelled. "There's our Jemmy," she screams, flourishing the first thing that comes to hand—I think it is her shoe. "Here we are, Jemmy; here's mother, and Betsy, and all!" A cheer for Jemmy! I don't know if Jemmy was conscious of his ovation; discipline, perhaps, repressed his feelings. As for mother and Betsy, they were repressed by Policeman X. "What, mayn't I follow my Jemmy?" remonstrates maternity in vain.

But the sensation of the day is now at hand. The gruff roar of the crowd swells into something like a continuous cheer as the American flag appears with its guard of red coats with glittering bayonets—real soldiers these and real bayonets—and the flag itself has an air of substance and reality that is denied to the silken banners of extinct sheriffs or aldermen of the Pleocene period. And as the "stars and stripes" walks round into Palace Yard, the massed bands of two or three regiments burst forth with The Star Spangled Banner with all the power of brass and sheep's-skin. After that the six horses with their nodding plumes, and the great gilt coach, and the resplendent coachman and gorgeous footmen, all in gold as if just come out of a fairy tale, with the big mace sticking out and his lordship inside. After that again, the deluge.

A deluge firmly resisted by our band of policemen, who were drawn up across the street, a solid wall of men. It was pleasant to see rotund inspectors buttressing up that wall of beef and bone, mounted men treading upon the heels of their comrades in their anxiety to tread upon the toes of the public, and withal to see that wall quiver and bend, and finally break, with the sheer pressure of the crowd that now surges along, while a few policemen's helmets appear swimming in the vast whirlpool. But by this time, if there were anything to see in the Palace Yard, the time for seeing it is over. I am told that the star-spangled courteously inclined itself towards the Lord Mayor, that his lordship graciously acknowledged the salutation—perhaps it was the other way—anyhow, there is the star-spangled, and

there is the Lord Mayor, only you can't see him, for he is inside—like St. Jerome in his cave—taking his affidavit before the Lord Chief Justice.

And now that the swearing is over, and the procession on its way back, there is no better place to take leave of the Lord Mayor, wondering if the world will ever see him again coming in state to Westminster, than the embankment of the river, whereon, once upon a time, he was accustomed to sail homewards in his gilded barge. The brightness of the day is over, the sun appearing as a yellow waft of light through the haze, and the river looks dark and chill, and the huge shapeless mass of Charing Cross Station lowers gloomily over the crowd. The bridge is crowded with spectators, behind whom every now and then clanks a heavy train whistling its way along, as for the moment it envelops all about it in wreathy clouds of vapour. And to the leviathan above, leviathan below replies, a huge nightmare monster of a collier, a veritable triton of the deep among these freshwater minnows.

Here the crowd is more select, except at times when there is a cry of "Salvationist!" and a rush of mob follows. Then comes a commonplace-looking young man with a wild face, followed by a crowd of yelling roughs. He faces round every now and then, ignoring his tormentors, and says in a solemn voice, "The day of the Lord is at hand;" then marches on again. There is a negro, too, who has the credit of being connected with Salvation, though doesn't look it either, and wears a gay scarf, which he is obliged to pocket presently, or he might have been roughly handled. But here comes the procession again, that has now got to clear a way for itself with its hussars and mounted police—not a difficult matter, for the crowd only wants to see, and dresses itself in line with tolerable steadiness. And while banners are streaming and bands playing, and the whole pageant passes as a dream before the eyes, sometimes the funnel of a steamer, and sometimes the sail of a barge, interposes in the long drawn line. And here, by the water-side, we may think about the poor watermen who bear the banners, if they are really watermen, who have the appearance of frozen-out gardeners in winter-time. Some of them indeed, men in blue sacking with white trousers, even robust popular faith refuses to accept. "Them watermen! They're bread-and-water men. Them's convicts, I tell ye." But between fire and

watermen we are pretty well amused, and quite jubilant when a carriage-load of ladies appear, which were not there before. 'Tis the City queen and her court. And the thought strikes one, how nice for the Lord Mayor's daughter—when he has a daughter—to come out of the seclusion of a suburban villa, say, all at once into the middle of this pomp and popular homage; to be a princess for a year, and then to go back to the old shoe again. This last, perhaps, not so nice, but then Prince Charming is often seen at the Mansion House, and may save our heroine from such a fate. Once more the star-spangled, once more his lordship's gilt coach, once more the rush.

And what a rush, my friends! The body of it roughish humanity well used to the business, but borne along with it all kinds of decent people, perplexed faces of young maids, indignant faces of old ones, stout matrons, white-headed old men, all helter-skelter, a regular danse macabre. And when we should have stopped Heaven knows, but for the police, who dexterously shunted the flying mass, which soon lost its momentum in the open spaces about Northumberland Avenue.

Just one more glimpse of the star-spangled and the gilt coach, as the pageant passes from Victoria Street, broad and brand-new, into the narrower defiles of the ancient City. Wonderful to see the City all in uproar. The men of business caught in the whirl of it, cabs and omnibuses so many impromptu stands crowded with spectators. The big warehouses and tall offices all adorned with hangings and flags, and young women crowding at the windows. And the young women are not the last to shout and wave for the star-spangled as the last bit of sentiment going. And it must be said for the City that it seems to welcome the people who are crowding in. The streets are spread as it were with a carpet of sand, we squeeze in wherever we can see the best, and nobody offers to clear us out.

A little further on is the great carrefour of the City, a whirlpool of human beings and vehicles; while the last gleam of daylight shines upon the newly-gilded grasshopper over the Exchange. And then a second daylight steals over the scene as the electric lamps shine out from their tall columns. And for the crowds that are pouring in—country folks, too, in large proportion—this festive City must seem a very fairyland of brightness. To pass

suddenly from Stodgeford-in-the-Clay and its one dreary street into the artificial daylight of the City, the wide streets, the thronging crowds, must indeed be bewildering. "And be they Bow Bells?" cries young Hodge, listening wonderingly to the chime.

Perhaps the most impressive scene at this moment is the narrow pass by St. Paul's; the great bulk of the cathedral towering above, the bright lane of light along which the crowd of changing faces hurries in unceasing flood. It is hard work for the little trickle of humanity going westwards to stem the full tide of people coming in. And now the carriages of "the swells" are swelling the general current, so that the platform of Blackfriars Station is a haven of peace and tranquility in contrast with the streets above. But even the cheeriest of suburbs looks yellow and dismal after the cheerful City daylight; and for my own part I vow, after this experience, to spend every fine evening in the City, basking in the pleasant artificial sunshine. And if the new Lord Mayor would every now and then supply a little music, say in the covered area of the Exchange, I am sure that all the world, from east and west, would haste to this grasshoppers' feast as to a grateful interlude in the long dull nights of winter.

JOHN CHINAMAN IN AMERICA.

BY AN AMERICAN.

IN a New York journal appeared, the other day, the following paragraph:

"The last party of Chinese students in the United States, numbering twenty-seven, have left Hartford for China. Their educational home, a fine house, built by the Chinese Government, is shut up, and will be sold."

It cannot be denied, that this sudden exodus from our country of Celestials of the better class was somewhat wounding to our self-love. We had not wooed them to our schools and colleges, but we had made them welcome, and were not a little proud of the advance they had made, under American instructors, in English studies. We are grieved to know that the Chinese Government put this abrupt end to so interesting an educational experiment, from fear that the young Mongolians were learning in our model republic, among some few things useful, many things perilous to the high old (six thousand years old) civilisation of China—imbibing, in especial, political ideas which lead to election-rioting

and president-shooting. It is a "hard saying," but not an unnatural conclusion, for an outside barbarian.

During our last presidential election, the Chinaman entered for the first time on the stormy stage of American politics; being dragged, as it were, by his pig-tail into the thick of the fight. In the city of Denver, Colorado—where the proportion of Chinese, mostly laundrymen and market-gardeners, is less than two hundred to twenty thousand Anglo-Saxons, Teutons, and Celts—a Democratic mob two thousand strong, incited by the publication of the famous forged "Garfield letter," maddened by the harangues of pot-house politicians against that bugbear, "Chinese cheap labour," and fired by a bounteous flow of bad whisky, did, on the eve of the great election, take possession of the Chinese quarter, and proceed to sack houses and shops, and to beat, stone, or hang such of the unoffending, unresisting aliens as they could lay their hands on. It was many hours before the authorities regained possession of the town, and dispersed the rioters, imprisoning a few of the leaders.

In California, for some years past, the Chinaman has been forced into political questions, mostly local, and has been used as a bone of bitter party contention. He found his first political enemies and persecutors in the "working man's party"—a disorganising organisation, composed principally of Irishmen and other foreigners of agrarian and communistic proclivities, headed by that arch-agitator Dennis Kearney. As this Anti-Mongolian prejudice increased, "growing by what it fed on," and Chinese immigration seemed to be breaking like quick succeeding billows on our Pacific coast, politicians of all parties began to "take arms against that sea of trouble." Among the first marked results of this great "scare" were the proscriptive features in the new State Constitution of California, and the passage through Congress of the Anti-Chinese Bill, so bravely vetoed by President Hayes.

All Republicans of the old Anti-Slavery Humanitarian School held that should that new constitution be literally carried out, with the consent of the Federal Government and supplemented by Federal legislation, then must the central vital principle of Republicanism—the very soul of the Declaration of Independence—be abandoned, or, at the least, become a dead letter, as it was for so many shameful years under the slave system.

Among the first to perceive and denounce the fatal inconsistency and inhumanity of such a restrictive and proscriptive policy was the venerable anti-slavery leader, William Lloyd Garrison, to whose words of counsel and warning Death has since added new force and solemnity. His stinging strictures upon such republican representatives as voted for the Anti-Chinese measures called forth a reply from a prominent New England senator, then (in 1879) regarded as the most eligible candidate of his party for the presidency. In a long and able article he replied ingeniously, if not ingenuously, to the arguments and appeals of the great philanthropist, and so skilfully struck the key-note of Pacific Coast prejudice, that the "golden state" sent her delegates to the Chicago Convention, instructed to cast their votes for the stout champion of American "free labour" as opposed to "Chinese coolie slavery."

The senator's paper now before me is, in truth, a fearful arraignment of that heathen barbarism, "unholy, unwholesome, foul, and leprous," which he holds is poisoning our pure Christian civilisation on the Pacific Coast, and slowly eating its way eastward. He draws an appalling picture of the irregular domestic relations of the Chinese immigrants. It seems that marriage, as we understand it, is very rare among them—as rare, in fact, as among the students and grisettes of the Latin Quarter in Paris. At the best it is a contract no more solemn and binding than the morganatic marriages of Christian Emperors and Grand Dukes. He declares that in the entire population of the Pacific "scarcely one family is to be found; no hearthstone of comfort, no fire-side of joy; no father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister; no child reared by parents."

Strange! for in the Chinese quarter of San Francisco one sees no lack of children of all sizes, and these foundlings, these waifs whom "nobody owns," are wonderfully well cared for, housed, fed, and clothed, and are remarkably clean, orderly, and well-behaved little animals. They go to school without their parents, or those mysterious guardians who pass for parents, being hauled before the School Board; they go in whole and tidy garments, and with "shining morning faces." They have their special schools now, but when I was first in San Francisco their means of education were limited to the Sunday

missions, and it was said that the unregenerate little Mongols were attracted to those benevolent institutions more by the "Melicanman's" alphabet than by his religion. They were eager to learn that which they could put to the most speedy and practical use. The "scheme of salvation" was made to wait on the multiplication-table. Had they been more piously inclined, I fear they would have found that—as runs the negro hymn—"Jordan is a hard road to travel," because of their little Christian school-mates who, lying in wait around the corner and in alleys, too frequently pelted them with their little hymn-books and memoirs of other Sunday-school heroes, or insisted on "playing horse," they always being the drivers, like true Anglo-Saxons and Celts, using the small pig-tails of the young Celestials for reins, and so driving them in pain and sore affright down the steep declivities of that wonderful "city set upon a hill."

I have often visited the more respectable part of the Chinese Ghetto, Sacramento Street, with its strange shops, fragrant of sandal-wood and tea. I have seen the quarter thronged with Mongolians in holiday dress, and rejoicing with the subdued gaiety of aliens in their New Year fêtes. But I have never witnessed any scenes of tumult or disorder there; have never seen a street fight; never encountered a starving child or a drunken woman. I have never even heard of a Chinese "coster jumping on his mother," or of a Chinaman kicking his wife or his mistress to death.

In our Capitol at Washington I have heard many eloquent tirades, many awful warnings against John Chinaman; but I cannot believe that the poor fellow has yet done any great harm to our Christian civilisation, beyond furnishing a fresh hobby for demagogueism.

The statesman of whom I have spoken, though not a demagogue in the vulgar sense, argues like a political sophist when he treats of this unhappy alien.

Scarcely just or logical are certain statements he makes and the deductions drawn from them. For instance, he says:

"The two races have been side by side for more than thirty years—nearly an entire generation—and not one step toward assimilation has been taken. The Chinese occupy their own peculiar quarter in the city, adhere to their own dress, speak their own language, worship in their own heathen temples."

"Under what possible sense of duty any

American can feel that he promotes Christianity by the process of handing California over to heathenism is more than I can discover."

Again :

"The Chinaman to-day approaches no nearer to our civilisation than he did when the Golden Gate first received him."

So, holding themselves jealously apart—with us, but not of us ; engaged in many industrial avocations ; acquiring our language ; obeying our laws, but not seeking to make theirs or to unmake our religion ; humbly performing all sorts of menial service, but never becoming party-slaves or caucus brawlers ; these people are yet dangerous to our civilisation and Christianity ! Are they, then, morally stronger than we ? Is the religion of Christ to fear the religion of Confucius ?

In travelling along the wide highway of life together, is Caucasian civilisation to dread the slightest jostle against Mongolian civilisation, as though ours were the earthen, theirs the iron pot ? Are we really in peril from what touches us so slightly in our nationality, humanity, and social life ?

Not that the Mongolian element is so good a thing that we cannot have too much of it, unless, at least, it be better distributed than it has been. There was, to most Pacific Coast citizens, something appalling in the proportions it was assuming at the time the war was opened upon it, and up to the time of the signing of the treaty under which we claim the right to legislate against "excessive Chinese immigration ;" and though there has actually been little or no falling off in this particular sort of human importation, the fact that our Government holds the remedy in its own hands has seemed to render the Pacific coast more worthy of its name in its social and political aspect. Practically, however, John Chinaman's position only became more tolerable through the fall of his arch-enemy, Dennis Kearney, who, after the manner Milesian, had overdone his part of popular agitator and leader by his brutal violence and boundless impudence. He had "gone to the length of his tether," which many honest, decent, order-loving citizens regretted was not a halter. It was not overthrow or defeat, it was subsidence, collapse—a complete "cave in," to use a phrase of the miners. When he was finally arrested and imprisoned, the cry of the timid and the over-scrupulous to the authorities was : "You are making a martyr of the fellow.

He will come out of gaol more powerful than ever." But the fact was that he came forth, after a brief incarceration, to find his occupation and his prestige gone, and a "Vigilance Committee" on the look-out for him. So he wisely mastered his ambition to conduct the fiery chariot of revolution, and took to driving a dray.

When I was last in San Francisco, some five years ago, he was a formidable figure of menace and mischief, by reason of his tremendous power of invective and denunciation and of the numerical strength of his following. From his rough tribune on the famous Sand-lots, in the suburbs of the city, he harangued his motley multitude and fired their inflammable hearts against railway and land patricians and their "hideous helots," the "debauched, off-eating, devil-worshipping, leprous Chinese."

Those monster meetings often broke up with a proposition from some frantic orator, received with tumultuous shouts and wild yells, to adjourn to California, or "Nob" Hill, and there wreak the vengeance of honest labour on the palaces of the arrogant railroad kings and princes.

Sometimes there was a savage supplementary cry of "Down with Crocker's fence !" After awful threats of storming, sacking, and burning the costly houses of Stanford and Huntington, there was something mysterious, something of an anticlimax in that cry. And, in truth, this same "fence" bade fair at one time to become an historical and tragical structure. It was a lofty screen of closely-set palisades, dividing the lawn and conservatories of the millionaire from the unsightly shanty of an Irish labourer, and wholly hiding that primitive edifice from the view of the occupants and visitors of the great house. Before erecting this barrier, Mr. Crocker made repeated efforts to purchase his poor neighbour's property, but, invariably, after preliminaries had all been arranged and papers were about to be signed, there occurred a rise in terms—the bit of land and the humble domicile seeming to grow suddenly in preciousness and price, till after some half-a-dozen advances had been good-humouredly allowed, a peculiarly preposterous demand was made, and the blood of "bloated capital" was up. All was over with the negotiations, and then the fence went up, accompanied by a howl from the Irish "Labour Party," who looked upon it as a standing defiance, an insult and an outrage, "most tolerable and not to be endured."

But the lordly hill on which the San Francisco railway magnates most do congregate, is "high and hard to climb," and the palaces thereon were then known to be so many well-stocked private armouries, so the oratory-inflamed mob invariably cooled down before scaling the height, and usually contented itself with turning aside to sack and burn some Chinaman's laundry, or to maltreat or murder some poor Mongolian student, skulking home from a night mission-school with slate and spelling-book under his arm.

Had San Francisco been the head and heart of California, as Paris is of France, one might at that time have regarded that glorious state—regally crowned with shining silver and belted about with a cestus of virgin gold—as bound hand and foot and delivered up to the tender mercies of Irish Communists; but, in fact, the reign of terror at its height was of small account, except to such meek defenceless victims as those poor laundrymen and market-gardeners who fell in its way. Yet when General Grant, returning from his round-the-world ovation, declined point blank to receive the terrible Sand-lot orator and sans culotte leader, Kearney, he was thought to have shown as much bravery as he had ever exhibited in battle. It was said by politicians that this bold act imperilled his chances for the presidency, and perhaps it did. Sand-lot indignation meetings were held, and the foreign potentates who had done honour to the great American soldier were rather roughly handled. Not even her gracious Majesty the Queen of England was tenderly entreated on such occasions.

Of late the scene of martyrdom for poor John Chinaman seems transferred to South America, and there is a welcome pause in his persecutions in the Golden State—perhaps partly because the sympathies, if not the energies, of his persecutors have been absorbed by the far-off Irish struggle against landlordism. But should the League collapse into another "lost cause," they may return to the field of their old operations, and recommence the old fight, not of labour against capital, but of race, and caste, and ferocious prejudice. There are many there now who are far from content with the present peace or truce, who refuse to be comforted by treaties, who demand not alone restriction, but expulsion—some gigantic scheme of deportation.

That the hated "Chinese cheap labour" has been an important, an invaluable element in the prosperity of the Pacific Coast thus far, I suppose none will deny—not even the most zealous members of that radical "American party," which is made up mostly of citizens of foreign birth, with whom brogue is the vogue. That "cheap labour" has built in great part California's great railroads. It has caused her desolate sand-wastes and tawny prairie-lands to blossom into vast grain fields and fruit-ranches. It has made a life of comfort and refinement possible in her young cities. It has made those cities themselves possible. That the state is now rich and strong enough to do without that labour may be equally true, though I doubt it, but the question, of course, is how can she safely rid herself of the social adjunct, the alien comfort, she once so gratefully welcomed? As it has been a factor of peaceful prosperity, it may become an element of strife and devastation. Quietly the thing cannot be done. A great stream may not be turned back on its source. The struggle for disembarment may end in something like disintegration. If harsh and violent means are resorted to, and Dennis the Terrible again comes to the fore, I do not believe that the Mongols, mild and conciliatory though they be, will take the "driving-into-the-sea" process kindly. They have blood in their veins, though not of our rich and noble quality, and a sort of sense of right and wrong, and they will fight in an extremity, if only like so many cornered rats. They are the most patient and long-suffering of peoples, but, says the old Arab proverb, "beware the anger of a patient man."

Oil and water are not more dissimilar than the two races, nor more uncongenial, perhaps. Let us suppose that we are the water, pure and limpid—from heaven, originally, if not quite recently, and that they are the nasty oil, "of the earth, earthy." Yet a stream of crude petroleum sometimes makes its way into a mountain torrent, and the two flow on together, always distinct, disunited, but not recoiling one from the other, and equally harmless. But when, as it sometimes happens, in a conflagration of storehouses in a great city, water from the hose of the engines takes on streams of petroleum from bursting oil-tanks, and then takes on fire, the two uncongenial substances mingle in a final union of fierce destruction, and carry waste and ruin wherever they flow.

But, whatever danger may arise from having in our midst this foreign element, growing, however, less and less foreign every year, it seems to me that a greater danger would be incurred were our Government to act on the right it secured to itself in the late treaty to legislate against Chinese immigration. It might not be straining constitutional powers more than the English Government is now doing in the case of the Irish Land League, but the ultimate consequences might be far more serious. It would imperil its own existence as a republic pure and simple, and thenceforward would be compelled to abandon its grand old charter—the Declaration of Independence. The theory asserted by that immortal document may be “ideal,” but thus far we have been able, step by step, to realise it, by the abolition of old and almost universally accepted tests of the rights of citizenship—first, religion; second, property; third, alienage; fourth, colour, as in the negro race.

The only exceptions now existing to the perfect carrying out of the theory are the case of the Mongols, and the exclusion of one-half of the human race—women—on the ground of sex.

The great mission of our country, as I understand it, is fully to vindicate and exercise this theory or principle of simple humanity as the only title-deed necessary to the enjoyment of all political and civil rights. Thus far it has certainly succeeded passably well, and the question now is whether we shall go forward or back. Our country is practically a congress of nations, in which all nationalities are represented, and ought to be represented, in order to demonstrate the practicability or impracticability of our theory. The number of Mongols now in or likely to come to America is, after all, comparatively small, and practically can do no great injury. But whatever small harm or embarrassment it may cause we must bear for the sake of the greater good, if we would not go back on our record, if we would preserve our national consistency, if we would be true to our political faith, and, without hypocrisy, preach it to all the world. From the fusion of all races in our country, under the happy influences of free institutions, may we not rationally look for a new and noble type of humanity—the hope and the instrument of the future?

So I trust that the American Govern-

ment will never, yielding to weak fears and unreasoning clamour, do aught that may militate against the ultimate realisation of our sublime hope. We owe this to the world, and we must not defeat our destiny and our duty.

“ THIS MORTAL.”

ARE then the fleshly bonds so strong and stern?

Must all this waiting, watching, longing, weeping,
This passionate praying of the loved to learn,

That fevers all my waking, haunts my sleeping,
Pass, powerless as a child's light-lived desire,
To sink no deeper, and to rise no higher?

My darling, oh, my darling, whose brown eyes,

Looked back such full communion into mine,
At whose dear name such happy memories rise,

Round whose dear images such sweet fancies twine.
Friend, Guide, Companion, Comforter, and Brother,
Strong staff to me, to me, who have no other!

Cannot your spirit flash to mine, beloved?

Along the chords that stretch from soul to soul;
Must Nature ever as a rock unmoved

Fling back each voice that swells the mighty
whole

Of Love's imploring cry? Since earth began,
Has not the echo risen up from man?

One little whisper: “Dear, 'tis well with me.”

One little lifting of the dim grey veil—

What nectar to the fainting it might be,

What strength to tired feet that faltering, fail!

But this I know, the law will ne'er be broken,
Or, brother, heart to heart are this had spoken.

CONCERNING A PLEBEIAN.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

HENRY MARTIN was a young man of some means and with no imperative duties or occupation. Although he had many sisters, the service they exacted from him was not onerous. Sometimes they required his escort to a dance, or a lecture on sanitary reform, or the exposition of a popular preacher's views on Mr. Browning, but it more frequently happened that they preferred to be alone, and were indeed quite competent to take care of themselves. Martin professed, and in fact felt, for his sisters a creditable amount of fraternal affection, but on the whole he looked upon them in the light of warnings, pointing out what he should avoid in choosing his own wife. The Misses Martin were too well-informed on most subjects, and too eager for information on others. They had too many theories on housekeeping, religion, dressmaking, and philosophy, and they carried out their views with a precision and success exasperating to witness in members of the weaker sex.

Martin bestowed his attentions on all women with an untiring freshness and impartiality which had won him golden opinions; but he had never yet discovered

a maiden sufficiently gentle, ignorant, and confiding on whom to fix his heart. For these were the chief points he sought, together with youth, beauty, money, and position. It will be seen that my friend Martin was as modest in his requirements as are most prosperous young men. Plenty of time and money, together with blessed bachelor freedom, had developed in Martin an originally nomadic turn of mind, and he thought nothing of starting off for St. Petersburg, Paris, or New York on the shortest possible notice, and with no particular object. He had so well educated his family to his vagaries, that when one morning in early May he announced his departure in a few minutes for Switzerland, there was no manifestation of astonishment or concern. It had occurred to him the night before that it would be interesting to see Switzerland before the arrival of its tourist population. He regretted he had not thought of this in midwinter, but he knew of an hotel on a certain mountain where he thought it probable he could have all the solitude he desired.

At Basel, where he arrived next day, he was received with the same cheerful congratulation that welcomes the first swallow in a wintry land. He enjoyed his supper in the deserted dining-hall, and his pipe on the lonely terrace without. It was good to listen to the dark strong river rushing below him, and to feel the cold strong wind in his face. Between the driving clouds, a brilliant star sometimes shone out at him a moment, and while he sought its trembling reflection in the waters, both were lost again in darkness. He slept that night with the noisy river in his ears, and it woke him in the morning mingled with the sound of church bells.

He remembered it was Sunday and rejoiced he was abroad. He strolled about the town, watching the devout German wives and maidens, with their fair stolid faces, half hidden by their big hats, hurrying over the bridges mass-book in hand, and he found it a pleasanter way of spending Sunday morning, than listening to the eccentricities of the minister under whom his sisters sat.

Martin remarked that the men of Basel did not enter the churches. They evidently shared his own opinion, that to let your womankind pray in your behalf is the more reasonable and profitable arrangement. He was determined that his wife should be very religious; he even thought that a little gross superstition would not be amiss. It was

natural that a woman should be credulous, and his would be the pleasing task of enlightening her—if he thought fit.

On the following day Martin left Basel, and some time after noon found himself at the foot of Huldensfels. Here he took a carriage and began the ascent. A two hours' drive up a steep winding road takes the visitor to the top, where stands the solitary hotel, a one-storeyed, rambling white house. The road up is closed in on either side by forests of beech and fir trees, but when a break does occur, glimpses of distant lake and mountain forebode the glories to be revealed on reaching the summit.

Martin, comfortably stretched out in the carriage, was quite indifferent as to the length of time he was on the road; neither had the driver, in spite of portentous whip-cracking, the smallest intention of hurrying his cattle. Two hours was the orthodox time for getting up Huldensfels, and he was not the man to falsify the traditions of his tribe. So the horses crawled their slowest, and their master occasionally walked beside them to prevent himself from falling asleep on the box.

When about three-quarters of the way up Martin heard the undergrowth crackling on his right, and looking round he saw a gentleman burst forth, with an exceedingly red face, and an objectionable suit of checks. At least so it appeared to Martin, who was fastidious as to the particular shade and size a check should be. However, seeing that the stranger was an Englishman, and having some pity for his inflamed condition, Martin offered him a lift in the carriage.

"Thanks," said the gentleman with a gasp, "I'm in a hurry, and you'll be another good half-hour yet; and I promised my wife I'd do it in two hours; there and back, you know; which is stiff walking. The worst of it is it makes a man so damp." He took off his hat, and mopped his streaming face and head vigorously.

Martin thought "damp" a mild description. The gentleman looked rather as though he had just emerged from a bath. He appeared about Martin's own age. The upper part of his forehead was fair as a child's, but the rest of his face and neck, through exposure to wind and sun, had become of a fine fiery crimson colour. His coat was unbuttoned, and his shirt thrown open; in one blackened hand he grasped an alpenstock. Martin got out and walked beside him.

"I had no idea I should meet a com-

patriot here," he remarked. "It is so early in the year, that I imagined I should be the only Englishman at Huldensfels."

"My wife came here with that idea, too," said the gentleman; "she likes to be out of the ruck, as she calls it. She don't care a bit for fashion and that sort of thing, you see."

Martin began to apologise for his seeming intrusion; had he known he was coming to disturb the chosen solitude of a lady he would rather have gone to the ends of the earth, "though I hope she won't look upon me in the light of 'fashion,'" he concluded, smiling.

"Oh, she won't care for just one," said the warm gentleman, "and I expect Kate will like it. She is my cousin-in-law, you know, and I'm sure she finds it awfully dull! It is dull for unmarried people. I was only lately married myself, so I know what it is."

Martin, who was greatly diverted with the openness of this young fellow, now laughed outright, and said he had never looked on a wife as a possible source of amusement.

"It makes a great difference, I can tell you," said his companion. "I used not to care a bit for trees and things before I married, and it is wonderful how I've enjoyed a fine view since."

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks," said Martin. "Perhaps your cousin, Miss Kate, will allow me to help her find amusement in Nature."

The gentleman looked mystified. "Oh! ah! Yes, to be sure," he said. "I daresay she will be very glad to see you, but I must get on now. Fact is, I went down to get my wife some hairpins, and I expect she'll be wanting them. I shall meet you again at dinner, or rather supper, as they call it up there."

And off went this happy husband at a tearing pace up a short cut to the left, and Martin returned to the carriage.

When he reached the plateau on the mountain-top he found himself in one of winter's last resting-places. All the way up from the plains the signs of spring had been growing fewer and fainter, until here the beech-tree buds were hardly green, wreaths of snow crowned all the neighbouring heights, and a great glistening patch lay just below the hotel itself.

The first thing Martin did was to inspect the "Visitors' Book." At the top of the page he saw written, "Mr. and Mrs. Higgins of London, Miss Kate Adama." Then he made a rapid toilet, and went down to the dining-room. Four great western windows let in floods of light over the bare

walls and empty tables, and over three people sitting at the end of one of the tables near the stove. Martin recognised his hot friend of the road—Higgins evidently—sitting between two ladies. Higgins begged him cordially to sit down, and one of the ladies graciously made room for him by her side.

"The soup has just gone down," said Higgins, "but I'll get it back for you. Here Mary! Jane!" he cried to the German waitress, "just bring back that 'pottahge' will you? It's very odd how I can always make myself understood, though I don't know a word of their language. Luckily my wife here is as good as themselves at it."

Martin was aware he was sitting by Mrs. Higgins, but he could only see the outline of a young cheek, and of a largish hand lying on the table near him, a hand well-shaped enough, but which he thought would be improved by the use of a little soap and water.

The girl opposite him was Miss Adams, of course. She wore a great many pretty rings, and bracelets that jingled with every movement of her wrists. When her eyes first met Martin's steady gaze, she smiled back at him; then blushed very much, and smiled at her plate.

"She is decidedly glad to see me," was his inward comment; "what a nice little thing she seems!"

"How red you are, Kate," said Mrs. Higgins in a voice vibrating with intensity. "Does not your dinner agree with you?"

"She's choking! take some water," suggested Higgins. The young girl blushed the more.

"It agrees with me perfectly, Celesta," she answered gently. "Thank you, Jack, I am not choking, and I should prefer wine, please." She shook back her head a little when speaking, and her short dark hair flew up round it in wavy lines.

Jack looked about him. "Well, dovey," he said to his wife, "aren't we to have any wine, eh?"

"Water," replied this lady with increased earnestness, "is the only safe drink when at a high altitude. Wine and beer are too heating."

"Isn't there a milk-cure or something of that sort to be had here?" said Martin, addressing himself to Mrs. Higgins with a view to getting her to turn her head round.

"I know nothing of it," she said slowly; "to me pure mountain air is as invigorating as champagne. Besides, it would be an extra. It is not included in the pension."

She lifted up her face to him, and he was fairly surprised at the purity of its lines and the beauty of the dark blue eyes fixed gravely on his own.

He observed an instant later that her hair wanted brushing, and that a rough plait-end was straying down her neck. Perhaps after all her husband had not got up in time with the hairpins.

"I hear that you, like ourselves," said Mrs. Higgins, "are seeking solitude. It is the only means of learning to understand Nature. I mean to stay here the whole summer."

"You will have plenty of people up here later on," Martin told her. "When I was last here all these tables were filled."

"Celesta looks upon tourists as the most dreadful creatures," said Miss Adams, "but do you know I should have imagined we were tourists ourselves?"

Mrs. Higgins looked gloomily across the table. "I am well aware, Kate, that you are already craving after excitement; I never knew you happy two days together. But you should not grudge me a little rest, when you know how much good it does me. And you should remember that while you add considerably to the expense of travelling, we can live here cheaper than anywhere else."

Miss Adams blushed furiously; then shrugged her shoulders, and laughed.

"I think you should have considered the expense before you brought me," she remarked in the gentle tone in which she always spoke.

Conversation was now taking a purely personal line which, if amusing to Martin, appeared to render Higgins uncomfortable. He sought and found a diversion.

"Just look, pet!" he cried to his wife. "What a magnificent sunset. I believe I can see Mont Blanc! Come out and I'll explain to you how I went up it."

"You have told me now more than fifty times," said Mrs. Higgins, frowning. "Go and get me my cloak."

Then, without waiting for it, she turned, and led the way on to the terrace. From this terrace an unrivalled panoramic view is obtained, and on this evening when all the hundred fantastic peaks were bathed in fiery sunset glories, the effect was magical.

"Isn't it too awfully lovely!" exclaimed little Miss Adams in the unconsciously acquired slang of society.

"Does it not make you feel good?" enquired Mrs. Higgins, as she leant on the

balustrade, and looked with holy eyes in Martin's face.

He had a suspicion that this odd young woman was ready for a platonic flirtation, but he was averse to so arduous an undertaking. He felt that she was too profound. Miss Adams appeared more likely to amuse him. For though, when once fairly married, he would expect from his wife rather tender submission than brilliancy and wit, in his platonic affections he expected a reasonable amount of entertainment from the fair being whom for the moment he honoured with his approval.

Higgins now appeared, bearing cloaks and wraps, his red face positively glowing in the light. He wrapped his tall young wife tenderly in her furs, and then proceeded to spread out on the flat top of the balustrade an enormous chart of the mountains in view.

"Aren't you glad I brought you to Switzerland?" he said, gazing rapturously into her face.

As Martin turned discreetly away, he heard something unmistakably like a kiss. It was lovely to see Miss Kate blush; she was evidently very fresh.

"Look here, ducky," explained Higgins to his wife, "you see this mountain?" and he pointed with tobacco-browned finger on the map. "I went up that in '75. You see it over there, just in front of us?"

"I see nothing, Jack," said his wife gravely.

"Why, look, darling, follow my finger," and he pointed afar with laborious exactitude. "I say, Kate! can you see it?"

"Oh, perfectly, thanks; quite a sharp peak?"

"I've been up nearly all those mountains," said Jack, turning to Martin, "which makes it interesting to show them to my wife, you know."

"I see no mountains at all," declared that young lady with sublime gravity, "only clouds. There are no mountains. Why did you bring me up here telling me I should see mountains? I would never have come to Switzerland at all, if I had known it was so ugly."

Mrs. Higgins paused impressively between each sentence, and at every pause her husband's face assumed a deeper shade of anguish; and when she wound up with, "I would never have married you if I had known you would show me mountains where there are no mountains," Martin withdrew. He had no wish to see Higgins on his knees, and that would, he thought, be the climax.

At the end of twenty-four hours Martin found himself on very good terms with his new friends. With Jack Higgins he was as intimate as though he had known him half his life, and he found him to be a gentlemanly fellow, with no pretensions to intellect, but much honest feeling, and a tremendous infatuation for his beautiful wife.

As for the two ladies, it was easy to see they were as opposed as the poles; how they ever managed to set their horses together with even an appearance of amity was amazing to Martin. He began to take some interest in Miss Adams, and even to admire her; her dark curly hair made so becoming a frame to her pleasant little face. Certainly she was not to be compared to Mrs. Higgins, whose features he pronounced perfect; but then Miss Kate had every advantage that pretty dress and exquisite neatness could give her, while her cousin seemed absolutely indifferent to external aids, and wore her clothes anyhow, while her gowns left much to be desired on the score of cleanliness and taste.

Martin made some of these reflections when writing home to his people next day—not in his letter, of course, but during the long pauses in which he sat wondering what on earth he should say next. Grey clouds hung low over the mountain-top, an icy wind waltzed over the polished floor; the few logs burning dimly in the china stove at one end of the room, served by their wretched mockery of warmth, to make the cold more keenly appreciated. Martin wrote his letter at the other end of the salon, or rather did not write, but contemplated the two ladies, working near the stove. Miss Adams every now and then dropped her bit of embroidery, to clasp her hands round the chimney funnel, or to rise and fetch in despair fresh logs from the red velvet divan in which they mouldered. Martin observed her wonderfully frilled and draped skirts, and how she never resettled herself in her chair without bestowing divers little pats and shakes to the satisfactory arrangement of her attire. The result was graceful, even though the means were too studied. Mrs. Higgins on the contrary seemed to choose her attitudes for their inelegance, and as she sat now, with her feet, encased in slippers, raised upon the stove, and the sock at which she was darning drawn down over her hand, Martin thought he had never seen a beautiful woman look so unattractive.

Mr. Higgins was smoking on the terrace

outside, and as he passed to and fro the window, he would generally call in to his wife, "How are you, pet?" or some such endearing epithet. At other times, tapping on the pane to command attention, he would execute a little bit of a war-dance. He was still inebriated with the triumph of having secured Mrs. Higgins for himself, and of having thereby blighted the lives of innumerable rivals.

She received these little attentions of her husband's with a heavenly resignation, leaving Miss Adams to do all the smiles and blushes. Martin admired the latter's frequent changes of colour; they augured a timidity which was pleasing to him.

"I am sorry you are cold, Kate," observed Mrs. Higgins in response to a complaint from her cousin; "I see in the papers a very cold summer is prophesied, and of course up here you will feel it more than in the towns. I think sharp weather agrees with me; I have no intention of going anywhere else."

"I should hope you will change your mind before the summer is over," said Miss Adams, "and seek some gayer spot, How awfully tired we shall get of each other!"

"I do not agree with you, Kate," said her cousin gravely; "I believe this is an opportunity given me to thoroughly study your character. In society you affect a frivolity and shallowness, which are no doubt occasioned by shyness; for I must tell you your manners with strangers have been remarked on as extremely awkward."

"My goodness, Celesta, how comic you are!" said Miss Adams with a little gust of laughter. "Imagine coming to Switzerland to study each other's characters! Besides, at the best it can only be a one-sided amusement, for yours is so transparent it never contained any mysteries for me."

Mrs. Higgins looked at her long and gloomily. "Perhaps you are right, Kate, to act a part," she said at last; "even if I were able to read between the lines, it might not be a very edifying occupation."

Miss Adams, who saw that Martin had heard this, smiled back at him, with an expressive little grimace.

"What will you make Mr. Martin think of me?" she answered gently. "He is already conjuring up a dark and terrible past for me. He sees a dagger in my waist-band, and feels sure of laudanum in my dressing-case."

She rose and smoothed her skirts with careful fingers. "I am now going, on the

pretence of fetching my sealskin, for I am perished with cold, down to the lime-kiln to gloat over the cinders of my rival."

When she had gone, Mrs. Higgins crossed the room and took a chair opposite Martin.

"I am ashamed of Kate's flippancy," she murmured; "nothing is so fatal to a woman's dignity."

"Let us hope she will acquire dignity with years," said Martin, smiling.

"Kate is a woman now," cried Mrs. Higgins quickly; "she is eight months older than I. She was twenty-two in February."

Martin was careful not to betray his incredulity.

"I am so much alone here," she said after a pause; "until you came I had no one to speak seriously to; you see what Kate is, and Jack cares for nothing but walking and eating; but if I confide a little in you, you will, I think, understand me?"

Martin protested that henceforth his object in life should be to deserve her confidence.

"I am sure you wonder why I married Jack. Poor fellow! it was to save him from ruin. He was so desperately fond of me, it was driving him wild. And yet after all I think I was wrong. Marriage is so solemn a thing, one has no right to undertake it in the light of a sacrifice."

Martin, not deceived by these profound phrases, saw clearly that, a certain point once passed, a flirtation with his fair companion would proceed fast and furiously. But he felt no attraction for her; though her blue holy eyes were such as the Madonna might have looked from, and her mouth was a mouth to be immortalised in marble. Her untidiness was repulsive to him. If Miss Adams went to the other extreme in dress, and hung, as she certainly did, too many gold and silver ornaments about her small person, it was, after all, a more pardonable fault than the slovenliness which characterised Mrs. Higgins.

The days were so much alike, that Martin was surprised when he found that a week had slipped away with nothing to recall it by. He had walked down the mountain on every side, and watched day by day the beech-buds grow bigger and looser, until at last with a change in the weather and a warm sun, they unfolded into a million tender green fan-leaves. He was often with the Higginses, and he thought that the proverbial toad under a harrow had a happier time of it than Mrs. Higgins's husband.

One afternoon when they had all

wandered up to the highest peak of Huldensfels, Celesta, either from personal gratification or to exasperate her husband, had devoted herself to Martin with an outrageous ostentation. Higgins grew redder and more wretched every moment. Martin would willingly have dispensed with her attentions, but there being no escape, he could not resist, from a habit of philandering now become a second nature, throwing into his voice an inflection of half-tender patronage, anything but calculated to soothe the indignant husband. The fragrant ground was starred with gentian and orchids, and Mrs. Higgins, seated on the trunk of a fallen pine-tree, commanded the two men to supply her with flowers to make a bouquet. In an old brown ulster over a black gown she looked, as usual, anything but picturesque. Miss Adams, who sat on the grass, reminded Martin of some brilliant blossom herself, so gay and becoming was her scarlet and white frock. Martin lay near her, paying a lazy attention to Mrs. Higgins's behest, by handing her the few flowers within his reach. Higgins meanwhile, delighted to be of use, scoured an area of five hundred yards, and brought to his wife handfuls of flowers and grasses.

"Make a pitty bouquet for its little hubby," he said, as he sat down by her and affectionately rubbed his head on her shoulder.

She made up her flowers with serene indifference.

"Jack, fetch me some more of those fluffy leaves, down by the water-trough."

Off he went, to return in ten minutes warm and blown.

"What shall I tie them up with?" she said presently. "I have nothing else, I must tie them with a hair. Jack, undo my hair."

There was not much difficulty in this, as her loose heavy plait was held apparently by only one crooked hairpin, and, when this was removed, the hair fell of its own weight. With her long brown hair falling round her face, she looked more like a saint than ever; and the resemblance was rather enhanced by a certain griminess of complexion, saints having a well-known objection to soap and water.

"This is a very precious nosegay, Jack; to whom shall I give it? No, I cannot give it to you, I don't like you well enough. I will give it to Mr. Martin."

With a sedate smile she put it in the young man's hand.

The long-suffering husband began to

scowl. Martin transferred the dangerous gift to Miss Adams.

"Your flowers will look much better in your cousin's dress," he said, smiling.

The husband's brow cleared and the wife's darkened.

"I should think Kate was gaudy enough already," she remarked sullenly, "but I suppose you are laughing at her. I have often told her she ought never to wear any but neutral colours. A short and full-bodied person like Kate must inevitably look vulgar in red."

Martin could hardly keep his countenance at such an amazing description, and Miss Adams laughed uncontrollably, which did not tend to improve her cousin's temper.

She got up without a word, and walked back towards the hotel.

Jack Higgins, after a little hesitation, followed her with a most unhappy expression on his honest face.

"Never mind about your dress," said Martin when left alone with Miss Kate, "I think it very pretty," and his tone plainly said: "If I approve, you will not easily get out of conceit with it."

"And do you know," he went on, "that I think its wearer a very pretty little girl, too?"

Her extreme youth (he believed her to be not a day more than seventeen, in spite of Mrs. Higgins's word to the contrary) seemed to excuse this slight impertinence, and her silence did not reprove him for it. Her face was turned away, so that only one rosy ear was visible.

"I don't know what I should have done without you up here," he said presently, lying back on the grass with his head in his hands; "it's a beastly dull place."

No answer

"I expect you, too, would have been very dull without me," he went on. "Come, confess now, have you not liked it better since I came?"

"I am going in," said Miss Adams, rising, and smoothing her scarlet ribbons.

"Please help me up," pleaded Martin. "I am so old and stiff, and the grass has given me rheumatism. Do give me your hand a moment?"

But Miss Adams paid no attention, or, perhaps, did not hear.

Martin was inclined to get some amusement out of her that afternoon. She was an attractive little mortal, evidently unused to the ways of the world; and he was pleased, but not surprised, at the impression he saw he had made on her. There

is something so touching in the naive admiration of a young and pretty woman.

The level sunbeams sent long shadows slanting up from beech and fir-tree; in the clear atmosphere the distant mountains looked within an hour's ride; the cattle came scampering down from the hill-brow for their evening drink; and the wild jodel of the cowherd on his way up to drive them to the milking-shed cut through the air.

"Do look," exclaimed Miss Kate, "how that bull is staring at me! I do so hate them!"

Martin saw that the bull was certainly observing them with steady eye, and had left off drinking to advance a little towards them.

"Oh, it's all right!" said he. "Go to the other side, and we'll keep to the left."

But as they advanced the bull followed them suspiciously along an inner line.

"Oh, I'm so awfully frightened!" whispered Miss Adams. "I know he'll run at us. What ever shall we do?"

"I believe it's your 'gaudy dress,'" said Martin, laughing; but he secretly wished he had a stick, and there was not a twig within reach.

They were passing by the drinking-trough, round which stood the cattle, and giving it as wide a berth as possible; just in front of them the ground ran up steeply to the low stone wall enclosing the hotel gardens. It was Martin's desire to get Miss Adams safely to this wall, but fright and high heels combined to render this impossible. Every step they took was followed by the bull, who also began to move forward to diminish the space between himself and them.

"I can't go any farther," said Miss Adams faintly, uplifting a face as white as her frills.

Martin looked critically round; the bull was beginning to paw the ground impatiently. In the distance came running up the cowherd, brandishing a green bough, and shouting words of warning, but he was too far off to be of any use.

Martin lifted his little companion in his arms, ran for the wall and put her over on the other side.

"Lie down close, and hide your dress," he said, and then turned to the enemy, to find him disconcerted by their sudden retreat, and relieved by the disappearance of the obnoxious colour.

The small boy had now reached the herd, and by the aid of his bough and shrill voice was driving the cows down to the farm.

The bull majestically turned and followed.

"We are all right this time," said Martin, as he and Miss Adams set off for the hotel, but he saw her hands shaking so that she could hardly hold her sunshade. He took it from her, and held in his warm reassuring hand her little cold one.

"Well, you are a goose to be frightened still," he said tenderly; "or to be frightened at all, when I am with you. Do you think I should let you come to harm? You must learn to trust me. Do you know, when I had you in my arms just now, I felt your heart beating like hammers?"

It was some minutes before Kate Adams was sufficiently recovered to speak. Then she regained her voice and her spirits together. She gently and firmly withdrew her hand from Martin's.

"Am I not a horrid coward?" she said gaily; "but I am sure some horned beast or other will be my death, I am so frightened of them. Was there not a pope who had an aversion to flies, and died choked by one?"

Martin declined an historical discussion. He was disappointed at so speedy a return from the regions of sentiment they were just entering. He would have preferred her fears, and therefore her dependence on him, to have lasted longer. However, they reached the house before he had time to bring back the conversation to a properly personal topic.

This encounter with the bull was the only thing that enlivened Martin's stay at Huldenfels, and yet, at the end of three weeks, he said nothing of going. Mrs. Higgins was always extremely friendly, but her husband became decidedly less so. He looked on Martin with a jealous eye, sulked at billiards, and took his pipe alone. Yet Martin rather avoided Mrs. Higgins than sought her society. Her heavenly eyes and dirty hands, together with her intensity, had an uncomfortable effect on him. Sometimes he wondered if she were quite right in her head.

With Miss Adams he began to own himself slightly infatuated, and he believed her thinly-disguised partiality for him to be the cause. But whereas, in the beginning, mere kindness of heart had bade him pay her those attentions which were obviously so pleasing to her, he now sought her more for his own gratification than from any feeling of philanthropy. If an occasional suspicion crossed his mind that he would do well to leave Huldenfels, he promptly stifled it. After all, what was he

to Miss Adams, or she to him, that he should deny himself any amusement she might afford him? Martin had already gone through so many sentimental episodes with so many fascinating young women, that he made no doubt of coming out of this one unscathed. But he who plays with edged tools had best beware; they too often wound the holder himself.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHIEL HOBY.

CHAPTER XLII. THE NEXT OF KIN.

[THE following is an extract from a letter written by Mrs. Masters, at Chesney Manor, to Colonel Masters, at Chundrapore, a month after the incidents related in the preceding chapters.]

"To-day, Helen has been pronounced out of danger, and the first effect of this great relief is that I am able to write for you a brief account of what has occurred since the terrible events of which my last letter informed you. I shall begin with Helen herself, who was taken ill on the very day preceding the atrocious murder of Mr. Horndean, and within a few hours after Miss Merrick arrived here to confer with me upon the anonymous letter. Miss Merrick and I arrived at the conclusion that Helen's illness must be the result of the shock of finding that Mr. Lisle was a constant visitor at Horndean, and that she might be exposed to the risk of meeting him. Only that morning, she had taken so composedly the revelation of this, and the curious complication of our finding that the Mr. Lisle who visited at Horndean, and her treacherous lover, whom the writer of the anonymous letter to Madame Morrison professed to have seen there, were two different persons, that I was quite deceived. I really thought her youth, and the quiet happy life she had been leading with us, had got her over her trouble, and I was surprised as well as distressed by the feverish, almost frantic way in which, a few hours later, she clung to Miss Merrick, and seemed to yield at once, unresistingly, to illness. The events which immediately ensued, the murder of Mr. Horndean, the awful death of Miss Chevenix, the investigation here, of which I shall tell you presently, her own critical state, were all unknown to her; the brain-fever declared itself rapidly. I believe that she has known all through her illness that Miss Merrick was with her—the most

admirable and untiring nurse I ever saw—and so great was Miss Merrick's influence over her that John and I resolved to abide by her advice in all things respecting Helen. A part of that advice is that we should not revert to the mystery of the identity of Mr. Lisle. My brother has been told Helen's story—Jane discovered that she urgently desired that he should know it—I am happy to say that he feels about it just as I do, and he entirely agrees with this view. The matter has lost much of its importance by the change that has taken place at Horn-dean. Helen has little to fear now, not only because of Mr. Horn-dean's death, but on account of another event, to which I am coming. Similar advice has been given us by Mr. Moore. Strange to say, the first wish she expressed was to see Mr. Moore, and he came at once. It was necessary that she should learn the fact of Mr. Horn-dean's death as soon as possible, for reasons which you shall hear presently. And he undertook to inform her of it. Their interview was a long one. We were afraid of the effect, but it proved beneficial. We suppose her asking to see Mr. Moore, and being so restlessly anxious about it, is to be explained by the last impression on her mind before her illness came on having been associated with him; at all events it was fortunate, for he seems to have managed very well. She will have to make a good deal of effort at the earliest safe moment, and she is gaining strength for it more rapidly than we could have hoped. 'Let the past rest completely; never recall it to her, by a question,' was Mr. Moore's counsel. I objected, 'But suppose the real man to turn up; and he might now be very willing to try his chance with her, what then?' To this Mr. Moore made the oracular reply: 'It would be time enough to meet that contingency, if it arose.' Of the anonymous communication made to Madame Morrison, Helen knows nothing. She is very silent, and seems satisfied to see that Miss Merrick is there, without asking why. She lies for hours quite still, and frequently asks to be left alone; this is always yielded to, and she is, as I began by saying, quite out of danger. And now for my story.

"The sensation caused here by the murder of Mr. Horn-dean has not yet subsided. The frightful charge brought by the wretched criminal against Miss Chevenix, and the catastrophe to which it led, intensified the general feeling, and the neighbourhood

is not yet free from the perquisitions of newspaper reporters. As you know, John was present when the terrible story was told to the Townley Gores, and to the unhappy girl, who listened only to the promptings of her despair. He does not believe the accusation against Miss Chevenix—in which the murderer persists—nor does Mr. Lisle. John remained in town, to assist in the dreadful task which the Townley Gores had to fulfil: the inquest on the miserable woman, and the funeral arrangements. The merciful verdict of "temporary insanity" enabled them to bury her with Mr. Horn-dean; the double funeral was a most melancholy spectacle. Mr. Osborne, who, as you will remember, was in the room when the poor girl took the poison, was unable to officiate; the services of a strange clergyman were secured. Mr. Osborne was not even able to be present, and I never saw John so much unnerved. Mr. Townley Gore came down to Horn-dean the day before the funeral; Mr. Lisle received him, and John went to him in the evening. He was quite scared and broken down, and gave a sad account of his wife's state. She seems to have had a slight paralytic stroke. No wonder, to lose her brother and her friend, both within a few hours of each other, and in such awful ways; and then the dreadfulness of the inquest in the house! And the scandal, which she would think of, I fancy, very nearly as much. I felt very sorry for her, although she is such an odious woman, and although Helen, whom she had so wronged, was at that moment dangerously ill. She has had a tremendous blow, for, even if she has no heart, she has pride and ambition, and they are laid low; besides, John cannot bear me to say she cared more for her brother's possessions and position than for himself. I daresay her grief is as profound as her mortification. Mr. Townley Gore—I have seen him a few times since—seems quite dazed by all this trouble, and yet there is a certain air about him which I cannot help remarking, and which would be amusing, if everything about this matter were not too terrible to admit of such an idea. It is an air of indignant surprise, as if he really could not understand the taking of so great a liberty with him by Fate. He depended entirely on John and Mr. Lisle. Nothing can be more admirable than Mr. Lisle's conduct; and he it is who really feels Mr. Horn-dean's death. I believe they were very old and

close friends, and there must have been something in the young man, against whom I always felt a prejudice, to win such regard from one so frank, single-hearted, disinterested, and unconventional.

"The family solicitor, Mr. Simpson, of the firm of Simpson and Rees, to whom you sent Mr. Rhodes's papers, came down to attend the funeral. The two coffins met at the gate of the churchyard. Think, dearest Arthur, of the awfulness of that, for the silent sleepers in them had parted full of hope, only a few days before, and that very night they were to have gone to a great fancy ball, and Miss Chevenix was to have worn those fatal jewels. There was a tremendous crowd, but perfect order was kept. Mr. Townley Gore had to return to London on account of his wife's illness, and business matters were gone into at once. There was no will. Mr. Horndean had not intended to have any marriage settlements, but Mr. Simpson knew what arrangements he meant to make afterwards; they were most generous. And now comes the pith and point of my story. According to the will of the late Mr. Horndean, the whole of the property was to go, failing heirs general of his successor, to his own nearest of kin, or the descendants of that person. No one, except the lawyers, had ever taken the trouble to enquire who the individual, so little likely ever to emerge from the obscurity in which old Mr. Horndean's own origin was wrapped, might be. But Mr. Simpson arrived at Horndean with all the necessary information ready to be produced, and when the gloomy company, consisting of himself, Mr. Townley Gore, Mr. Lisle, and John, were assembled in the library, he startled Mr. Townley Gore by requesting that he would tell him what was his latest news of Miss Rhodes. John says the question agitated Mr. Townley Gore so visibly that he could not resist the conviction that since the terrible calamity occurred, compunction has been visiting that selfish and worldly man.

"Why do you ask me?" he said. "What has she to do with our present business?"

"A great deal," answered Mr. Simpson. "When I wrote to you for Miss Rhodes's address, I was pursuing certain investigations, which I brought to a conclusion soon afterwards. Those investigations rendered it advisable that I should know where Miss Rhodes was to be found, in case that contingency should arise, with which we are unhappily face to face to-day."

"What contingency? I do not understand you."

"The death of Mr. Horndean without heirs. The estate devolves on the next of kin to the late Mr. Horndean, who was the late Mr. Richard Smith of Nottingham. Now, this Mr. Richard Smith died twenty years ago, leaving one daughter; she survived him only a few years. That daughter was the wife of the late Reverend Herbert Rhodes, and she left an only child, Helen, who is the sole heiress to the estate of Horndean."

"It is all perfectly true, my dearest Arthur. The letters which our dear friend directed should be sent to England, and which you sent, are all in Helen's possession. Miss Merrick knew where to find them—the poor child kept them in a box which that wicked man gave her—and we had to hand them over to be examined, while she was lying between life and death, and when they did not know but that another next of kin would have to be sought for. The evidence was there, in the simplest, clearest form. There was no difficulty of any kind. The old gentleman must have seen Helen, in her penal days at the Townley Gores', without the remotest idea that she was of his kindred. She steps into the estate and position of the brother of the odious woman who was so merciless to her. She will be mistress in the house where Mrs. Townley Gore was so fond of queening it. The old romances are put out of countenance by so hard a fact as that Helen Rhodes is Miss Horndean of Horndean!

"It would not be in human nature—at least in Townley Gore nature—that they should not feel both bitterly and awkwardly about this strange turn-up of fortune. As a matter of fact, we do not know what they feel, for we have heard nothing since Mr. Townley Gore went back to London, having expressed with the utmost propriety his confidence that the interests of Miss Rhodes were in the best hands. He looked very foolish, however, when on Mr. Simpson's asking him whether he would wish himself to convey the important information to his young friend at Madame Morrison's, John was obliged to explain that Miss Rhodes was no longer there, but at Chesney Manor. He rallied, nevertheless, like a true man of the world, and made a polite rejoinder. And then there occurred one of those things which interrupt the solemnity of the most solemn, and even tragic scenes. The irrepressible 'bit of an artist' showed

itself in Mr. Lisle through all the keenness of his distress, when he discovered the identity of the heiress of Horndean with our children's pretty governess, and he said: 'I only caught a glimpse of her as she stood at the top of the steps, full in the light, but I told poor Frederick that morning what a pretty girl she was. What a pity it is that he never saw her.' John told this to me and Mr. Moore when he came in, as a trait in Mr. Lisle that he liked. We have seen a good deal of Mr. Lisle, the children are devoted to him, and I think they do him good. He has a horror, as we all have, of the trial of Ramsden. It will take place soon. Helen has said literally nothing about her own position, except that she hopes we will allow her to remain with us, and that she wishes Horndean to be shut up for a year."

[The following is an extract from a letter written by Mrs. Masters, at Chesney Manor, to Colonel Masters, at Chundrapore, six months later.]

"If only you were here, in these beautiful summer days, how lovely this place would be! But you are not here, and I want to get away from it, and back to dry and dusty Chundrapore. Only the old story, but with a difference this time, because I see my way to getting back with an easy mind. Helen and Jane have been talking to me this morning, with, I need hardly say, a running accompaniment by Mr. Lisle, and the proposal which Helen begs me to submit to you, with a request that you should 'wire' your answer, is, that she should remain here, with Jane, and take charge of the children, until after next Christmas, and should then remove with them to Horndean. We hope John will have had enough of mummies, cataracts, and crocodiles, by that time, and will be induced to come home and finish his big book at Chesney Manor. I could leave the children in Helen's charge with perfect confidence. It seems an ideal arrangement. What do you say to it, my dearest Arthur? Let it be 'yes,' and do, pray, grease your lightning in reply. Helen has been ever so much better and brighter since this plan occurred to her. She seems to find all her happiness in aiding that of other people; and her gratitude is too profound and sensitive. She has almost recovered her health, but a great sadness and weariness hung about her for a long time after her illness, and are, indeed, not dispelled even yet. It is remark-

able how her likeness, physical and moral, to her father grows. It is pretty to see the sympathy, the sweet gravity, the total absence of anything like envy or regret, with which this dear girl, whose life had been so spoiled and laid waste, views and fosters the budding love-affair between Jane and Frank Lisle. He goes away occasionally, but he is always darting back, and he has a general invitation here, and also to the rectory. I need hardly tell you that he is painting Jane's portrait, and really very well. He flatters himself that he is the soul of impartiality when he says to me, looking at the picture with his head on one side, and his eyes shining with admiration: 'No one could call her handsome. But what a heavenly expression, and what divine hair! Talk of golden locks, my dear Mrs. Masters, nothing but that blue-black hair is worth painting.' The rule that we laid down for ourselves at the time of Helen's illness has been adhered to. No allusion is ever made to the past, and she is losing her frightened manner, and beginning to take her place with an easy modest dignity that I never tire of observing. There is a good deal of business for her to transact, and Jane, who, as Frank Lisle remarks with delight, could govern a colony with ease, and is not to be made wink by all the figures that ever had to be totted up, assists her. If she ever mentions that wicked man, it is to Mr. Moore, but of this we have no proof, it is only a surmise. He told me not long ago that he was sure Helen believed the man to be dead, and that he shared her conviction. So, as we hope this may be true, we agree to believe it. She has had a very handsome monument erected in Notley Churchyard, and a beautiful window placed in the church, in memory of Mr. Horndean; a second inscription on the former records that in that spot rests also 'Beatrice Chevenix, his promised wife.' One is always finding out traits of goodness in this dear girl, some of them so like her father. She has taken great pains to ascertain what were Mr. Horndean's views and plans about the estate and his tenants and dependents, being resolved to carry them out; but he seems never to have formed any. I fancy he was merely careless and good-natured, with no sense of responsibility, one of those of whom it has been said, 'Eat, drink, and be merry; but this night thy soul shall be required of thee.'

"The guilt or innocence of Miss Chevenix

remains an unsolved problem. No trace has been found of the people who passed as Colonel and Mrs. Ramsden, or of Mrs. Mabberley. Her disappearance is one of the 'bafflers,' as Dick Swiveller would say, which mortify and exasperate the police. She must have had faithful confederates, and large resources to do what it is believed she has done. Not that one word tending to criminate her was elicited from Ramsden; her sudden disappearance, abandoning a good deal of property (though at the same time leaving a large amount of debt), is the only witness against her. On the other hand, the murderer persisted up to the last in his charges against Miss Chevenix. It was not until the day before his execution, when he was visited by Mr. Osborne, that he learned that the object of his vindictive hatred, for such she evidently was, was beyond his reach; and then his blasphemous rage was horrible to behold. Mrs. Townley Gore, on whom John called just before he left England, imparted to him a theory which may have some truth in it. It was that the unhappy girl was a tool, but not an accomplice, of the gang of thieves; that she was accompanied on her visits to great houses by a maid who was in their pay (she admitted to Mrs. Townley Gore that her maid was engaged by Mrs. Mabberley and under her control), and that the information and aid which Ramsden declared were supplied by her, were in reality furnished by her attendant. The supposition struck John as being so probable, that he made enquiries at Horndean about the maid who was there with Miss Chevenix, and ascertained that she was a Frenchwoman, and that her name was Delphine. This struck a light for Jane; the woman who waited on Helen at Neuilly was called Delphine. We concluded that it was she who had written to Madame Morrison, she who had taken Frank Lisle for the man whom poor Helen had called her husband. Then came the difficulty that the letter declared that the writer of it had seen him at Horndean, but Jane disposed of that, at once, as an exaggeration, the amplification of a shrewd guess, for the French girl who waited on Helen had never seen the man who called himself Frank Lisle; her so-called identification of him therefore went for nothing, if, indeed, the letter were written by her. Madame Morrison, having been informed of all this by Jane, went to Neuilly to see the

concierge and his wife, who were, she understood, the parents of Helen's attendant, and to find out something about her. She failed. The people were no longer there, and the legend concerning them in the neighbourhood was that their daughter had married in England, and emigrated to America, and that they were gone to join her there, à la mode Anglaise, which was quite foreign to French ways and ideas. There the matter has ended, and the mystery remains. 'Whether the world' believes or does not believe that Miss Chevenix was guilty, one thing is certain, it does not care, and it has forgotten her. Mrs. Townley Gore is, I am told, a distressful spectacle. The slight attack of paralysis distorted her face, only a little, but just enough to shake the beauty of it, and destroy her "well-preserved" look. When people say of a woman of the world, 'she is quite a wreck,' they pass sentence; her day is done. Cold curiosity was the only feeling her misfortunes excited; cold curiosity was all she would have felt for others in a similar case; and I suppose people of her world really do regard a family in which a murder has taken place, in something of the light in which Mr. Chester puts it in Barnaby Rudge. At any rate, her star is waning, and her discontent is great. She is terribly afraid of a second attack of paralysis, which would probably not be slight. She has contemptuously rejected Helen's gentle overtures, showing an unworthy bitterness and meanness of spirit. She cannot forgive Helen because she has wronged her, because Helen is the possessor of Horndean, because she bears the name that was her brother's. A wretched mind to drag about and live with! Mr. Townley Gore is not of her way of thinking. He would be friends with Helen if he dared, and she always hopes the time will come. She rates his worthless kindness, that lacked courage so completely, much too highly; but unreasonable gratitude is a fault one pardons readily, for its great rarity.

"How anxiously I shall look for your message! John is at Cairo. He would meet me at Alexandria. Say 'yea.'"

Thus did circumstances aid Helen to keep her word to her false lover. She will never reveal his secret, and if it should be divined by one as true as he was false, it will be held sacred for her sake.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE

CHAPTER X. THE LOST LEADER.

It was a great night for the Associated Robespierres. The Queen's Head, hitherto unknown save to a few people who lived a little to the north of Holborn, was henceforth to become famous in history. That little upper room, with a long kitchen-table, a dozen hard chairs with open backs, and a row of hat-pegs for all its furniture, and with a framed advertisement of bottled ale for all its artistic attraction, was to be the scene of an act that would throw Runnymede itself into the shade. The Grand President was in his place at the head of the table, smoking a long churchwarden, and with a tumbler of hot rum and water at his elbow. History delights to record the favourite beverages of her great men. To the left sat three, to the right sat three, of the society which had sat upon the future welfare of England any number of Saturday nights for any number of years, and whose mature and patient wisdom was to-night to pronounce itself ready for action. Seven may be thought but a small minority when compared with the forty and odd millions of Britons who were not, as yet, Associated Robespierres. But quality is not to be measured by quantity, nor force by number—every triumphant majority has been a minority once upon a time.

They were, for the most part, grave, solid, silent men, with the air of profound and unimpassioned wisdom that should belong to the fathers of their country. There was nothing about any of them that suggested the hot-headed and fiery enthusiasm of the

working tailor, or the grimmer or more deeply-burning indignation of his neighbour the shoemaker. These were quiet, placid, philosophic-looking men, one and all, save perhaps their president, and he was not very much otherwise. It evidently took them long to think, and long to speak. No doubt their action would be correspondingly swift, sudden, and sure. Even on this important night they showed no want of deliberation, no impatience to shake the fruit which had taken years to ripen. They sat, and smoked, and sipped in silent but pregnant harmony. Yet they were not wholly without suitable signs of action, even now. From time to time, an attendant without a coat, and with shirt-sleeves rolled up to the elbow, brought in another steaming tumbler of rum, took the money for it, and vanished.

At length the Grand President struck his fist upon the table, and made the glasses tinkle. "Silence, gentlemen!" said he. "Order. We are going to begin."

One would have thought "Silence!" as fittingly addressed to an oyster-bed, and "Order!" to a congregation of Quakers.

"And strangers," said the Grand President again, "will withdraw." Whereupon the waiter—not that he was by any means a stranger—withdraw.

"Mr. Grand President and gents all," said a fat Robespierre with a husky voice at the immediate right of the chair, "I dare say you'll excuse my rising, because we'll leave that to the country, if needful, and I'm one of them that can speak better off my legs than on; I'm not a born orator, like our Grand, that doesn't signify whether he's on his head or his heels—it's all one to him. Now as the Committee appointed to frame a new constitution for this enlightened but benighted land, I've been

sitting, I may say, while I've got a leg to sit on, and I've worked it all out in a way that'll be safe to commend itself to the very meanest capacity. I'm not one to go beating about the bush, which isn't written in rose-water, and which good wine needs none. I've gone, I may say, straight as the die to the pole, and sat between two stools without upsetting the apple-cart or getting up a tree. And my opinion is, things are as bad as bad, and there's only one way to mend them, and that's to make a sweep clean, and begin at the other end, and go on, always upper and upper and upper, till we get to the very root of the matter and the regular bottom of things. Now in the first place there's the dairy question—a red-hot burning question, that makes a man turn cold in his grave. How's a man to get an honest living when a Government spy is suborned by the helmeted mermaids of the law to come tasting his milk on false pretences, and putting in chalk and things, and lead into his scales, and fat into his butter, when all the time he knows as well as the trade that chalk's the finest thing going for the inside, if people wouldn't be prejudiced, and see themselves as others see them with their own eyes? And so the first thing your Committee recommends—”

“Question—question, Mr. Committee, if you please,” interrupted the shrill voice of the chair. “It is of course intended to abolish every form of meddling in other people's business, whether it's in the shape of gas or taxes. For what else are we here? But butter, and cheese, and eggs will keep—what won't keep is the land. How about the land?”

“Having,” began the speaker, “disposed of the dairy question—not that eggs will keep much over their time, though I must say some people are more particular than they need to be, thinking they ought to get new-laid eggs when they only pay for fresh, as if they thought eggs ran contrary to human nature, and laid themselves over again every day; and so, having done that, I'll come to the land, which hangs on to the dairy question like a pump on to its own handle. I've thought of the land; maybe there's not many that's thought more. I've got a geography book at home, and I got my Joe, who's got a figure-head like a man-o'-war, to work out the whole thing by a sum in long division. Something like a sum it was—went into five-and-twenty figures and seven over; and he's not nine years old. So he found, if the country

was divided among every man, woman, and child in England, there'd be just about an acre apiece for every one of them. Now as that's so, it's clear how Nature meant it so to be. So give it 'em, says I.”

“I second that motion,” said one of the five Robespierres who had not yet put in a word. And then ensued a long deliberative pause.

—“Carried unanimously,” said the Grand President, “that every man, woman, and child in England shall have an acre of land—division to take place as soon as it becomes practicable. Now, Mr. Committee—go on.”

“Having disposed of the dairy question, and put the land, I may say, into a nutshell, I now, therefore,” continued the Committee, “beg leave to state that that's about as much as one pair of brains could be looked for to do. Things that have been puzzling human nature for millions and millions of years aren't to be settled as you might say Jack Robinson. I've thought out the dairy, and worked out the land in a sum with twenty-five figures in it and seven more over. ‘An acre apiece, and no meddling with the milkman’—that's your cry. Ah, the thinking I've gone through to get at that, nobody would believe that hasn't tried.”

“Is there anybody else here present,” asked the Grand President, “who has got an idea? But before he lays it on the table, I move that strangers be readmitted. Tom!”

The stranger returned, with a fresh supply of the stimulant which high thinking needs, and then withdrew as before. And then a weak and smothered voice declared itself from behind its own especial cloudlet of steam.

“My idea's this. No levelling down. This is the age of progress, Mr. Nelson, sir—Mr. Grand, I should say; and I for one won't be the fly on that wheel. Another gentleman in my own profession was saying to me on Tuesday, ‘Curtis—whatever are we to do with that bothering House of Lords?’ ‘What would you do with them yourself, Blenkhorn?’ says I. ‘Level 'em down,’ says he. And that's the way some do talk. But what does it come to? Where'd you be the better if you made every marquis in England cut his own hair and shave himself for sixpence instead of going to a regular professor? 'Twould be no good to anybody; the profession would be robbed, and the marquis wouldn't dare to come out in November for fear of being

took for a guy. Level Up! That's my motto! I say, make everybody a lord and a lady—and then everybody will be equal and up at the top together, instead of being a jumble of tops and bottoms, like they are now."

"Carried unanimously," said the Grand President, "that every man, woman, and child in England shall be a duke and duchess. Gentlemen, this is a regular cave of harmony! and yet they take us for democrats and demogorgons—us, gentlemen, of whom every one has this Saturday night made himself and all his fellow-countrymen landowners and lords! For myself, I simply propose to abolish the rates, the taxes, the gas, the water, the milk——"

"The milk, Mr. Grand?" exclaimed the original land reformer, showing a sparkle of animation for the first time. "I must ask you, Mr. Grand, that that expression be withdrawn."

"I will omit the milk, Mr. Committee. That is a subject on which there may be differences of opinion, I am aware. But the taxes, the rates, the gas, the water, the coals, and all duties imposed upon the necessaries of life, such as tobacco, and malt, and alcohol. And I would compel the diffusion of cheap literature, for a duke sitting all alone on his own acre, which might chance to be the top of a mountain, might find time hang a bit, unless he'd something cheap to read. I'd have every book sold for a penny apiece, and if they couldn't print the big ones at the price, I'd have the books boiled down to fit the penny. Carried, gentlemen, I presume! Carried unanimously. What is the next thing to be done? But I think that we have already done pretty well, and that we may indulge in a little melody. Mr. Committee, I call upon you for a song. "I'm Afloat" will be just the thing."

"There's one more little thing, though," said another Robespierre from the farther end of the table. "I thought Mr. Committee would have noticed it; but, as he hasn't been able, and as it won't take more than a minute, and won't disturb this convivial harmony, we'd better have it over. It's the public funds, and the government annuities, and things of that kind. I don't know much about 'em myself, but there's many that do, and I'm given to understand, on the best authority, that how they're all a public swindle, that allows the rich to fatten on the poor. We must have the National Debt abolished the very first

thing, and then, Mr. Grand, and gents, all the rest will come."

"I second that," said his next neighbour. "I have nothing to do with such big debts as that, and it's a shame and a disgrace to feel that one's own native mother country can't pay her debts; and if she won't pay 'em, it's worse still. I know what happened to me once when I couldn't pay one of mine that I didn't justly owe. County-courted I was, and judgment-summonsed, and the Queen's Hotel, Holloway. I had to pay. And sauce for the goose is——"

"Gentlemen," said the Grand President, suddenly rising in his place with nervous haste, "I—I can only say that I am amazed—astounded—thunderstruck—I may even say surprised. Why, the National Debt, gentlemen—the National Debt, and more particularly the government annuities—why, they're the very keystone of our greatness—an oasis in the desert—the palladium of British liberty. Touch the National Debt, gentlemen, and you undo what it has taken generations to rebuild. The Three per Cents, gentlemen, and more especially the government annuities, are sacred things; and I say, sooner let the land remain in the grasp of feudal tyrants; let dukes be counted on the fingers of one hand and the toes of one foot; let milk——"

"Milk, Mr. Grand?" interrupted the committee. "I'll be obliged by your leaving milk alone. There are some things that years of thought——"

"Let milk," cried the Grand President with resolution, "go the way of rates, and taxes, and gas, but let the National Debt flourish like the upas-tree—our bulwark and our pride. Mr. Committee, I call upon you for a song."

But it was as if a real thunderbolt had fallen into the midst of the seven sages. It was more than mortal could understand. They were proud of their leader's eloquence, but prouder still of the advanced spirit which halted and quailed at nothing—their leader in fact as well as in name. Such Conservatism as this seemed downright drunken; but among these seasoned sots drunkenness was unknown. They could only stare and open their mouths; they even forgot the use of the entrance thus made.

"You object to the abolition of the funds, Mr. Grand?" said one at last, or two together.

"I do, gentlemen. Most distinctly I do."

"One would really believe he had something in 'em himself," said he who had proposed to deal in so original a fashion with the House of Peers.

"And if I had something in 'em, sir," said the Grand President quickly, "may I ask what's that to you?"

He who had made the remark was struck silent; but the Committee took up the word.

"Because, Mr. Grand," said he, "a man who is blind to the wrongs of milk, not to speak of eggs, and has an interest in keeping up things as they are, and not making them what they aren't, is no truly Associated Robespierre. And if he happens to be P.G.P.A.R., as you, Mr. Grand, happen Perpetual for the present to be——"

"Mr. Committee," said the admiral, "I am sorry to see in you an inconsiderate person, who only desires to reform society because he was once fined ten shillings and costs for——"

"Inconsiderate? I am not an inconsiderate person, and I'm not a person at all. And if it comes to calling names—you're another, Mr. Grand. Inconsiderate, indeed! What do you mean by that, I should like to know? And what do you want to inform society for, if you please? You're a fund-holder, Mr. Grand, and that's what nobody here can say of me."

"Divide!" was called from the corner of the table whence the motion had come.

Was the National Debt to be abolished or no? It was an exceeding difficult question to decide. For, though there were signs that the milkman represented a somewhat factious opposition, still the eloquence of the Grand President had by no means been thrown away.

"I will not put from this place a question that would annihilate the very axioms of society," declared the admiral. "I will not rob the widow and the orphan to glut the maw of a ravening milkman, who wants an acre of land to keep a cow. I distinctly refuse."

"You—a common scribbling lawyer's clerk——"

"I'm not, sir; I'm a gentleman at large."

"Maybe you won't be at large for long——"

"Divide!"

There was no mistaking the feeling of the house this time. The authority of the chair was gone. Eloquence could not conquer the fact that the trusted leader of the Associated Robespierres had boasted

of being a gentleman at large, and had not denied that he was a fund-holder. Just for a handful of silver he had left them. Never could it be glad confident morning again.

"Divide!"

The National Debt was abolished by a majority of six to one.

The Grand President rose, while an awful silence reigned.

"Gentlemen," said he, beginning in an extraordinarily deep voice that rose higher and higher as he went on, "this is an evil day for England. You will live to regret this day. For me, I can only consider you, considered collectively, as one milkman and five fools. I shake the dust of this chair from my feet, and will devote the remainder of my talents to the Maintenance of Things as they Are."

And so he left his chair to the milkman, and the room, and the Associated Robespierres to pay for his last tumbler of rum.

"There's the ingratitude of human nature," thought the admiral as he walked homeward. "It's all self—self—self—at the bottom of everything going. However, some sort of a crisis was bound to come; only I never hoped it would come so quickly. Political associations like that are all very well while one's young, but they're more than a man can afford who's got anything to lose. I'm well out of it, and before I've paid my subscription, too. But I didn't think they'd be quite so ready to let me go. They might have asked me to stay, if only to give me the pleasure of saying, 'Go and be hanged.' Well, I said it without their asking. I'll soon find a better sort of a club than that, now, to spend a stray evening in. The notion of confiscating the National Debt! Absurd. And government annuities! There's one comfort, they won't do it in my day; and, after me, they may do what they please. What a contemptible thing selfishness is, to be sure! And what a set of selfish, ungrateful, conceited upstarts all milkmen always are."

It was not to the old house in the shabby terrace that the ten thousandth victim of political intrigue and of popular fickleness and ingratitude returned. It was to a larger and newer house in a newer, if not much better suburb, which wore an air of retired tradesmanhood and of respectable competence all round. Nor, as of old, did he fumble at the door with a large

iron key, or, failing that, rap with his umbrella till it should be opened to him by Phoebe or one of the boys.

This time he made use of a regular knocker, and pulled a bell—though the latter, since the wire had become slack, was a mere form—and was admitted by a real maid of all work, as different from Phoebe as any professional from a mere amateur. It was quite clear that the mission of the Robespierres had become obsolete, and that things were no longer so completely as they ought not to be. It is true that the vision of the interior, as seen through the open door, did not suggest luxury, nor even comfort. There were too many signs of unwiped boots, there was too little light, too many broken banisters, and too much smell of dust and onions. In these regards, the general effect had not improved. But it was a great advance to see an unbroken knocker from the outside, and to have it answered by a real girl.

"There's a gent called to see you in the parlour," said she.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the admiral; "who could possibly want to see me? What's his name?"

"He doesn't have no name," said the girl; "least, he didn't give none to me."

"Better luck next time then, eh, Maria?" chuckled the admiral, thus causing Maria to blush and giggle. "Tisn't the milk—I mean the taxes, eh?"

"He don't look like taxes," said Maria. "He looks more like spoons. I locked up the best ones, and I put him into the parlour, 'cause there's nothin' there he could turn into a threepenny-bit, lest it's the fire-irons, and them we wants new."

"Why didn't you say I was out?"

"So I did, but he only says, 'Never mind, I'll wait,' and walks in, before I could bang the door to; but I've locked up the spoons, what of 'em there were."

"Well, we'll soon see," said the admiral, hanging up his coat and hat, and smoothing down his hair with a broken clothes-brush that lay handy. Then he walked into the parlour, a rather less tidy room than the old one, and could not help giving a little start and cry of not over-delighted surprise. For there, standing on the hearth-rug, he saw Phil.

He was certainly surprised, and as certainly displeased; for this son, with his stern, steady, uncomfortable ways, was a standing and reproachful enigma to the father. But, whatever one may feel within,

one must show a bright new knocker to the world, and a father's heart must not look closed, even though the returned son may not possess the claims of a prodigal.

"Why—why, Phil, my boy!" said he, holding out first his left and then his right hand; "this is an unexpected sort of a thing. Why, I thought you were in Russia, or Prussia, and—won't you sit down?"

"Yes, father," said Phil, hardly caring to affect any particular impulse of filial joy. "I've been ill, with some sort of marsh-fever, and had to come home."

"Ah, marsh-fever, that sounds bad. I've had a touch of the rheumatics myself. But you look pretty right again now, eh? I suppose as we didn't know you were coming, you won't mind pigging it a bit with some of the boys?"

"I've got a bed out."

"Oh, then you're not going to stay? I'm sorry, but of course you know your own business best; you always were the one to know that, I must own. And you're not the least bit of the way up a tree? Doctor's bill all paid?"

"I've got money enough till I get some more, and——"

"You don't want money? And you won't stay? Phil, my dear, dear boy, I'm as glad to see you as if somebody had given me fifty pounds. Do sit down, and make yourself at home."

"And I was going to say, I had an Irish diamond of a doctor, who is such a bear that he won't hear me speak of a fee. He's made a man of me, and now he won't let me behave like a man."

"Bless my soul! The very next time I get the rheumatics I'll go to that doctor, Phil. He must be a first-rate man, that doctor of yours."

Phil had been hoping and dreading for the last half-hour that the parlour-door would open, and that he would be compelled to meet the eyes and hear the voice which he had once made up his mind never to see and hear again. Of one thing he was sure—he neither could, nor would, ask after her; he wanted to know so much that to ask was simply impossible. He had not even asked the strange maid-servant if the young lady was at home.

"No, there are plenty of good fellows knocking about," said Phil. "Why the firm, when I went to them the first thing, and told how matters were, they didn't send me about my business for an impostor who couldn't do a stroke of work without breaking down; they paid

me up my full wages, even for the time I was ill, though they had to pay a stronger man to do the work, and are sending me down to report on a big drainage affair down in the country, so you see I've fallen on my legs, thanks to them. But how is it I never heard you'd moved? It was only by the merest chance I found you out at all. I began to be afraid— But it's not that, anyhow. I went to the terrace; nobody knew where you'd gone. I went to Mark and Simple's; they said you'd left them for good, and didn't know anything. So I went to Dick's place in the City; he wasn't there, of course, and if I hadn't found a messenger there who was open to a shilling, nobody would have told me, even there; the old clerks took me, I expect, for one of Dick's friends, and the young ones for a dun. What does it all mean?"

"H'm—ha—well, the truth is, Dick, what with the rheumatics and things, I felt I ought to retire from copying-work, and have a little peace and comfort for the rest of my days. I've not had too much in my time."

"And you have the means?"

"Well, you see, what with one thing and another, a bit here and a bit there, I manage to scramble on—things are changed a bit for the better, as you see."

So Phil did see; but entirely failed to understand how. The better house, the servant, his father's retirement from crust-winning, better clothes, and general air of prosperity—all were absolutely inconsistent with the possibilities of human nature. Suddenly an idea struck him that made his heart turn faint and sick. Some letter must have failed to reach him out in Russia. Had Phoebe found a husband, and was it he who found all these other things?

"How is—Phoebe?" he brought out with an effort which made the question sound like "What have you done with her?" to the admiral's startled ears.

"Oh, Lord!" he exclaimed in thought, while he stood looking scared; "what was it I said about Phoebe to the boys? Dead? No; that was to—let me see—gone away?"

"I have so much to learn," said Phil, seeing the strange look on his father's face. "Is she—is she—well?"

"I—I hope so; I hope so, I'm sure," stammered the admiral, trying to bring the wits together which this terrible son of his always managed somehow to scare away; "I hope she's pretty well."

"Father, in Heaven's name, what do you mean?"

"Ah, I've got it! She's gone off, Phil, my boy; and I've registered a solemn vow never to hear that young woman's name mentioned again. So we'll change the subject. I want to take down the name and address of that medical man who doesn't want fees. I'm pretty well at present, but it's always as well to know."

"With whom?"

Phil's voice was as steady and cold as a rock, and his heart as heavy.

"Ah!" said the admiral; "that's just what I'm blessed if I know."

"And you've made no search; you don't know if—oh, this is too much to bear!"

"Eh? Well, it is bad and ungrateful of her, I must say. But when a girl will go, let her go—it's the only way, say I. If she don't one way, she will another. But you see, it's all mixed up with the Three per Cents. Touch 'em, and down they go. She was a nice girl, too, and I miss her at tea-time, for she wasn't a bit like the boys. But—well, there. Won't you stay and see the boys?"

Phoebe lost! He knew half her faults, and yet it seemed to him as if an angel had fallen, and then he heard that grand tenor voice charming the soul out of her, and he knew at least the name of the devil who had ruined her, and wished he had crushed the creature in his hands instead of letting it go.

"No, thank you, father; I am going to work," said he, and he knew in his heart that work must be the whole end now, on this side the grave.

THE DRAGON IN TRADITION AND LITERATURE.

THERE are, perhaps, few of us whose earlier years were not made familiar with those traditional tales of fairies and monsters, which for ages have been the alternate horror and delight of childhood. In these wonderful histories the dragon makes a considerable figure, and no romance of enchanted castle, distressed maid, and valiant knight can be complete without his direful influence. In the popular literature and folk-lore of every nation is preserved the recollection of innumerable fights with this traditional enemy of mankind; and his external form is depicted with every adjunct of horror and mystery which imagination has been able to conceive. His body is the writhing

form of a serpent, his jaws are those of a crocodile, his claws those of a lion, and his wings, unlike anything in animated nature, must be sought in the creatures of the geological epochs. Flames issue from his mouth, his eyes glare like balls of fire, and his scales clatter with a noise which strikes terror into the hearts of all but the bravest. But his form is not constant. Sometimes he is many-headed, again he is wingless, now he bears horns on his head, often a sting in his tail. At times he has been known to speak. But, whatever his form or his capabilities, he is always found on the side of evil; and, as fairy tales have always a moral tendency, he is never known to be victorious. Still, the good knight has always a hard struggle with him, and many a tough lance is broken and many a good sword hacked, before the monster is finally overthrown.

For the origin of this fight with the mythic dragon, the typification of the eternal struggle between good and evil, we must go back to the very cradle of the human race. In the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden, the Evil Spirit compasses the destruction of mankind; and in the embodied traditions of the sacred books of the East this struggle is a constantly recurring theme. Vrithra or Ahi, "the biting-snake, the thief, the seducer," who hides his prey in his dismal cave, and keeps the waters which are necessary for the earth, is slain by the mighty Indra, in the hymns of the Rig Veda. In the Persian myth it is Ormuzd who slays Ahriman; and in the Zendavesta, Thraëstana who conquers Azidahaka, who, according to the Yaçna, had three heads, three throats, six eyes, and a thousand strengths. In the modern epic of Firdusi this is reproduced as the victory of Feridun over Zohak.

It is remarkable that while the dragon, as the emblem of evil, is everywhere regarded with hatred and disgust, a creature which is analogous to it, and which, though totally distinct from it, is yet described by the same name, should, in some countries, be regarded as an object of reverence and veneration. Mr. Cox has well observed, in his *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, that serpent-worship is founded on the emblem of the Linga, and is altogether distinct from the ideas awakened by the struggle of light against darkness, which is always represented as a serpent; but the names Ahi and Vrithra of the Vedas do not imply keenness of sight, which is the real meaning of dragon.

When the creature was first used to symbolise darkness and evil, it was always described as a creeping thing. Later writers endowed it with wings and claws. Yet it is interesting to know that tradition has preserved its original crawling nature, for in the folk-tales of the north of England it is still described as a worm.

Though the dragon is essentially a winged serpent, an interesting question has been raised as to whether its accepted form has been affected by some knowledge the ancients may have possessed of the extinct pterodactyl, which it in some degree resembles.

Milton, in the *Paradise Lost*, in that passage in which Satan, returning to Pandemonium to recount his victory over mankind, is greeted with the prolonged hiss of the transformed demons, and is himself changed into a dragon, has given a powerful description of the monster as compared with the serpent from which it has been poetically evolved.

When the dragon myth was carried to the shores of Greece, and embodied in classic literature, it received many new developments and was presented in several different forms. But the central idea was the monster engendered in the darkness and slime of the marshes, the Python slain by Apollo; and the struggles between Bellerophon and Chimæra, Hercules and the Lærnian Hydra, Œdipus and the Sphinx, are but versions of the same story. The fable of the dragon whose ravenous appetite could be appeased only by the periodical sacrifice of a beautiful maiden, which is told in the story of Perseus and Andromeda, has since been many times reproduced; and, in the more general form of a damsel delivered from the keeping of a monster, was a frequent theme in mediæval romance. In the former case it will invariably be found that the hero arrives just in time to deliver the king's daughter from the terrible fate which otherwise awaits her; and, as in the classic story, is generally rewarded with the lady's hand.

As the classic gods and heroes are found in the mythologies of the north under different names and in different circumstances, so the dragon is still preserved as the opponent of all that is good and virtuous. In the older Edda, which belongs to the ninth century, but was collected by Seemund in the eleventh or twelfth, it is Sigurd, the popular Scandinavian hero, who slays the dragon Fafnir, by whom the earth has been robbed of its treasure.

He descends to the infernal regions to recover this; and there stabs the monster who addresses to him the following serious words: "Youth and youth, of what youth art thou born? of what men art thou the man? When thou didst tinge red in Fafnir that bright blade of thine, in my heart stood the sword;" at the same time foretelling that the recovered treasure will prove to be his ruin. Sigurd then takes the monster's heart, which he roasts; and, through touching it to see if it is done enough, burns his finger. With the familiar action which has since been immortalised by Charles Lamb, in his Dissertation on Roast Pig, the hero then puts the injured member to his lips, and is immediately enabled to understand the language of birds. He thus learns that he must slay Reginn, the dragon's brother, who otherwise would defraud him of the recovered wealth. This singular story is slightly varied in the Teutonic version, in the Nibelungen Lied, in which Siegfried, after slaying the dragon and obtaining his hoard, bathes in the monster's blood, and is rendered invulnerable. There is an evident connection between these stories of treasure-keeping dragons, and those of the sleepless dragon of the garden of the Hesperides, and that which kept watch over the golden fleece.

It was doubtless from this Teutonic source that the dragon found its way into English literature. In *Beowulf*, the earliest poem of our Saxon ancestors which has been preserved to us, the hero's father is a dragon-slayer: "To Sigemund sprang—after death's day—glory no little—since battle-hardy—he the worm slew—the hoard's guardian;" and *Beowulf* himself destroys a monster, the keeper of treasure, as in the tales of Sigurd and Siegfried. Among the English people, with whom the grotesque and romantic found always a ready acceptance, stories of dragons had a wide popularity, and, no doubt, were often told on winter nights in the huts of swineherds and huntsmen, or were the theme of stirring songs in the rude halls of thanes and franklins. Sitting by his log-fire, or looking out from his cottage-door as the shades of night drew on, the Saxon peasant peopled with elves the forests and morasses around him, and gave to the dragon-myth of past ages and distant climes a distinct and local application. Hence it is that the stories of "worms," which may still be heard in many parts of the north of England, obtained their place in popular lore.

With the coming of the Normans, and the rise of the spirit of chivalry, these tales assumed a more romantic form, and in songs of doughty knights and injured maidens were the common theme of mediæval troubadours. The old romance of Sir Eglamour of Artois is in many respects characteristic of the whole. The knight, having heard that at Rome a dragon "ferse and felle" lays waste the country for fifteen miles round the city, exclaims:

"Wyth the grace of God Almyght,
Wyth the worme zyt schalle y fyght,
Thowe he be nevyr so wyld;"

and, departing at once on his self-imposed mission, soon finds traces of the monster's ravages, for he sees "slyne men on every honde." The creature was so terrible in appearance that the sight of him alone struck both man and horse to the ground; but the knight, quickly recovering himself, enters upon the combat, and, though sore hurt with "a depe wounde and a felle," succeeds at length in striking off the head of the "grete beste." It need scarcely be added that the people hold great rejoicings, or that the "ryche emperoure of Rome" has a "doghtyr bryght" who heals the champion's wounds. The classic legend of Perseus and Andromeda is reproduced in mediæval guise in the popular story of St. George and the Dragon, which borrows most of its incidents from earlier romances, and particularly from the celebrated one of Sir Bevis of Hampton. The monster is appeased, as in the classic story, by the sacrifice of a maiden every day to its ravenous appetite; but St. George arrives in time to save the king's daughter from her fate. Ariosto, in the *Orlando Furioso*, has reproduced the same incident in Orlando's rescue of Angelica exposed to the Orc. The stories of Sir Guy and a host of other dragon-slayers bear a strong resemblance to those given above.

The finest description of a dragon in the English language is that of the fiery monster from whose power the Red Cross Knight rescues the parents of the Lady Una, in the first book of the *Faerie Queene*; and Spenser seems in it to have collected the attributes of all earlier dragons and blended them into one terrible whole. The very roaring of the creature shook the "steadfast ground;" and, when he perceived the knight,

The dreadful beast drew nigh to hand,
Half flying and half footing in his haste,
That with his largeness measured much land,
And made wide shadow under his huge waist;
As mountain doth the valley overcast.

His body was armed with brazen scales, which clashed with a horrible noise, and were so hard—

That naught mote pierce ; ne might his corse be harm'd.

His flaggy wings, when forth he did display,
Were like two sails, in which the hollow wind
Is gather'd full, and worketh speedy way :
And eke the pennes, that did his pinions bind,
Were like main-yards with flying canvas lin'd.

His knotty tail, little short of three furlongs in length, was armed at the point with two stings of exceeding sharpness ; but far sharper than his stings were his "cruel rending-claws."

But his most hideous head my tongue to tell
Does tremble ; for his deep devouring jaws
Wide gap'd, like the grisly mouth of hell,
Through which into his dark abyss all ravin fell.

And, that more wondrous was, in either jaw
Three ranks of iron teeth enrag'd were,
In which yet trickling blood, and gobbets raw,
Of late devour'd bodies did appear ;
That sight thereof bred cold congeal'd fear :
Which to increase, and all at once to kill,
A cloud of smothering smoke, and sulphur sear,
Out of his stinking gorge forth steem'd still,
That all the air about with smoke and stench did fill.

In the beginning of the combat the knight gave such thrusts to the monster as he had never before felt, at which "Exceeding rage inflam'd the furious beast;" and taking to his wings he carried both man and horse across the plain, "So far as ewghen bow a shaft may send," when the knight compelled him to bring his flight to an end. The champion then again charged the monster with the strength of three men, and the stroke gliding from his scaly neck made a fatal wound beneath his left wing. On this the dragon, roaring and spitting fire, made a furious attack on the knight ; but, wounded and unable to use his wings, was finally overcome.

Perhaps of all folk-tales relating to dragons, that of the Worm of Lambton, in Durham, is the best example. Sir Cuthbert Sharpe published an account of it in a volume called the *Bishoprick Garland*, which consists of the legends of the county of Durham ; and the story is briefly as follows :

Many generations ago the heir of the knightly house of Lambton was of a profligate mode of life, much given to ungodly exercises, and with a strong predilection for fishing on Sunday. One day he was engaged in this occupation for a long time without success ; and, as his patience shortened, his imprecations became more frequent, to the great scandal of the good folk on their

way to church. At length he felt a pulling at his line, and, after keeping his captive in play for some time, succeeded, not without trouble, in landing, to his great disgust, an exceedingly ugly worm, which he flung with a loud oath into a well close by. Here the strange creature grew apace, and finally, having outgrown its abode, took possession of a rock in the middle of the river Wear. It was after all but a degenerate descendant of the mighty creatures of earlier times, for its ravages seem chiefly to have been made on the farm-stock of the neighbouring peasants. Nevertheless it became a great terror in the district, and was only prevented from making depredations at Lambton Hall by the milk of nine cows placed daily in a trough for its gratification, an offering which no doubt represents the maiden of the classic story and of the legend of St. George. To make a long story short, when the heir of Lambton, who had sown all his wild oats, returned from the wars, he was conscience-stricken at the loss and misery which had fallen upon the land through his early failings, and determined at once to slay the worm. Now the creature had an unfortunate power of reuniting the parts of its body when severed, which it probably inherited from the Lærnian Hydra or other classic monster ; so, acting under the advice of a wise-woman, the knight took his stand on the worm's rock in mid-stream, and when, after a long struggle, he managed to cut its body in two, one half floated down the river, and thus the creature was slain.

The sequel of the tale, which is singular, and perhaps unique, bears a strange resemblance to the biblical story of Jephtha's daughter. The knight had made a vow that, when he had destroyed the monster, he would slay the first living thing he met. It had been arranged that when he blew his horn his favourite hound should be let loose for the sacrifice ; but, when his father heard the joyous sound, forgetful of these instructions, he went himself to meet his son. What was the horror of the returning hero to behold the terrible alternative before him ! He hesitated a moment, then blew another blast, the hound came bounding to him, and was slain. But the vow was broken, and a curse descended upon the family that for nine generations no lord of Lambton should die in his bed, a presage which, according to popular tradition, was fulfilled.

There are several other similar stories in the North of England, such as those of the worms of Sobburn, Linton, and Spindleston Heugh. Mr. Surtees in his *History of Durham* has defended the apparent absurdity of calling the dragon a "worm," which, as we have seen, was common in mediæval romances, and has pointed out that Dante himself has called Cerberus "il gran vermo inferno."

Such are some of the instances, which may be drawn from tradition and literature, of the appearance of the mythic dragon.

THE STORY OF A WALTZ.

IN a career of hard work, and often of drudgery, there arise sometimes little, strange, unexpected turns of fortune, not very marvellous of their kind, but still welcome and encouraging, and often flavoured with a little romance. There have lately been "cropping up," as it is called in those colloquial columns of gossip which are a special feature of the newspapers of the time, allusions to a certain waltz, which came into existence under odd circumstances. As the writer of these lines happens to know more about the matter than anyone else, it may be found entertaining to relate what really took place.

Now a true waltz—such as *Waldfteufel*, the most popular composer of dance-music now, writes—is a poem, and might engage the talent of the first composers. Infinite art and dramatic feeling are required, a melancholy despairing strain, strange to say, best quickening the dancers' motions, and there is the artful contrast of rough and uninteresting passages introduced, like bitters, so as to make return to the more exquisite bits longed for and welcomed when they do arrive. On this account there are but few really good waltzes. Sometimes a popular and good air will carry the whole waltz through, and the taking tune of Mr. Sullivan's *Sweethearts* has formed one of the most successful of this day. On the other hand, there is a curious uncertainty, even as to first-rate composers. There are dozens of Strauss's and Gungl's, good as any that they have written, which are unknown and uncared for. Then there is the element of patronage, royal or other, which has often brought an inferior thing into a vast popularity. The *Soldaten Lieder*, the *Beautiful Blue Danube*, are perfect poems in their way,

and have been little fortunes to their publishers—probably not to their authors.

Being a diligent and laborious writer, and one who has written scores of books, I was getting ready for Christmas—that is to say, for furnishing those jovial festival stories which were until lately as indispensable as the plum-pudding on the day itself. Now these matters are avoided. There are no outcast brothers to come home exactly on Christmas Eve in the snow, and look in at the squire's window—the Hall—where everybody is merry-making. There is no making-up of old feuds, and the like. All these things have gone out. But still a certain amount of jovial stories is in demand, for annuals and the like. Being at work one October night on this description of provender, a letter came in from one of the great illustrated papers. It was a request to furnish them with a contribution suited to the festival, but to be done at once, as there was not an hour to be lost. Two large but effective engravings accompanied it, one of which portrayed a lady in ball dress, fastening her glove, the other the outside of *The Grange*, its mullioned windows lit up—picturesque enough as a subject. This is lifting the corner of the curtain a little discreetly or the reverse; but the fact is so, that often the story illustrates the illustrations rather than the illustrations the story. It was a pleasing task. Working at white heat, I had soon produced a tale of some length—a genuine thing, based on that best of all foundations, one's own experiences; in my own case, a sad and recent one. It was despatched—in both senses; that is, completed and sent in in a short period of time.

Now this story was called *Loved and Lost*; or, the *Last Waltz* (*Geliebt und Verloren*); and it turned on what might be suggested by some of the strains of pathetic melancholy we hear at a ball in the small hours. A man had met a young girl some years before at such a ball, and during this waltz had declared his affection. Events, however, had interposed and parted the lovers. Some years pass by. One night he is accidentally at another ball at *The Grange*—the building with the lit mullions—looking on sadly at the dancing, when this very waltz, played again, brings him back to the old scene.

Here, indeed, was the scene; "Skipper's band" was the orchestra.

"So it went on the rather monotonous round—now quadrille, now lancers, now waltz and headlong galop, wild *Balaclava*

charges; the more sober dances were gradually becoming extinct, to the annoyance of what might be called the Quakers and Methodists of the ball-room, who, with their discreet measures, were coolly put aside in defiance of all law and agreement. At that time of night, to be "wading" patiently through steps and slow measures was unendurable; and, accordingly, here were the greedy waltzers and galopers devouring dance after dance; while the aggrieved quadrillers, partners on arm, looked on, rueful and indignant. And now I see Skipper bending down in earnest talk with a sort of deputation, who had waited on him, and now came back with alacrity and rejoicing, ready for fresh exertion.

"Hark! What was it that kindled for me a sudden interest in the proceedings? that made the nerves thrill and the pulse quicken? Where had I heard it? It seemed a strain lent from Paradise! How it rose, and fell, and swelled, and died away; growing tender, pleading, and pathetic; now turning into a fierce clash and whirl, as though impelled by despair and driven by furies; then becoming soothed into piteous entreaty, and winding up in a dying fall. It was, in short, one of those divine waltzes, as they may be called. Where, when, had I heard it? I knew it. There are a few of these that seem part of your life, like a poem. It may have happened that one of those tender, complaining measures has been the accompaniment to some important act. It is then no longer mere vulgar music. Some, such as the newer German waltzes, touch strange mysterious themes, reaching beyond this earth. Then the artful enchanter suddenly dissolves into a sad and pathetic strain, for, merry as the dance is, a merry tune would not be in keeping; alternated with the crash of cymbals, and, desperate protest as it were, appeal for mercy or reckless defiance, to be succeeded even by grotesque and reckless antic, all, however, to revert to the pleading of the original strains, led by the sad and winding horn! Such was the 'last waltz' of this night, which thrilled me, yet seemed to thrill Skipper himself far more, who led, as some one near me said, now "like a demon," and now like a suppliant begging for mercy. What was it? Where had I heard it? It was charged brimful of agitating memories. Some dancer near me said flippantly, 'Oh, that's the Loved and Lost—pretty thing,

isn't it?' And, looking down on the card, I read:

"WALZER, Geliebt und Verloren (Loved and Lost).
MÜLLER.

"Again, where had I heard it? For it was music that seemed to belong to other spheres far away, and to time quite distant. There it was again, returning to the original sad song—a complaining horn, full of grief and pathos, which invited such dancers as were standing or sitting down to turn hurriedly, seize their partners, and once more rush into the revolving crowd! It was slow, and yet seemed fast as the many twinkling feet of the dancers. Skipper, mournfully sympathetic, beat time in a dreamy way, as though he were himself travelling back into the past, calling up some tender memories. Then he turned briskly, and called vehemently on his men, dashing into a frantic strophe, with crashing of cymbals and grasshopper tripping of violins; dancers growing frantic with their exertions, and all hurrying round like bacchantes; the strain presently relaxing and flagging a little, as though growing tired—to halt and jerk—then, after a pause, the sad horn winds out the original lament in the old pathetic fashion. For how long would it go on? Skipper knew well its charm, and was ungrudging in his allowance—would probably go over and over it again, so long as there were feet able to twirl. I know I could have listened till past the dawn.

"Airy, cloudy thoughts and recollections came with the music; it floats to him with 'a dying fall,' it rises again as the brass crashes out, and then flits by him the figure of his old love."

That night all is made straight and the past forgotten.

As much depended on the waltz, a sort of vivid description of the music and its alternations was attempted. You heard the soft inviting sad song with which it began, the strange fluttering trippings into which it strayed—aside as it were from its original purpose—the relaxing, the sudden delirious burst which sent everyone whirling round in headlong speed, and the last return to the sad song of the opening!

The story was duly printed, and went forth with a highly-coloured portrait of a child, which hung in every shop window, and which was somehow the cause of bitter animosity among the newsvendors, who never could secure sufficient quantities of the infant in question. I received a very

handsome sum for my services, and was more than content.

Now begins the real story of the waltz. With that curious literalness which characterises our public or publicas—for there are many—there were found persons to assume that there must be some waltz existing of the kind, and which had been performed, if not at the ball in question, at least somewhere else.

Orders were accordingly sent to various music-sellers for copies, which, as was natural, could not be supplied. A sagacious vendor thus applied to, wrote to the author in question, asking for a copy which could be published, and suggesting that if it had been only performed in the author's brain hitherto, it could be brought into more tangible and profitable shape.

On this hint I went to work, and having a fair, though unscientific, musical taste, having before now written "little things of my own," yes, and sung them too, I soon put together a string of waltzes. A near relative, also with a taste, had devised a tune which was popular in the family, and this I fashioned into an introduction. It was sent off, a clever professional took it in hand, shaped and trimmed, and re-arranged, but to my astonishment declared that the introduction—a sad slow measure—was the very thing for the rapid step of a waltz. This was somewhat of a surprise, and it was believed, that in consequence, the whole would make certain shipwreck.

In due course the waltz made its appearance. The publisher was an enterprising person and knew how to advertise.

Everywhere appeared "Loved and Lost." I think something was quoted from the newspaper in question. It began to be asked for—to sell. The next step was to have it arranged for a stringed orchestra, and next for the military bands. Next it was arranged as a duet, "à quatre mains." Next, in easy fashion for the juveniles. Next, our publisher came mysteriously to ask would I, being a literary man, and, of course, a poet, write words for "a vocal arrangement." I agreed to do so, and supplied the lines. Presently the song was being sung at the Brighton Aquarium. In short, the arrangements in every shape and form now fill a very respectable volume. But what strain was more refreshing than the first grind on the organ, coming round the street corner; or, later, its regular performance by the German bands, and by the grand orchestra at the Covent Garden Concerts! Yet all this

referred back to the story itself—itsself like the whirl of a waltz, dreamy and romantic and sad.

When we came to reckon up the results, some sixty or seventy thousand copies had been disposed of. And some time later, on the copyright changing hands, it was disposed of for a sum of two hundred pounds!

Such is the highly satisfactory story of my waltz.

CONCERNING A PLEBEIAN.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

ONE day, lounging round alone, Martin was attracted by a bit of brilliant colour between the trees. He soon recognised Miss Adams, in her scarlet dress, sitting on a low wall that skirted the carriage-way. She was apparently sketching, and her pretty feet and conspicuous stockings dangled a little above the road. He went over to her, and was flattered by her blushes, forgetting that these were habitual.

"What are you drawing?" he asked, putting much pathos into his voice. "The cow-shed? You must give it to me as a souvenir."

"Are you so particularly attached to the cows?" she answered, blackening her pencil in her mouth, preparatory to giving the final touches.

"You are very cruel," he said tenderly; "you know I want something of yours to remember these happy days by."

Miss Adams, with tremulous lips and downcast head, began to put up her book and pencils.

"Don't go in," pleaded Martin; "let us go for a walk down the road."

She gave him her hand, and jumped down from the wall.

"I don't want to go in, Celesta has been so unpleasant to-day. She quarrelled with Jack all the morning, until I took his part, and then she made up with him and turned on me. They are now both of them lying under a tree, wrapped up in a railway-rug."

Down the sloping mountain road, between stately forest-trees arching over their heads, in the midst of a delicious silence, as in an enchanted world, walked Martin and Kate Adams. The only sounds that broke the stillness were the music of distant cattle-bells, and the murmur of myriads of ants rustling over their pine-needle hillocks.

The fragrance of the early spring-time; the warm breeze playing through the

foliage; the pale green undergrowth, glorious with imprisoned sunlight, which closed the view on every side; the white anemones under his feet, and the rifts of blue sky up above; and, not least, the charming eyes of the girl by his side; all began to make strange havoc in Martin's too susceptible brain.

"Heigho!" he said with a sigh, "I have been very happy here, have not you? And yet it can't last for ever. The day must come when we shall part. Shall you not be sorry to say good-bye?"

"I don't want to stay here for ever," said Miss Adams; but he read in her downcast eyes and blushing cheek a more satisfactory reply.

"I think I may hope you won't quite forget me when that sad time comes!"

"You may hope it," she said gently.

They had reached a stone bench, and he asked her to sit down. She complied with a most encouraging smile.

"I wonder if we shall ever meet again in England?" said Martin tentatively.

"The world is a very small place," she answered. "I am always meeting people again."

"Does that mean you will be glad or sorry to see me?"

"When the meaning of a phrase is dubious, you should always take it in its most complimentary sense," she replied with sweet sententiousness.

The light and shade through the trees played most becomingly on her elegant little person; she had taken off her hat, and with dimpled fingers patted down her curly hair.

Martin felt his blood rush quicker, and for a moment no longer quite knew what he was doing.

"My own little Kate!" he cried, seizing her wrist, and then he knew the Rubicon was passed, and retreat impossible. And, after all, why should he wish to retreat, when she was as loving and pretty and gentle as a girl could be?

"I think you love me a little," he said, drawing her hand nearer to him, "and I love you very much. Will you not make me happy?"

Did he expect she would thereupon fling herself into his arms, and confess herself his for ever? Certain it is that when he found his hand lightly shaken off, and saw Miss Adams rise and retreat a few steps from him, he felt both surprised and disgusted.

"Is that a proposal?" she asked coolly.

"Why, of course it is!" he retorted with warmth. "I am asking you to be my wife!"

She, standing in the road before him, and lightly fingering her coral necklace, looked about her a moment, considering her reply. Then it came with dumbfounding rapidity.

"I think, Mr. Martin, you are the most conceited and insupportable man I have ever met, and I have met a great many, though you seem to think I grew on the top of this mountain, and must be quite overcome at the infinite condescension of Mr. Henry Martin paying me any attention, though I wrote and asked my people about you, and they had never heard of you except in connection with blacking! I never in my life heard anything so funny as your imagining me to be in love with you! It is so comic, it ceases to be impertinent! Have you drawn conclusions from my blushes? I declare half the time I reddened at your folly. I'm doing so now. But, at least, I must thank you for giving me an opportunity of undeceiving you, and showing you your insufferable vanity."

Rage and mortification devoured Martin during the delivery of this audacious speech, and a reply was impossible to him.

Miss Adams, taking breath, continued rapidly:

"I admit I was glad to see you when you first came up. After a month of Jack's and Celesta's society I would welcome anyone, but what I have suffered since from your patronising ways, words will not describe! I could see that you extended your kindness to me, because you considered me a gentle foolish little thing, ready to kiss any hand that caressed me!"

"Well! I shall no longer consider you 'gentle,'" said he moodily, "nor 'foolish' either; you have led me on very cleverly into making a fool of myself."

"I did not lead you on, sir!" she cried, "and if I did I'm delighted; you deserved it. Next time you propose to a girl, take a little more trouble to win her first! Fascinating as you think yourself, you will not find it sufficient merely to throw your handkerchief!"

This was really unendurable, and Martin jumped up with something uncommonly like an oath. At the same moment some heavy rain-drops fell on his angry face.

"What a bore! it's going to rain," remarked Miss Adams serenely. "I shall go back."

It certainly was going to rain with a vengeance. The sky became overcast, and the drops pattered hard and fast on the light foliage overhead. Already the ground was wet; Martin looked round for shelter, and found an old beech-tree, whose twisted trunk and boughs afforded some protection.

Miss Adams after a few steps homeward stopped in dismay. The rain was now falling in torrents, and the scarlet and grey of her gown began to blend in admirable confusion.

She looked at Martin. "What am I to do?" she said in deprecating tones.

"You had better come here," he replied ungraciously, and she went; he gave her his place and stood out in the wet. Though his passion was most effectually cured, he still felt resentful.

The storm swept on and everything was lost in a mist of rain, while, in spite of the shelter, Miss Adams's attire was getting completely ruined, and the poppies in her hat ran down in crimson streaks. This however, was nothing to his plight; his light summer clothing was soaked through in three minutes.

"Do stand nearer me," she said; "there is plenty of room."

But this his dignity would not allow him to do.

"I wish you would stand by me," she repeated presently. "I think you would shelter me a little. The rain is all running down my neck."

Martin did as she desired, but would not vouchsafe her a word. To be crouching under a tree, wet and dragged, in close proximity with an equally wet young woman who has just refused you contumeliously, is to be in a trying position, and Martin felt the absurdity of it keenly. He confounded the weather in his heart, and wished he had never set eyes on the mountain or Miss Adams either.

It was with an exclamation of pleasure that he hailed the first bit of blue sky overhead. The storm cleared off as rapidly as it had broken. With the first gleam of sunshine Martin and Miss Adams emerged from their retreat, looked at each other, and burst out laughing.

The rain had left the beautiful wood more radiant for its visit; a glittering diamond hung on every twig and leaflet; strong fragrant scents, and the song of birds, rose up to heaven; only two human beings stood with limp and dripping

plumes, inexpressibly funny and pitiable objects in the sunshine.

"Please forgive me," said Miss Adams, "I'm afraid I was rude."

"You were very rude," answered Martin promptly, "but I quite deserved it."

"I hope the rain has washed away your wrath," she remarked with a smile.

"Yes, and my folly too. You need not be afraid; I shall not annoy you again. You have most thoroughly cured me."

It was a grim satisfaction to see how Miss Kate pouted at this. He knew it was an objectionable line for a rejected lover to take, and that she probably put it down to his "insufferable conceit," which could not be put out of countenance, but it was better than gratifying her by a spectacle of woeful despair. And in truth he was not particularly woeful; he still thought he had proposed less for his own sake than for hers. As he walked by her side up the sparkling mountain road, he looked again and again at her wet hair and fresh young cheek as though to probe his wound, and he came to the conclusion that his pride was more hurt than his heart.

When they reached the hotel, Mrs. Higgins with her usual perversity waylaid them at the foot of the staircase. She surveyed her cousin's ruined frock with some attention, but she was not moved to laughter. There was nothing that could with certainty be relied on to make her laugh but Higgins's face of misery, when, after an hour's aggravation, she had reduced him to despair.

Now her beautiful mouth was set in ominous lines. "Kate, I have been looking for you everywhere," she said; "I sent Jack out to find you with your umbrella; I never supposed you had hidden yourself away with Mr. Martin. I have changed my plans, and we leave here early to-morrow. Please to have your things ready, and not to delay us as usual at the last."

Miss Adams did not betray the slightest emotion, though this announcement was of course intended to strike her as with a thunderbolt.

"My dear Celesta, what a charming surprise!" she answered gently. "I'll run up and pack at once."

Mrs. Higgins remained facing Martin.

"I am going as much for Kate's sake as my own," said she. "I don't think it good for her to be up here."

"I think she looks remarkably well," he answered.

"Mr. Martin, I will be frank with you," she declared, looking up with those splendid eyes that expressed anything but frankness. "I am much disappointed in Kate. She is not so open as I believed. At one time there were many things said about her which I now begin to see were true."

She conveyed unutterable innuendoes in her voice. He thought she rather overdid it. But he answered with becoming seriousness :

"I too have changed my opinion of Miss Adams since I first came here. She is certainly not so simple as I thought."

Dinner that night was very gay. Martin and Miss Adams talked and laughed a great deal, to prove to each other how lightly they felt the events of the day. Higgins recovered his original cordiality, relieved at the prospect of removing his wife from Martin's dangerous influence ; and this lady appeared to the latter equally pleased at punishing him for his devotion to her cousin.

The next day the Higginses left, and Martin made himself useful in stowing away Celesta's five-and-twenty parcels in convenient places in the carriage, and in arranging the various rugs and shawls which she found necessary to her comfort, while Mr. Higgins blew out her air-cushion with an exhaustive energy which threatened to burst him.

Martin asked where they thought of going.

"We sleep at Berne to-night," said Mrs. Higgins. "After that I can tell you nothing. I have formed no plans as yet. It will depend on so many things."

"I hope we may run across you again," said Higgins with some insincerity. "But, you see, my wife's out of sorts; so we shall probably pitch our tent wherever we find a doctor who suits her."

Martin received from Miss Adams a parting smile and blush, and then the carriage drove down through the trees, and he was left in undisputed possession of the hotel, and, indeed, of the whole mountain.

And now he should have begun to feel the torments of disappointed love ; he should have refused his food and sought relief in rhyme ; but being an ill-conditioned ; graceless creature, he ate as heartily as ever and played billiards with a smart German waiter. He did not find the time particularly leaden, nor did he

think of Miss Adams more than fifty times a day.

Once he returned to the scene of his humiliation and smoked a peace pipe on the fatal bench. A small goatherd, driving her frisky black charges up the road, was amazed to see the strange gentleman burst out laughing as she passed. For Martin was reflecting how sold he had been and how well a certain young lady had punished him for his presumption. It was a less amusing reflection that, from an altogether mistaken diagnosis of character, he had, during the space of three weeks, shown himself in the light of a patronising coxcomb to the very girl he imagined he was pleasing.

Some days after he noticed one of the servant-girls hanging out to dry a well-known scarlet skirt she had just washed. This trifling circumstance decided Martin's departure. That gown was fraught with too much meaning for him to bear the sight of it on Anna's comely back. He therefore packed up his traps and bade farewell to Huldenfels and its memories, and betook himself to Neufchatel and thence to Geneva. Then he spent a pleasant time at Vevey, and then went on to Lausanne. Glorious summer weather had set in with its deep blue skies and crimson roses, and in consequence the tourist population swarmed over the land.

About July, Martin got a letter from his Aunt Hilders.

"Pension —, Lucerne.

"MY DEAREST HENRY,—I have just received your address from Eliza, and I write to implore your assistance. I am in a miserable condition. The people here are simply robbing me, and neither I nor Plackers have had anything to eat for a week. However, what I want you for is to recover a box, which has been lost between this and Interlachen. Most fortunately I had all my MSS. with me in a hand-bag. The loss would have been irreparable. But the box contains a bonnet and other valuables, and what with calling for it daily at the station, and keeping an eye on the people here, I am almost out of my senses. I need not tell you how my work suffers in consequence. You will be horrified to hear that I pay eighty francs a week, candles extra, and that they only give one 'plat' of meat at dinner ! Plackers behaves admirably, but I can see suffers martyrdom. I sha'n't close an eye till you come.—Your affectionate aunt,

"MAUD HILDERS."

Miss Hilders was a literary lady, who spent six months of the year travelling, accompanied by her maid and her notebook. She was engaged on an interesting work, entitled, *A Woman's Opinions on Europe*; and in the formation of these opinions she underwent much misery and extortion. It is true that half her misfortunes arose from the amazing inertia of her incomparable maid Plackers, who displayed on all occasions a stoical indifference and somnolency, in exact proportion to the fussiness, excitability, and warmth of her good-natured mistress.

Martin was quite willing to go to Lucerne. It was his nature to like to help any woman, and he had long ago accorded to his aunt a portion of that calm condescending affection which he bestowed on his immediate family.

Arrived at Lucerne, he had not much difficulty in recovering the missing box, and that evening he gave Miss Hilders a special little dinner at his hotel; she entertaining him with a detailed account of the misdoings of the lady who kept her pension.

"My dear Henry," she cried, "I am actually obliged to buy tarts, and smuggle them into my bedroom for myself and Plackers to eat during the night. We used to dream of food. But I won't give in till Friday, when my week is up; and then I go straight home. Painful as my experience here has been, it is nevertheless interesting as a study of the typical Swiss pension, to which I shall devote a chapter of my work."

When Martin had conducted this willing martyr back to her prison-house, he sat down outside the Schweitzerhof to listen to the band playing the overture to Zampa. Crowds of men and women, representatives of every nation, passed restlessly up and down before him, and he began to wonder if he might not suddenly see amongst them Mrs. Higgins's brown ulster, and Miss Adams's gay toilette. It would not be surprising; as she had said, "the world is small," and Lucerne but a very minute and delightful part of it.

"Confoundedly small!" was his mental ejaculation next instant, when he received a hearty smack on the back, and heard a "Hullo! you here, are you?" and he knew, without looking round, that it was Booker, a little man whom he detested and had done his best to affront more than twenty times already. But Booker was irrepressible, and thicker-skinned than the

rhinoceros. Had you kicked him downstairs he would have only imagined you were dissembling your love, and run up again as radiant, as jocular, as imperturbably odious as ever. Martin was haughty and rather touch-me-not with his sex; he reserved his graciousness for women; it required the obtuseness of a Booker to venture on slapping him on the back. He now threw an icy coldness into his greeting, but felt it was hopeless to awe the fellow, who was buoyant as a cork, and forgiving as a spaniel.

"Well now, I'm astonished to see you," cried Booker, and not being invited to sit down, he stood in front of Martin grinning with a terrible expansiveness. "You are such a man for turning up where you're not expected—I won't say not wanted, you know," and he laughed jocosely, "for I know you'll play fair, and not come in a fellow's way—eh, now?"

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Martin. "I suppose I've as much right to be in Lucerne as you have; and, I assure you, you are the very last person I looked to meet here."

"Ah! you're a lucky dog to meet me, I can tell you. I know some awfully jolly people, charming girl and all the rest of it, and I'll introduce you if you promise not to cut in between us—eh? A case of 'honour bright,' you know!"

Booker talked so loud, and laughed so hilariously, everybody began to notice him. Martin longed to pitch him into the lake, and got up, perhaps, with that intention.

"Hullo!" cried Booker, pushing his inquisitive head under other peoples' elbows, "there they are! Come on, I'll present you, as the mounseers say. Don't be bashful, man; she won't eat you!"

Martin, who had the advantage of some nine inches in height, had seen, before the conclusion of this speech, Mrs. Higgins and Miss Adams on a bench by the water's edge. A presentiment told him these were the people Booker meant. Nothing should induce him to renew his acquaintance with Miss Adams under such auspices.

With an abrupt "Good-night" he turned away, and Booker sent a parting shaft after him.

"Hullo, Martin! I thought you were so sweet on the ladies; got snubbed—eh?" and then came his customary guffaw.

Martin was very glad to know that Miss Adams was in Lucerne, and at the same time felt that he should meet her with some embarrassment. She was prejudiced

against him, and he had before him the difficult task of removing that prejudice. For he now acknowledged to himself that he loved her, and he wanted an opportunity of proving it to her. Opposition had had the same effect with him as with others. The unattainable became the desirable. In consequence of her scornful refusal, Kate Adams now seemed to him the one woman in the world. He magnified her brightness into beauty; her laughter into wit; and her frills and ribbons indicated a sweet feminine mind. He was determined to win her, but in his newly-found humility the difficulties looked insurmountable. He did not, however, include Booker among them.

The following morning, having ascertained the Higginses' hotel, he went to call on them. He found them in the garden; Miss Adams was not there. Mrs. Higgins received him with her wonted gravity. She was as beautiful and as dirty as before. She wore the old brown ulster over a washing-gown, and a black velvet cap, with gold beetles crawling round it. Higgins looked like a fiery cinder. He explained that he had been up Pilatus the preceding day.

"You are wondering where my cousin is," said Mrs. Higgins. "She went out after breakfast with Mr. Booker. I should not think she would be in till dinner."

"If she is with Booker I venture to say she will be in before that," answered Martin cheerfully.

"She is very glad of his company," said Mrs. Higgins, "she is always going round with him; but then she would do so with anyone."

Mrs. Higgins raised her Madonna eyes with such expressive tenderness, that Martin felt something gallant was expected of him. He was piqued also at Miss Adams's absence.

"I wish you were as kind as your cousin," he said in a bantering tone, (Higgins had fallen back to a respectful distance, and they were walking down to the lake); "I dare not ask you to come in a boat with me!"

Mrs. Higgins, however, agreed with much fervour. She leant on his arm, and gave herself up to his care with a touching confidence. Martin saw she would have pardoned, perhaps welcomed, some slight impertinence.

"I have been very lonely here," she murmured, leaning over the side of the boat, and letting the water slip through

her outspread fingers; while Martin, obtaining a good view of her feet, strongly suspected she had on a pair of Higgins's boots. "I long for a friend to whom I might pour out my soul. After all, there is nothing like friendship. Love is a very poor substitute. One can only truly live in the life of a sympathetic friend, and I have none now."

Martin was no more inclined to fill the vacancy than he had been at Huldenfels, so he rowed awhile in silence along the shore.

"Is Miss Adams too frivolous to confide in?" he asked presently.

"Kate is very heartless," she said in a displeased tone, "though I think she has come to her senses at last. Mr. Booker is a far better match than she had any right to expect. He has an estate in Dorsetshire."

"I knew he came from Bœtia," said Martin inaudibly.

"Kate is determined to marry money," continued her cousin, "and you know she hasn't a penny of her own, and is very extravagant."

Martin saw that his beautiful vis-à-vis still resented his interest in her cousin.

"Celesta!" cried a voice; and there were Kate and Booker watching them from the bank.

Martin at once pulled in to where they stood.

"Oh, do give me a row!" cried Miss Kate. "Quick, quick!" she whispered as he helped her in. "Don't let him come."

The boat was out in a moment, and Booker was left gaping with indignation and astonishment.

"Hullo, you know," he cried, "that isn't fair; I want to come too."

"Run round," cried Martin ironically; "we'll take you up at the bridge."

Little Booker set off in a rage, dodging and knocking against the numerous strollers, and for five minutes Miss Adams could do nothing but laugh, while the boat drifted anywhere, for Martin, from contagion, laughed too, until he was unable to row.

Mrs. Higgins looked on gloomily.

"I shall be glad to go home," she remarked presently. "You will make yourself ill, Kate, after all the honey you ate at breakfast."

Booker was awaiting them at the landing-place.

"Oh, I'm glad you've come off," he said to the ladies, ignoring Martin. "Stupid work in a boat, isn't it? What shall we

do this afternoon—eh? Couldn't we get up some fun, Mrs. Higgins? Have a picnic—eh?"

"Have a picnic, have a dance, have a burial," she answered gravely. "Do exactly what you like. I am going in. Be so good as to stay where you are, Kate."

"Why, what's the matter now?" asked Booker, when she had gone, opening his eyes till they threatened to fall out. "You two ladies have been pulling caps—eh? About me or Martin? Come, tell, now; though why you can't have one apiece I don't see."

Miss Adams sat down on the nearest bench.

"I am nearly dead," she murmured, with her handkerchief pressed against her lips. "Perhaps it's the heat. Mr. Booker, could you—would you go and get me a glass of water, or salts, or anything?"

Booker hesitated. He didn't like leaving Martin in possession. Still, there was Miss Kate lying with closed eyes, and the hotel was close at hand. Then she had clearly shown her preference in asking him, and on his return he would necessarily be first fiddle. He went. Miss Adams looked up at Martin, and they smiled simultaneously.

"Am I very wicked?" she said, getting up and patting her flounces. "But I do hate him so! I assure you, after half an hour of his society, I am ready to faint, though I was not quite so bad just then."

Then with one accord they took the direction Booker was least likely to think of.

"I hope you have had a good time since I saw you last?" Martin asked her.

"I have amused myself ever so much," she said; "but sometimes I think I liked Huldensfels best."

"My recollections of the place are not entirely satisfactory," he continued in a low voice.

"What do you regret?" she said, smiling.

"My stupid behaviour to you," stammering a little over his words.

"Well!" said Miss Kate, laughing, "if you were stupid, you must admit I took no mean advantage of it. Supposing I had taken you at your word, you might now reasonably regret it."

"You misunderstand me," he said eagerly, "I mean if I had appreciated you then as I do now, you might have given me a different answer."

He felt himself positively growing red under the smiling scrutiny of his little

companion; he thought he read in her gay eyes, "You are as conceited as ever."

"Well," she remarked, "if you can only appreciate me at a distance you had better leave me."

They were walking down a grass-grown silent street at the back of the cathedral.

"Let us go in and hear the organ," she proposed.

It was a relief to him to get into the cool dark church, where there were only a few visitors scattered about, listening to the storm, which was raised daily by the organist at the same hour, roll and swell along the aisles and rafters. Martin and Miss Adams sat down together in the shadow of the pulpit steps, and he watched her pass her pretty hands over her curls, and plait up the ribbons on the front of her frock, and twist her seven little rings into wedding bands, and then round again.

He felt he could be happy there with her an indefinite number of hours, and when the storm culminated in some astounding crashes, he regretfully followed her out on to the glaring steps which lead down to the promenade.

There the inevitable Booker pounced upon them.

"Well now, if that isn't too bad," he cried to Miss Adams. "Wherever have you two people been? I've been looking for you everywhere. You're to come up home, Miss Kate, at once. Mrs. Higgins sent me for you. We're all going up the Rigi, take our luncheon with us, and dine up there; come on, there's no time to lose. Mrs. H. will be outrageous."

Miss Adams carefully buttoned up her gloves, which she had withdrawn in church, eight buttons on each arm. Then she answered:

"I am sorry you have had such trouble, for after all, I cannot go."

"Oh, but you must!" cried Booker; "Mrs. Higgins sent me for you."

"No, I am too tired."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Booker; "it will do you good. I'll undertake to amuse you. Do come, now."

"I am too tired," she reiterated sweetly.

"Oh, bother! I'll carry you."

Miss Adams turned upon him with an angry blush, and Martin thought of the little scene under the beech-trees at Huldensfels.

"I will not come, sir!" she exclaimed; "and you may tell my cousin so, and you may ask her the reason!"

Booker retreated in amazement. He was not the least offended, for it never

occurred to him he could be the objection. Nature has bestowed on some of the most hideous of her sons this happy incapacity of believing themselves otherwise than charming.

"Is it not too bad of Celesta," said Miss Adams when he was gone, "to force the man on me like that? She knows how I hate him. The last time we had a picnic she rolled herself up in her ulster, and went to sleep under a tree, and Jack, of course, sat by to keep the flies off. So I was left all day with Mr. Booker, until I became ill with ennui. I vowed I would never go anywhere again if they took him."

"It is not so easy to shake him off," said Martin; "he is a regular old man of the sea. If anyone could be found with public spirit enough to shoot him, that man's fortune would be made. All Booker's acquaintance would subscribe largely to keep him in clover for the rest of his days."

Martin escorted Miss Adams back to her hotel, but did not stay very long with her. She looked so pretty, so gay, so kind, he was on the point of risking his fate again, and he feared it might be premature.

Late in the evening he met Higgins. He enquired after his wife, and hoped she was not tired with her expedition. Mrs. Higgins had acquired a new interest in his eyes, as being "near the rose."

"I am sorry to say Celesta is not at all well," said Higgins slowly. "You see she feels things so much; however, I hope she will be better to-morrow."

"What are you going to do to-morrow?" asked Martin with a view to his own arrangements.

"Well, we're unsettled," said Higgins; "my wife has changed her plans." He hesitated so much that Martin knew something had occurred. "In fact," Higgins continued, "we are going to break up our party."

There was evidently only one way in which this could be done.

"Do you mean that Miss Adams is going to leave you?" said Martin.

"Yes, that's what it is; you see my wife wants perfect rest, and she devotes herself too much to Kate."

Martin pitied Higgins sincerely; he was in an awkward position between the two ladies, and felt it acutely.

The next morning Martin went up to the hotel. He was shown into the Higginases' private room. Mrs. Higgins was lying on

the sofa, in a garment which resembled a dressing-gown. A hair-brush stuck out from between the sofa cushions. She held a tattered French novel in her hand, and closed it over her finger as he entered. A hasty attempt to thrust her stockinged feet back into her slippers, sent one of them flying with a flap on to the polished floor. The room was in amazing disorder. Martin recognised in a heap under the table, where it had evidently just been kicked, the horse-shoe patterned shirt Higgins had worn the previous day. Through an open door was seen the bedroom, in which a still more direful chaos reigned.

Martin asked after Miss Adams.

"She is packing," answered Mrs. Higgins serenely.

"Does she leave you at once, then?" said Martin.

"At twelve to-day," and Mrs. Higgins fixed her dark eyes full upon him.

"And do you mean she is going alone?" said he.

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Higgins, "and she can sleep in Paris to-morrow night, and reach London on Saturday, I suppose."

"Oh, it is quite preposterous," said Martin with warmth; "you cannot send a girl of her age and appearance alone to a Paris hotel. I appeal to you, Higgins?"

Poor Higgins, with a face of burning discomfort, stood running his hands through his fair hair, the picture of misery.

Mrs. Higgins sat up and her holy eyes gleamed dangerously.

"What right have you to interfere in Kate's movements?" she asked insolently.

"None, I am sorry to say; but you must admit it is a very unusual thing to do."

"Kate's conduct is altogether unusual!" cried Mrs. Higgins. "I will not keep her any longer after her disgraceful behaviour yesterday. As for our going with her it is out of the question. Perhaps you would like to accompany her yourself by way of improving things?"

Higgins looked very much distressed.

"My dear ducky!" he remonstrated feebly.

Martin kept his temper.

"I should like to see Miss Adams, if you will allow me," he said.

"This is an hotel," cried Mrs. Higgins; "you can see anyone you like."

With this courteous permission he took his leave. As he closed the door behind him, something came with a violent crack against it from within. Martin believed

it to be the hair-brush; he had certainly seen Mrs. Higgins grasping it with looks of fury. He ran smiling downstairs, and fancied he heard sounds of strife and weeping, and the precursory scream of hysterics, echoing behind him.

He did not ask for Miss Adams at once, but stood awhile at the open door, looking out upon the lake with all its charming reflections. Circumstances were playing into his hands, and he was considering how to turn them to the best advantage.

His eyes straying along the opposite shore, lit on his aunt's little white pension. An idea struck him. He jumped into a passing carriage, and a few minutes later was disclosing to Miss Hilder's sympathising ear, the state of the case and of his affections.

"My dear child," said that excellent woman, "my week is up to-morrow, thank Heaven! and I'll take Miss Adams back to England with me. She had better come here for to-night, though the food is shameful and the cooking worse. I never was so cheated in my life, and Plackers has become as thin as a thread-paper."

"Will you come over now and fetch Miss Adams?" suggested Martin.

Miss Hilders put on her bonnet at once.

"We'll stop and buy plenty of cream-cakes on our way," she remarked; "they are the most supporting, and I know what fine appetites young creatures have. Higgins, do you say the woman's name is? Wasn't she Celesta Kelverton? I know the family well; they are mad, my dear, all of them—as mad as hares!"

"Not the Adams side, I hope," said Martin.

"No; it is on the Kelverton side—the blue-eyed Kelvertons, as we used to call them; and there's not one sane man or woman in the whole family."

About an hour afterwards little Booker, bustling across the long covered bridge, ran up against Miss Adams, walking with that conceited fellow Martin, and an old lady whom he did not know.

"Hullo!" cried the vivacious Booker, "what are you up to now? You aren't so shabby as to have started a picnic without me, I hope?"

Miss Kate laughed and coloured very much.

"You must go and ask Mrs. Higgins," she said, "for she has changed her plans, and this is part of them."

"OPEN SESAME."

CHAPTER I. THE MAT DE COGNAC.

IT stood in the centre of a three-cornered irregular place, tall and polished, its well-greased sides glittering in the sunshine, and a garland, gay with streamers of coloured paper, hung from its summit, and here dangled the miscellaneous things that were to be the rewards of successful ambition in the way of climbing. All day long—a hot, broiling, cloudless day—the place and its pole had been deserted, for the pleasures of the fête had taken another direction.

There had been regattas, with much firing of cannon on the quay; there had been music; there had been sports. All Canville had had its fill of pleasure, including the most delightful pleasure of all, for which the rest was but the pretext and occasion—the constant ceaseless chatter, the display of all the resources of Canville millinery. Now the shadows were growing long, a cool westerly breeze stirred the leaves of the elms on the public walk and fluttered the flags on the gay Venetian-masts, a soft peaceful rest stole over the landscape, and the satiated world began to think of dinner. Only the last item of the programme remained to be accomplished—the mat de cognac, or greasy pole, to be spoiled of its tempting prizes. And now the deserted place began to fill with people.

It was not a tidy place by any means. The broad white roads that opened into it seemed each to bring its contingent of dust and rubbish. In one corner stood the Hôtel des Victoires, with its gaping gateway, its faded yellow walls, and an air about it which seemed to belie its proud cognisance. Other big houses, with elaborate plaster cornices and festooned with plaster garlands, looked mouldy and neglected, sulkily conscious too of being too big and too florid for their present tenants. The most living animated feature of the place was a cool grot in a corner opposite the hotel, where a little stream came to light for a moment in an open conduit. Over the whole was a slated roof, and here congregated daily the washerwomen of the quarter, with great baskets of linen to be rinsed in the running stream. A descent of a few damp steps led to the level of the water, and here the massive hoary foundation stones of some old bastion showed that the rivulet had once washed the vanished fortifications of the town. Just over the roof were two windows looking

out upon the place, which also formed a pleasant contrast to the general dreariness. It seemed as if the genius of the stream below had climbed thus high to decorate these windows with the freshest greenery. In the hot sunshine this nook was a solace and refreshment; but now with the evening shadows falling, the intense darkness of the interior, with the sight of a white face looking wistfully out from behind the curtain of green leaves, gave a pathetic suggestion to the picture.

The crowd had now thickened, the people of the neighbourhood had brought out their chairs, and were sitting waiting patiently for the beginning of the entertainment. Windows were thrown open, and spectators appeared within as if in their private boxes. On the steps of the hotel stood the host himself in his white kitchen suit, who had snatched this moment for enjoyment between the luncheons accomplished and the dinners yet to come. Even the competitors were there, a pale tatterdemalion set, wet sand oozing out from all the crevices—and they were many—in their garments. Everybody was there excepting only the administration.

From the window over the conduit, the white wistful face has disappeared; in its place a stout dame and a young damsel are surveying the scene. Behind these is a wiry elderly man. It is not often that Madame Desmoulins, the owner of the pale face, and the careful tender of the flowers in the window, entertains her friends. But on such an occasion, with the slippery pole right opposite her windows, she could hardly do less, and then it is a family party. The girl, indeed, is her daughter. The stout lady is Madame Souchet, the postmistress of the town. The other is Lucien Brunet, Madame Desmoulins's brother.

"It is very provoking that they should be so late," cried Madame Souchet, looking at her watch. "No wonder the affairs of the town go wrong when the maire is always unpunctual."

Madame Souchet cast a reproachful glance at Brunet, as if he were in some way responsible for the maire's want of punctuality. And, indeed, M. Brunet in most things was held to be the alter ego of Lalonde, the maire and banker of the place, of whom he was the principal, and, indeed, only permanent clerk.

"Well, here he comes at last, the elephant of a man," cried Madame Souchet, "and now, I suppose, we shall begin."

Brunet craned forward to catch a glimpse of the well-known figure. It would be wrong to say he was proud of his master. But he felt a solidarity, so to say, with the man. Together they might have made something to be proud of. Brunet had a vivid intellect, sensibility, and human kindness, qualities which in Lalonde were entirely wanting. Lalonde, with his obstinacy and firm grip of everything he got hold of, might have counterbalanced a certain weakness observable in Brunet.

"I can't be always at his elbow, madame, to keep him punctual. But, after all, our time is our own; we have not to render an account of every moment to the administration. And this time, I fancy, madame, the gendarmes are in fault."

"Well, here they are at last," cried Marie as the formidable cocked hats and blue and silver uniforms of the gendarmes filed into the place.

"And the quartermaster himself," interrupted Madame Souchet, "and he is looking up at your window, Madame Desmoulins. Bon jour, M. Huron; I wonder if that elegant flourish of the hat was meant for me?"

Madame Souchet delighted to rally her friend upon a certain weakness the gallant gendarme was thought to entertain for her. But Madame Desmoulins never retaliated. She seemed too sad and broken-spirited to contend with the florid, self-satisfied postmistress.

A roar of satisfaction from the crowd gave notice that the fun had commenced. Madame Souchet followed every detail of the contest with great enjoyment.

"The prizes are magnificent this year," she cried. "There is a silver watch, worth at least twenty francs, and of a size! Why, you can see the figures from here. The very thing for a banker. Oh, M. Brunet. Ah, if I were a man! But you have no enterprise."

Marie laughed softly at the notion of her uncle climbing the greasy pole. M. Brunet folded his arms, and looked over their heads in lofty indifference.

"Mon Dieu! there is a new candidate," cried Madame Souchet; "a sailor, I think, for he goes up the pole like a monkey. The wretch! he actually kisses his hands at us. What will M. Huron think? But what a villainous ugly-looking fellow!"

"But I don't find him at all ugly," cried Marie, "and I seem to know the face. Mamma, come quickly and say, is it not somebody we know?"

Madame Desmoulins, thus appealed to, leaned forward and caught sight of a form just on a level with her window. A man had climbed half-way up the pole, and was now resting with his legs firmly clasped about it; waving his hand to the crowd below, who greeted him with derisive shouts. But he was certainly looking hard into these windows, and the sight of Madame Desmoulins's face seemed to be just what he was waiting for, for no sooner had she shown herself than he loosened his hold, slid quickly down the pole, and was swallowed up in the jeering crowd. The woman sank into a chair, her face whiter than ever.

Yes, she had recognised the face, and she felt that with it a new trouble had come into her troubled existence.

As it was, her life was narrow, cold, and joyless. But she had become used to it. She had suffered all kind of bitter things, but had now lost the sense of their bitterness. Yet she shrank from any fresh suffering, and this was what the face she had just seen appeared to announce.

Madame Desmoulins was the wife of an exiled Communist—wife or widow, she knew not which, for the last she had heard of her husband was that he had escaped from Nouméa, the penal settlement, in an open boat with some half-dozen other exiles. Since then she had heard nothing, and it was probable that the whole party had miserably perished in the trackless seas. She had scarcely grieved for him—the bitter stress of poverty and abandonment had so hardened her. Formerly her husband had infected her with his enthusiasm. She had shared his plans, and worked for the same cause. Desmoulins had made no inconsiderable figure in the Commune. For a moment his wife had dreamt of a grand future. Then came the realities of suffering and misery. At one time it seemed likely that she would share his exile. Perhaps such a sentence would have been happier for her than the milder infliction of five years' police supervision in a designated town. Desmoulins owed his escape from a death sentence to the intercession of some people of influence whom he had befriended during his brief tenure of power. By the same influence the town of Canville was assigned as a residence for the wife. She would not have had it so herself; she would rather have chosen some large city where she might have sunk quietly out of existence.

But her husband had thought it best for her; since there, among her own friends, she would at least be preserved from utter destitution. And there, too, was her daughter. From the time of the first disasters of the war, Desmoulins had sent Marie to Madame Souchet, to be safely out of the way, and with her she had remained ever since. The husband and father had judged that his wife would be happy in having her daughter close at hand; but, indeed, to Madame Desmoulins it was a continual torture to see another woman taking her place with her daughter, to feel her own impotence and humiliation. She was too proud to accept any help for herself. With her needle she earned enough to supply her wants and keep a roof over her head, but she would not drag Marie down to her level.

Now at last the woman had learnt to be contented—not with a complacent contentment, but with a hard bitter feeling as of one who owed the world a grudge, but, knowing the world to be the stronger, dissimulated patiently what she felt. And she recognised that the condition of her existence was to eliminate all soft emotions. Marie, indeed, had never ceased to be her mother's daughter, but the mother coldly discouraged all outward signs of affection. If she retained a weakness, it was for her flowers, which she carefully and skilfully tended, making the windows looking out upon the place a very oasis in the desert. And perhaps she had yet another weakness, this self-contained immaculate woman—a weakness on which Madame Souchet had managed to put a finger with her usual skill. She was not quite insensible to the respectful homage of M. Huron, the quartermaster of gendarmes. But then this was a reminiscence, an echo of bygone days.

Twenty years ago, when he had been just twenty years old, and she five years younger, M. Auguste Huron had been madly in love with Mademoiselle Lucille Brunet. She was above him in social position, for her father was an invalided officer, while Huron was the son of a humble forest-keeper. But it was thought that Lucille was not quite indifferent to the manifest adoration of the dark-eyed handsome youth. But Huron was marched off to the army, and saw no more of Lucille, or of Canville, till appointed quartermaster of gendarmes only a few months since. Their relative positions were now reversed—she was a poor sempstress

and he a man in authority, and likely to rise to a higher position. He was still unmarried.

Had he remained single for her sake? It were hard to say.

"Here is the sailor again," cried Marie from the window. "Come and look at him, mamma. I am quite sure we know him."

Marie felt a sudden grip of the arm, and looking round, saw a frowning warning on her mother's face. She saw at once there was a mystery, and was suddenly silent. Madame Souchet was too much engaged in watching the man's progress to notice this by-play, but Uncle Brunet saw it and looked uneasily at his sister.

Yes, Madame Desmoulins knew the face well enough. She had last seen it looking from the door of the prison van that had taken her husband on the first stage of his exile. It was the face of a hot-headed young sailor, a naval lieutenant, a Marseillais, like her husband. He had lived with them during the siege of Paris, and he, too, had been a leading spirit of the Commune.

A roar of mingled applause and disappointment from the crowd announced that the sailor had reached the top of the pole, where he was nonchalantly inspecting the prizes that dangled about him; but all the while he kept a keen eye upon Madame Desmoulins's window, where Marie was waving her handkerchief encouragingly. Then he grasped the watch, put it to his ear, and finding it not going, carefully wound it up, listened again, nodded approvingly, and slid down the pole with the watch in his pocket. There was some commotion below. The regular competitors were furious that a stranger should carry off the best prize. M. Huron was obliged to interfere to keep the peace, but his feelings, too, were enlisted on the side of local talent. He spoke harshly to the sailor, who answered him hotly, and then Huron would have seized him by the collar, but the man, favoured by the crowd, who had taken his part from the moment it was seen he was obnoxious to the authorities, contrived to slip away.

"And now," cried Madame Souchet, "as the excitement is over, I will go back to my work. I shall leave Marie with you for the afternoon, if you don't object, Madame Desmoulins, for I am going to the maire's banquet, and the house will be deserted."

"What! you are really coming to our

banquet!" cried M. Brunet. "We did not expect such an honour."

"Your master is a pig!" cried Madame Souchet, "and you will one day find it out, or rather you will one day acknowledge it; but, though we hate each other, he is still the maire; and I as postmistress have no right to consult my private feelings. You will take care of Marie, then, madame?"

Madame Desmoulins hesitated; her daughter watched her face with a wounded puzzled expression. Here was an opportunity such as rarely occurred to talk about old times, to renew assurances of affection, and the mother hesitated!

"You see," urged Madame Desmoulins, "the child will want to see the fireworks, and I never go to such sights."

"For this once you will," said her brother; "I will come and fetch you both, and find you excellent places."

"That will be charming," cried Marie. "Mamma, you must go; you have so few distractions, and this will do you good."

Madame Souchet sniffed the air suspiciously. The banker's son, a handsome young fellow, clerk to a notary in Paris, was now home for a holiday, and Charles and M. Brunet were like father and son almost. Indeed, it was said that Charles thought more of old Brunet than of his father, who indeed was often harsh and arbitrary. And perhaps Charles, who was known to admire Marie, would join the party. "Very well, he might," concluded Madame Souchet, nodding her head sagely. If M. Brunet had any thought of match-making in his head, all the greater would be his mortification when he found himself forestalled. For the postmistress had herself planned this interview between Marie and her mother, in order that Marie, as a matter of form and to make sure of everything being in order, should ask her mother's consent to a marriage that Madame Souchet had arranged for her. The poor child had promised to ask this consent as a favour from her mother, though, in reality, she looked forward to the marriage with repugnance and dread. She had scarcely seen her intended husband, and there was nothing about him to win her fancy. Now, if it had been Charles! Ah, Charles was everything that was gentle and pleasant.

Madame Souchet, heedless of the agitation that reigned in poor Marie's spirits, hurried home intent upon business. She had just time to look over the letters that

had come in by the afternoon mail, all neatly sorted by her assistant. That was a duty she never failed to perform. She had too much interest in the affairs of her neighbours to neglect this avenue of information. Long practice had taught her to judge pretty accurately of the contents of letters from their outside appearance. She knew who was pestered by creditors from a distance, who was blessed with a spendthrift son always appealing for money; who had unsuspected savings carefully invested in distant securities; what gallant husband corresponded with unknown dames; what neglected wives had loving friends to console them. Indeed, so penetrated was she with the character of her neighbours' correspondence, that anything unusual or abnormal struck her with something like the awe that Robinson felt at sight of the footprint in the sand. To-day she had just such a turn. There was a massive irregular scrawl, addressed to Madame Desmoulins, who never had a letter since those officially stamped despatches from Nouméa had ceased to be sent. And the handwriting was not unfamiliar, it excited reminiscences. Madame Souchet ran hastily to her desk, and brought out some old papers, one of them bearing the ugly prison stamp; a letter from Desmoulins begging her to be good to "la petite." The handwriting was the same. Madame Souchet sank into a chair quite aghast.

And there was the postman waiting for his bag, his time-bill in his hand, and she had to decide all in a moment what to do! No, she could not let the letter go. She threw it on one side and made up the bag. The postman went his way and still she sat there with the letter in her hand, undecided what to do.

The indecision did not last very long. Madame Souchet was too perfect a postmistress to find any difficulty in the envelope, even though carefully gummed and sealed with surest wax. The enclosure was soon at her disposal. Alas! the contents were but vague. Imprudent as M. Desmoulins had been in writing with his own hand a letter that must pass through the post-office of Canville, he was not quite so imprudent as to commit anything vitally important to its keeping. There was no date, no address. Simply the words: "Dearest, I am free; be ready to join me, you and Marie—more by surer hands."

The face of Madame Souchet assumed

an evil expression. By surer hands, indeed! There was a secret reflection upon herself in that phrase, as if the man had foreseen she would read it and had planned a covert blow. She who had been his daughter's benefactor; she whom he had implored, writing there on his knees as he told her, to be good to la petite! And she had been good to her. And then how the child had grown into her heart, making her life, dry and withered before, blossom like Aaron's rod. And then, march! decamp! leave the old woman to her fate; leave her to gnaw her heart out with mortified love. For Marie would go—not a doubt of it—would leave her with hardly a tear, hardly a sigh. But, no! swore Madame Souchet softly to herself, things should not march quite like that either.

Just at this moment the trap-door of the office-wicket was gently raised. Madame Souchet, in her agitation, had forgotten to fasten it when she had given out the bag to the postman, and a purple mottled face with a red bulbous nose, shaded by the peak of a blue and silver képi—the most faded blue, the most tarnished silver—appeared in the opening. The head advanced, the neck craned forward; almost it peered over Madame Souchet's shoulder, when the postmistress, startled by some unaccustomed sound, or was it perhaps the spirituous atmosphere that surrounded the Père Duze, turned fiercely upon the intruder.

"Pardon," cried the père humbly, and began to excuse himself. The pressing nature of his errand had made him forgetful of politeness. Had Madame Souchet forgotten the hour? The maire expected his guests at seven precisely, and here it was a quarter past.

"I am coming," said Madame Souchet gruffly. Then could the père carry anything for her—her bonnet-box, her sabots! "No, no!" cried the postmistress, slamming the window in his face.

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER XI. OUT OF SIGHT.

SUCH news as this of Phœbe drove all else out of Phil's mind, or he might have given a few minutes of more rational and natural wonder to the altered circumstances in which he found his father. These were all the more remarkable, for its being now impossible to connect them with the disappearance of Phœbe. But, as it was, his whole idea of life had received a deadly blow. Of course the girl was flighty, feather-brained, romantic, and even silly—so much he knew, because Love is as quick to see faults as to ignore them; his famous bandage is placed over his unhappily keen eyes, not by nature, but by his own hands. But this thing had never entered into his heart, even in its most jealous moments, to conceive. He had been more miserable about her than he knew—but for himself, not for her. She had always been, with all her faults, the one bright flower in a world of weeds; the one saving touch in that forlorn and shiftless thing which the Nelsons called home. She had been the one thread of softness in the straight hard road he had marked out for his own feet to travel. And now—what had become of her? Why could she not have loved him a little, if only that she might have been saved?

"I will give up loving her!" his heart groaned. "I'll only find her, and save her, if it makes her hate me—if she's to be saved in this world. I'll force myself to hate her—and I'll save her, just because I hate her with all my heart. Poor little girl!"

Vermin like Stanislas Adrianski are apt to vanish when wanted, and only to appear again in unexpected places and at wrong times. To find them, one must turn over the middens of every big town between San Francisco and Astrakhan; and then they may be in Melbourne or Cape Town all the while. They change their trades and their names, and even their features, sometimes; and nobody ever knows anything about them, because nobody ever wants to know. Phœbe might, at this moment, be deserted and starving in some Parisian garret, desperate for daily bread, and exposed to all the hideous temptations that those who have ever hungered alone can know. Or, if the end was not yet come, it must needs come in no long time. But how can words tell what Philip Nelson foresaw? Save her, indeed! It was worth murdering one's own brother to save any girl on earth from such a doom.

However, he had made up his will to love her no more. Apart from his duty towards a sister in deadly danger, he would, as he called it, play the man, and plod on in his straight hard road with his eyes fixed and his heart closed. Whatever he would have done, had he never heard these tidings, he must do now, and the smallest things, and therefore the hardest, all the more, if only out of defiance, and to prove to himself that he was master of himself and that his will was his slave—not knowing that the man who believes in the strength of his own will incurs the peril of him who trusts to the strength of a straw. So, instead of spending the night, like one of Phœbe's heroes, in a desperate walk to nowhere, or relieving himself by a plunge into what their biographers call, in their

straight to the lodging which he was, till he should leave London, sharing with Ronaine. He would not even allow himself the luxury of being alone. To do what one liked was, of necessity, weakness in the eyes of Phil. He must now carefully watch for opportunities of thwarting and crushing himself, at every turn.

"Ah," cried the now familiar brogue, as he entered. "Here he comes, the best patient to cure, and the worst to nurse, that ever I knew. Nelson, let me introduce ye to my friend Esdaile, who's the greatest painter in London. Esdaile, this is my friend Nelson, who's the biggest engineer I know, bar none. But he's bad to nurse—he's got engineering notions about the human machine, and thinks it goes by steam. Ye should have come with us to The Old Grey Mare, Phil, my boy, as I wanted ye, instead of going off about work the first thing. It isn't the work a man lives by—it's the meat and the drink; and if a man don't eat and drink, neither shall he work—and that's true."

"Nelson?" asked Esdaile, accepting the introduction with a nod, "no relation to our old friend?"

"What? Meaning the admiral? I'd think not, indeed! Why, he'd have known all about Zenobia, my little girl; and he's never heard of her, except from me. But I'll introduce him—and may be—who knows? We're both of us fathers, Esdaile; we'll have to give her away. Faith, there'll have to be six of us though, counting poor—I mean that infernal woman-beating blackguard, Jack Doyle. I'd like to see the thundering scoundrel again, just to knock him down with one fist and shake hands with the other. But ye don't look the thing to-night, Phil, at all. Ye've begun bothering too soon. I hope ye've had no bad news?"

"I'm quite well," said Phil roughly, in a tone that had no effect on the doctor, who was by this time familiar with what he called the Saxon in his friend, but which must have made Esdaile set him down as an ill-conditioned bear. "For that matter, I must be well. I'm going out of town, to report on draining some marsh lands—"

"And you just well from the marsh-fever? Are ye mad? As your medical attendant, I forbid ye to go. Ye'll just stay here."

"No, Ronaine. I must go."

"There's something wrong with ye to-night, Phil—I saw it with half an eye, as soon as ye came home. I thought 'twas

the work. But as it's not that—if it's anything stuck in the heart, have it out like a man, and never mind Esdaile; he'll mix the medicine meanwhile. 'Tis Miss Phoebe! Ah, I'd give half the practice I'll get some day, and all I've got now, to be able to feel like a fool about any girl ye like to name. And so'd Esdaile; faith, it's we're the fools, that have done with fooling. 'Tis Miss Phoebe, then, after all?"

"Good-night," said Phil, unprepared for the strength of this straw, and, in spite of his manhood, which was true enough, feeling painfully like a boy. "I shall see you again—before I go."

"That's kind of ye! But look here, Phil. Never mind Esdaile—he won't count, between friends. You won't quarrel, least of all over a girl. I've been through it all myself—twenty times, till I got so used to it that faith, if a girl hadn't jilted me, I'd have had to jilt her, for after things have got to a certain sort of climax, ye see there's nothing else to be done. Jilted! 'Tis having had all the fun of the fair, and nothing to pay. I wouldn't give a bottle of vodki for a girl that's got so little love in her that she hasn't got more than enough for one boy. I wouldn't—"

"Good-night, Ronaine," said Phil, more gently, and holding out his hand. "You're right—whoever I quarrel with, it'll never be with you. You saved my life; and I've got to make it fit for saving."

"Why, then you're a good lad, after all, and if ye weren't a Saxon, ye might be an Irishman, by the soul of ye! I'll tell ye what I'll do. I'll swear a mighty oath, and Esdaile here shall bear witness—I'll swear on the bones of all my fathers, born and unborn, from their crania down to their brogues, and on my own right hand that's holding yours, and on anything else ye like to name, that ye shall marry my Zenobia; and she's worth twenty Phœbes by near a thousand pounds, that'll may be ten before I die. Ye shall marry my Zenobia—and here's her health, and her husband's that is to be. And she'll make ye as good a wife, though I say it myself, as if she was a bit cut out of your own soul."

"Who is your amiable friend," asked Esdaile as soon as Phil left the room, "that you're so anxious to give him your sixth share in a daughter you don't know, and in a fortune that's got to be made? Of course you can give your Zenobia, you know. But can you give him Marion Bassett, and Eve Esdaile, and Psyche Urquhart, and Dulcibella Nelson, and Jane Doyle?"

"Oh, they'll do for the bridesmaids. And one will be enough for him. I'll give him Zenobia, and the others may stay away—if they can. And as to the fortune, it's as safe as the Bank of England; for I look on that as a debt of honour—and honour's a sacred thing."

"And, talking of Dulcibella Nelson, who's your future son-in-law? You call him Phil Nelson—and, oddly enough, I happen to remember that our friend the admiral had a boy who answered to the name of Phil, and a very dirty, ragged little boy he was too, always counting his fingers and gnawing a slate-pencil. I expect I kept him in boots for a considerable while."

"Oh, there's lots of Nelsons. Why this Phil's a big gun in Russian railroads, and had a fever it was a real credit to know. He's a gentleman, every inch of him, and no more like the admiral than I'm like King Lear or Desdemona. And he's never heard of Zenobia—and 'tis impossible he'd never have heard of the little thing if he'd been the admiral's boy."

"Well, anyhow, Philip Nelson doesn't mean a straw more than it matters. He's welcome to my share in Miss Eve——"

"Miss Zenobia Esdaile, if ye please. I've nothing to do with Miss Eve."

"In Miss Burden, then. Seeing that I bought out—commuted for her boot-bill in the lump—perhaps I've lost the right to interfere. Only I do grudge your son-in-law one thing."

"And what's that? Why, I don't grudge the boy all my savings of the last twenty years. Didn't I bring him out of the jaws of death with my own hands? And would ye have me turn an ungrateful blackguard on him now?"

"I mean—her eyes, if they're anything like that child's."

"There, then—I'm the only real father out of the lot of ye," said Ronaine. "And I've earned the right to choose her husband—and I will, too. Phil Nelson's the man—as fine a case of malarious typhoid as I'll ever see."

Philip Nelson did not fall asleep soon, but, when he did, he slept soundly, and with no dreams that he could recall. Yet, when he woke, it was with a feeling of feverish stupor, as if he had not slept the whole night through. It cost him some slight effort to remember, all at once, the whole history of yesterday, and a far stronger effort to return to the resolute frame of mind with which it had closed. All things,

at first were so hopelessly bleak and bare. And when, at last, he gathered himself together stoutly enough to face the day, he was only certain of two things—that he must live for his work in life, and that he must save Phoebe from the worst, not for his own sake, but for hers, and for hers alone.

What can the weak know of the weakness of the strong? No weak man can ever feel wholly weak—for he can blind his eyes, and fly; nay, it is he who is made to seek and to find the strength that is no man's own. But the light of life had gone out for Phil, and he knew no other. Is this a history of heathens? So it seems—and so must all histories seem which are bound, as all such histories are, to leave out of all account all the deeper mysteries both of the body and of the soul. Phil Nelson did, nevertheless, believe in a great many things. He believed, among others, in the conquest of nature by man, and of man by himself: and he believed in himself, and in work and duty as being one and the same thing. And he believed in all these things still. But it had become a petrified creed, out of which the fire had burned and the heart had gone.

He made a point of being out before Ronaine was up or down, as he was shy of meeting a medical eye that would not fail to observe any signs of injustice towards breakfast, and to set them down to nearly the right cause. It was too early for him to see his own employer, so he strolled, as slowly as he could, towards what his brother Dick used to call "my place in the City"—that is to say, the office in which Mr. Richard Nelson occupied a stool for so long as it might please an exceptionally long-suffering, good-natured, or eccentric principal to put up with his vagaries. Dick was as true a Nelson as Phil was a false one; and yet there had always been the sort of sympathy between Dick and Phil that is sometimes observed between a monkey and a bear. And, more by luck than good management, he met Dick himself just setting out on some errand that probably required special delay.

"Ah—I heard from the governor you'd turned up last night," said the younger brother, who had lately been at some pains to acquire the proper nonchalance of high breeding. "I'm in no hurry—never am. Come and have a drink—by Jove! the more one drinks in the small hours, the drier one is in the long."

"That's not business, Dick. But I'll go your way. Did you write to me more than once while I was away?"

"No. You see writing letters——"

"Is a bore; I know. But I thought I must have lost a letter when I came back, and found you all in a new house, and—what does it all mean?"

"Ah, indeed! Between you and me and the post, it's my belief the governor got the right tip about Pocahontas, and was mean enough to keep it from his own son. Jack thinks he's been robbing Mark and Simple's cash-box, and Duke that he's found out a family secret, and is getting paid to hold his tongue. My belief is that the governor's a precious sharp old blade and a regular deep old file. But it's no use your looking after any of the sawdust, Phil. I wish there were; I'd cry halves. Yes, Phil; there's no more doubt that the governor's turned up some sort of trumps than that I haven't; such cards as I held last night you never saw. If I can't spot another Pocahontas, I shall have to make free with the cash-box too. I've half a mind to go on the Stock Exchange."

"And Phoebe is—gone."

"Ah, poor girl. But she always was rum. You take the advice of a fellow who knows women pretty well, and never trust one farther than you can see her with both eyes. I never do. When I say she's rum, I don't mean for taking a leap in the dark—that's their way; but it's for taking up with such a caterwauling, tallow-faced skunk as that fellow over the garden wall. But there's one comfort—you punched his head pretty well for him."

"So you believe Stanislas Adrianski to be the——"

"Rather—not being green. The governor knows it too, but he won't speak of it; it puts him in a rage. He came home one evening and found her flown; and by the same token, off goes Don Tallow-face too. I needn't say he forgot to pay his weekly bills—poor Mother Dunn, where he lodged, has never smiled again, and spent her last sixpence on a grindstone for her nails. If I were Phoebe, I wouldn't like to come across Mother Dunn. I don't think Phoebe took anything. But there wasn't anything worth taking in those days. Ah, Phil, there's only two sexes—men and fools. There was my new meerschaum—and she went off with nothing but her bonnet and shawl."

"And you dare to tell me," said Phil, "that you all let her—who had been our sister—go off without putting out a finger across her road? Poor girl—there is not a soul to care for her; not one!"

"Ah, Phil, you don't get knowledge of

the world from books, my boy. I'm a man of the world. You may stop a woman from doing the right thing with a wink—I've done it myself, fifty times—but you may as well try to stop the Flying Dutchman with your own skull as to keep a woman from going to the Devil if she's got the ghost of a mind to go. They all do it, you know. She's only one more. Well, old fellow, since you won't let me stand you a drink, p'raps you can lend me five pounds? By Jove! if you'd been with me last night, you'd know why. The luck was something——"

"You want me to help you from going to the Devil—you, a man, who would not lift a finger to save a girl?"

"Ah—but then I'm not a girl," said Dick. "If I had been, I wouldn't have asked you for five pounds. I'd have asked you for ten. Bless your heart, Phil, I know them, through and through. The best of them isn't worth lifting a finger for. But when the luck's like last night's——"

And that was all the information for which Philip Nelson threw away five pounds. But it was more than enough—it was clear that Phoebe's fight with this foreign scamp had been at least notorious enough to become the gossip of the neighbours. To go there, and gather up the current tales, would only be to learn how the foulest truth can be made yet more foul by lies. There was nothing left for the hour but to follow the road marked out for him, and to trust that the eager eyes of an aching heart might discover some by-path which should lead into the heart of the maze.

But I cannot tell—perhaps I cannot dream—what the struggle means between a heart that has ceased to live with life, and a brain that clenches itself, and will not die—nay, will not even groan, lest it should be ashamed.

"God bless you, my boy—and don't forget Zenobia," was Ronaine's parting blessing; and then, as ungratefully glad to be free of his friend as he could feel glad of anything, he set off for the station whence he was to reach the scene of his new work after a few hours' journey. Those few hours of escape enabled him to attempt some sort of a plan, but every effort ended in failure. He knew that he might spend every spare moment in searching London, and every penny he earned in making enquiries elsewhere, with as much hope of discovering Phoebe or her lover as if he were to sit down with folded hands. Perhaps—and thought could bring

him no nearer than this—he might, when an old man, hear by chance some account of how she had come to die in a workhouse, or in the streets, or in a gaol; that was always the last picture he could form. He had heard, or read, some story of how some prosperous, self-made man was accosted in the street by some wretched beggar-woman, and, chancing to look at her face, recognised the remains of features he had loved in youth, and had never forgotten—and the memory came upon him with a ghastly horror. It was not even a relief when he reached the little way-side station whither he was bound. He could not put the picture out of his eyes, and it was always Phoebe's eyes that he saw.

It was not a station where chance passengers were common, but there was an inn close by where he easily found a fly for himself and his portmanteau. His experiences of the drive were no better than those of the railway. In this out-of-the-way part of England, which was altogether new to him, he felt himself being carried farther and farther from even such poor possibilities of helping Phoebe as the most incredible chains of chance might afford. The dull flat country through which he drove was as much an image of his future life as the flare and fever of great cities was henceforth of hers. It began to be like a nightmare—the thought that she might be within the bounds of the same small island, and yet farther off and more lost than when he had been dying in a distant land. And all the while Nature, so far from sympathising with his mood, and putting on for him her harshest winds and most leaden skies, was alive with a bright sharp winter laugh, opening out a clear blue sky, and stinging no more than a healthy skin likes to be stung. Things would no doubt have been more fitting, had Phil been one of Phoebe's heroes. A woman—and what is Nature else!—cannot be expected to waste her sympathetic scowls upon fellows who have so little amour propre as not even to take a pride in their own misery; who do not even whisper: "This all comes of her not having chosen me."

WHERE THE MERMAIDS ARE GONE.

"WHY don't we see no mermaids now? I knows why!"

The oracle was Fern Jipson, able seaman on board the good ship *Osiris*, bound from the port of London to Calcutta; his most

attentive auditor was a small midshipmite belonging to the same gallant craft, myself; and the just-quoted profession of familiarity with a certain phase of the supernatural was delivered on the forepart of the spar-deck one hot afternoon, as we lay becalmed on the verge of the tropics.

Fern was a character. Accustomed to a seafaring life from his very infancy, at the age of five-and-thirty he had been wrecked on one of the South Sea Islands, where he and six of his companions who had escaped drowning were taken prisoners by the natives. Though he lost one eye by an arrow-wound, out of the seven his life alone had been spared—for what reason was not quite clear, as Fern was in the habit of variously attributing his good fortune to the accidental circumstance of his super-excellence or special dexterity in whatever might be the topic of conversation or dispute at the moment, from theology to thimble-rigging. "Don't tell me nothing about that!" he would say finally and emphatically; "if I hadn't knowed somethin' about that, I should ha' been eat more'n twenty years ago!" Be that as it may, he had remained on the island fifteen years, marrying a native woman and living in all respects as the savages did; so that, when an English ship came there after that lapse of time, he discovered that he had almost forgotten his own language, and caught himself marvelling at the white skins and strange attire of the visitors as his dusky adopted brethren did. But not for long. The accents of his native tongue wrought their spell on him, and he was seized with an irresistible desire to see the old country again and the wife whom he suddenly remembered he had left there. He got away, not without some difficulty; and after knocking about the world for several years more, found himself growing old and almost incapacitated for sailor work. Reduced to distress and unable to get a job, by great good luck he strolled into a shipping-office, as a forlorn hope, when the crew of the *Osiris* were signing articles; and our captain, with whom Fern Jipson had sailed when he was fourth officer many years before, recognising him, had taken him on and kept him in the ship more out of charity, and as a pensioner of his own for the sake of auld lang syne, than for any real service the old fellow could render.

It was, as I have said, a hot afternoon. The watch below were assembled on the fore-castle head, and presented a fringe of canvas-cased legs as they hung over the rail,

lazily watching the efforts of the sail-maker to harpoon the porpoises which were tumbling their somersaults under our bows; while the sailors of the watch on deck were all aloft stowing the topsails and top-gallantsails, all but Fern, who was squatting on the deck, scraping the oaken bitts surrounding the foremast, preparatory to varnishing them. And Fern was blubbering like a child.

Though I was midshipman of that watch my duties were so far from onerous, that the choice lay before me of seeing the sail-maker miss his porpoises, or of talking to Jipson as the better means of whiling away the time till four o'clock. The old man's tales of the marvellous had a weird fascination for me, so I chose the latter course, perching myself on the hammock-bin over against him, and wondering what he was crying for. Strange are the inconsistencies of human nature! I knew that he was waiting for me to question him, and I knew equally well that, if I had done so, he would have returned a surly answer or none at all. So, after a few minutes' silence, I cautiously opened fire with a query which was always pertinent.

"Have a bit of 'baccy, Fern?" I was making desperate efforts myself to acquire the fine arts of smoking and chewing, and invariably carried a plug of "hard" in my pocket to show that I was a real sailor.

Without a word he put down his scraper and stretched out a gnarled and venous hand in which the tattooed cinnabar and charcoal showed dimly through the brown sun-glazed skin; took the cake of tobacco, cut off a quid which might have weighed about a quarter of an ounce; adjusted it in his cheek with great deliberation before handing back the remainder; heaved a deep sigh, and resumed the scraper.

But, seeing that I was not to be lightly beguiled into committing myself, he paused again presently, and began to pour out his grievance.

"All the other chaps aloft, and me sot here to scrape bright-work like a boy! They thinks I'm got too old to go aloft. It's 'bout time I were slung over the side. I aint no use on board of a ship now. I aint a sailor now. I'm a deck hand now. That's what I am!"

It may be observed in passing that Fern's diction throughout was garnished with a variety of forcible expressions, usually of a hyperbolic nature, in the proportion of about two words here reported to one of vernacular suppressed.

"Anyhow, you've managed to smarten up that fife-rail." This from me, as a balm.

"Well, I ought to know summat about varnishin'. If I hadn't knowed summat about it, I should ha' been eat afore now."

Not wishing to traverse that well-worn groove, I cut in rather hastily:

"Did you ever see a mermaid, Fern, when you were on the island?"

"Mermaid! Hunderds of 'em. They used to come up in shoals there inside o' the reef on fine nights, a-combin' of their 'air an' a-singin' an' dancin' round like; mermaids an' mermen an' little mer-boys an' girls too. Wery perlite an' affable they was, too, if you spoke 'em, and willin' enough to come ashore, only the women was jealous of 'em an' druv 'em away with bows an' arrers. But I've seen 'em other places, too. The Comoro Isles used to be a great place for mermaids."

"Where's the Comoro Isles, Fern?" Neither my geographical nor grammatical attainments were conspicuous at that period.

"You'll see 'em by-an'-by. We shall leave 'em on the starboard side going through the Mozambique Channel. But you won't see no mermaids there nor nowhere else, now." And here I asked the question indicated by Fern's reply, which is recorded in the title of this paper.

"There's other places where they used to be seen," he went on, without immediately verifying his claim to a knowledge of the cause of their disappearance; "places where folks don't think of. It's a great mistake to say there's no mermaids in cold latitudes. I mind sailing from Montreal once for Glasgow in a five hundred ton brig, the *Blanche Macgregor*—"

Here Fern discarded the scraper and, half-turning round, composed himself into an anecdotal attitude, with an occasional internal revolution of his quid; while I, seeing that he was on the right tack, drew my feet up on the bin and settled myself into position, with my chin resting on my knees and hands clasping my legs, for the full enjoyment of the coming yarn.

"A five hundred ton brig she were, an' the skipper was a north-countryman. Off Anticosti we gets becalmed one Saturday night an' drops anchor, for there's a strong current from the St. Lawrence there, an' we should ha' drifted on to the island if we hadn't. Next day was Sunday, an' still there wasn't a breath of wind. When it come artemnoon the ship was all quiet like; the skipper he'd got tired o' whistling for a

breeze an' bossing round with his hands in his pockets, so he'd settled down in his big canvas chair on the poop wi' a long pipe an' a glass o' grog alongside him, an' the rest of us was for'ard, some washin' clothes, some playin' cards, most lyin' on their backs doin' nothing at all, when all on a suddint we hears a voice hailing the ship seemingly right under the bows. Up we all jumps an' looks over the bulwarks, an' sure enough there was nothing to be seen, 'cept the swirl o' the tide running past the cable. 'Well,' one says, 'that's rum!' an' another says, 'That was you!' an' in fact most on us put it down to a young limb of a boy called Bill Masters, who was always up to some monkey trick or other, though he swore as he'd never said nothing, an' run to the side like the rest. So presently we all settles down again, but we hadn't been no more'n two minutes afore we hears the hail again. 'Blanche Macgregor, ahoy!' it says quite close to us, just as plain as you hears me now, with a long sing out to the 'ahoy!' at the end. We rushes to the bulwarks again, feelin' certain this time there must be a boat alongside, but when we finds nothin' there as before, by George, some of 'em looked up rather pale an' began to ask each other in a whisper what on airth it could be. Then somebody says, 'That's that young Bill!' and we all feels quite relieved an' says, 'Why in course it is!' an' goes for Bill. But no sooner was he knocked head over heels down the foke'sle ladder, where he lies snivelling at the bottom, an' the bo'sen was s'lecting a lanyard for to foller him with, than the voice comes again plainer than ever: 'Blanche Macgregor, ahoy! ahoy!'—twice this time. None on us goes to the side any more then, but we all took to our heels and rushed aft as hard as we could go, main scared I can tell you; for we sees then that there was somethin' in it more'n flesh an' blood could take soundings of. The noise woke the skipper, an' he jumps out of his chair an' looks over the poop at us on the deck below, an' asks what's the matter. None on us liked to say, but at last the carpenter speaks up an' says how we had heard somebody hailing the ship.

"'Hailing the ship!' roars the old man in a passion; 'it's my belief you've all been hailing some o' that infernal square-face* you've been buying ashore; you're drunk, all the lot of you. Get away for'ard an' don't let me hear any more, or some of you'll be hailing a rope's end!'

* Hollands or cheap gin in square bottles.

"Well, we slunk off, feelin' pretty small; but just as we reached the waist, we hears young Bill Masters, who had tumbled out of the foke'sle, yell out, 'Lord ha mercy; look there!' an' come flyin' towards us. An' I can tell you, when I see what was comin' up over the bows, all my inside seemed to go to ice.

"There was a man's head and shoulders rising over the bulwarks, but such a head an' such a face as nobody ever see afore. Long hair an' long beard an' shaggy eyebrows, all like teased out rope-yarn, an' big round eyes, an' a sort o' pretty coloured skin, an' the arms an' breast covered with close smooth seaweed, like the green laver you see on the rocks at low tide. But when he draws hisself up by the arms he flings up a big fish's tail like a dolphin's instead of legs into the air, an' jerks hisself inboard, where he falls with a whack on the deck, an' then I see it were a merman. Back we runs again an' all huddles behind the main-mast on the larboard side, for the merman was coming aft at full speed on the other—flop, flop, flop, like a fish hops about out o' the water, only more reg'ler an' as straight as a line, with his head up an' a sort of snakey movement from his breast to his tail that sends him along at the rate o' knots. The skipper heard us run back an' jumps out of his chair with an oath, but when he sees what was coming towards him, his long pipe drops from his hand an' he stands with his hair nearly liftin' his broad-brimmed Panama an' his face as white as a sheet. As soon as the merman got to the break of the poop, he sot up straight, throwing a round turn in his tail to lean back on.

"'Air you the cap'en of this ship?' he says.

"'Yes, sir!' says the skipper, very humble an' shakin' all over; 'yes, sir, at your service.'

"'I've hailed your vessel three times, cap'en—I read her name on the bow down below—an' nobody was perlite enough to answer, so I've come up the cable,' says the merman, severe like.

"'I'm very sorry, sir, as you should have had so much trouble,' puts in the cap'en; 'wot kin I have the pleasure of doin' for you?'

"'Well, it aint much,' says the merman, a bit softer, 'but you've bin and dropped your anchor right in front of our chapel door, an' our folks can't get in. We didn't have no meetin' this mornin', an' the ladies say they must have their reg'ler Sunday evenin' to-night, so we'd take it as a great

favour if you'd shift your anchor a couple of fathoms or so to the east'ard, afore half-past seven.'

"Just then, the steward put his head up through the cabin sky-light, an' quietly shoves the skipper's gun, loaded an' full cock, into his hand; but the merman was too quick for him, an' before he could get the gun to his shoulder, he was gone over the side and disappeared under water with a flop of his tail again' the ship's side. For a minute or two, nobody spoke or moved, an' there wasn't a sound to be heard 'cept the lap o' the water again' the side an' the clank o' the tiller-chains, an' we all seemed dazed like. The mate was the first to speak.

"'Shall we haul taut the cable an' lift the anchor, sir?' says he, touching his cap to the skipper, who was still standin' on the break of the poop above.

"That seemed to wake him up, for he'd been standin' in a sort of dream, wonderin' whether he was asleep or whether he'd had one Sunday tot of rum too many.

"'Not you!' he roars out, 'this is some lubberly trick you've been playing! I'll teach you to sky-lark with me! I'll log the whole lot of you—I'll fine you two days' pay! Be off, will you? If any man talks about shifting that anchor, I'll clap him in irons!'

"Off we goes, for'ard again, an' the bo'sen pipes all hands down to supper. We didn't talk about many other things besides the merman, you may suppose; but it was a curious thing that no two of us could agree 'xactly about what he was like. Some said he were as tall as the mainmast an' some said he warn't no taller than the main-hatch combing. I said he were about the build of a thickset man, only about nine foot long on account of the fish-tail, an' some on us went on deck to measure the wet trails, but the old man caught sight of us an' made us squeegee it out directly. But we all said amongst ourselves as how somethin' would come of it, if he didn't haul up the mud-hook; an' somethin' did come of it very soon.

"I shall never forgit that night. We had finished supper an' was all on deck in the second dog-watch; there was no wind yet, an' everything was quiet, when three bells went. An' then we all remembered that it was at three bells as the merman had said their chapel was to begin. But afore we could speak a word, the water was all alive as if millions of fish was playin' around, not jumpin' or splashin', but seem-

in'ly just below the surface—all alive an' all afire, too, with the glint o' thousands of lookin'-glasses flashin' in all directions. An' it got more an' more, till bimeby in the middle watch we goes an' prays the skipper for Heaven's sake to shift the anchor, an' he jumps on deck with a oath in his mouth, when on a suddint he stops an' shrieks out, 'She's adrift—we're lost!'

"An' sure she was. The critters had knocked the bolt out o' the shackle that bent the anchor on to the cable just at chapel-time, for we must ha' drifted better nor six miles; an' before he could get to the wheel, the breakers seemed to come up out of the dark on our starboard beam, an' the ship struck on the rocks with a crash that flung us all off our feet an' brought her top-hamper down about us. An' in the breakers was the glint of the lookin'-glasses, an' some on 'em arterwards said they heard the ringing of church bells.

"The spanker-boom fell on the skipper an' killed him on the spot. The rest on us managed to get on to the island at daylight, all but the steward—him that loaded the gun; a big wave come up an' took him back just as he reached the last rock safely, an' he never rose no more. An' though you don't see no mermaids now, you can of'en an' of'en see the glint o' their lookin'-glasses in the water on stormy nights—fuzz-friz, some calls it, but I know better. I ought to know somethin' about it. If I hadn't knowed somethin' of mermaids when I were wrecked in the South Seas, them islanders would ha' eat—"

"But, Fern," I interpolated, putting the conversational helm hard over to steer clear of this topical Charybdis, "why don't we see them now?"

"Well, I can tell you, an' there's not many men alive as can. When I—you see, sir, you makes a half hitch and reeves the end o' the line through the bight, like this—so."

From a suddenly assumed respectful tone, and his catching up the end of the fore top-sail clewline, which lay hard-by him, and manipulating it in illustration of his wholly irrelevant remark, I inferred that the second officer, to whose watch I belonged, had hove within the horizon of Fern's solitary eye. We youngsters were not allowed to go forward among the sailors except now and again under pretext of learning knots and splices, so I became engrossed exceedingly in the mysteries of the bowline then in explication. I may say, however, that this show of instruction

on Fern's part was not designed so much to save me from a sharp reprimand, or to ensure the continued pleasure of my society, as to account for the temporary disuse of the scraper. Our confab was not interrupted, so, dropping the rope again, he resumed :

"I were shipmates with the wery man as were the cause of it, an' I got it from his own lips, hissself an' no other. We was cruisin' in the West Indies, an' taking in stores afore goin' south. That was in the Bluesiffis, a fine barque-rigged vessel of eight hunderd tons; carried fore an' main skysails an' had a big white 'orse for a figger-head."

"The Bucephalus!" I exclaimed, by sudden inspiration. But I bit my tongue directly the word had slipped out, for the old man had come to a dead halt, and slowly rolled his one eye round at me with a baleful glare.

"Wot did I say?" he demanded severely.

"All right, Fern, go on!"

But Fern was not all right, and would not go on. His finer feelings had been hurt by the implied inaccuracy of his classical pronunciation, and he took up the scraper for a moment with an offended air. But another idea struck him.

"Have you got any more o' that 'baccy?"

I handed him the plug, and he wreaked his vengeance on that to such an extent, that the poor little remnant which went back into my pocket was not bigger than the reserve piece he stowed away in his cap; while the magnitude of his fresh quid rendered his voice lusciously indistinct during the rest of his narration.

"Takin' in stores, we was, 'here an' there, an' was pretty near provisioned in full; the last place we put into was Grenada for sugar an' rum. Didn't go into the bay, but anchored in the roadstead outside St. George's. The casks o' rum came off in a lighter an' we was hoisting 'em in as fast as we could, for it was close on sunset an' no twilight there, an' we was to sail the same night, as the wind was fair. My mate, Josh Stevens, was down in the lighter, helping the niggers to sling the casks. It was just dark as he got the last one in the sling, but somehow it slipped as we hoisted it over the gunwale of the boat and fell into the sea with a splash. Spirit-casks was different things in them days to what they is now—bound with thick iron an' built of hard-wood staves as heavy as iron, so down goes this 'ere cask to the bottom like a twenty-four pun' shot. If it

had been daylight, no doubt you might ha' seen it lyin' there, for the water off Grenada's as clear as crystal; I've seen the ship's anchor lyin' on the white sand fathoms deep many a time; an' you can look down an' see the coral an' weed growing in trees an' bushes wi' bright-coloured fishes an' sea-snakes a-flyin' in an' out between 'em like birds, an' all sorts o' shells crawlin' about. But 'twas pitch dark now, an' you couldn't see the lighter on the top, much less the barrel at the bottom. The skipper was standin' by, hurrying us up, when it went over—a good man he were, but a devil when his temper got out, an' when he hears this cask go splash he went clean off his head, an' stamped an' swore like a madman. Josh Stevens cried out from below that it warn't his fault, but 'twas no good. 'Look here!' he yelled out, leaping on to the rail foamin' an' cursin', an' holding on by the backstays while he hung over, 'look here, you——'" (the gem of the gallant captain's speech, picked out from the elaborate setting of profanity in which it was enshrined, consisted of the observation that the unfortunate Mr. Stevens should go after the lost cask of spirits). "When Josh heard that, he sang out 'Ay ay, sir!' sad like, but just as cool as anything; an' there was another splash in the dark down below, an' the niggers in the boat called out, 'De man gone, sah!' Well, the skipper was taken aback then, an' we all listened with our hands to our ears to hear him come up again, an' presently the skipper called out with his voice all quaverin', 'Come on board, you fool!' for you see he was sorry then for the rage he'd bin in, an' frightened to think as how he'd sent the man to his death; but there was no answer. Then he ordered all the boats to be lowered, an' we pulled round an' round the ship far an' near for hours, but no sign of poor Josh could we see. I was stroke of the cap'en's gig; the cap'en hissself steered her all the time, an' when he give orders about two in the mornin' to return to the ship, I could see by the light of the lantern in the bucket at his feet as he sat in the stern-sheets that his face was as pale as death, but he never said a word. His was the last boat to be pulled up, an' he stood up while we hitched her on to the falls, with his hand shading his eyes, looking into the black night to the last moment. But just arter we got on board an' all hands was piped to stations for sailing, the leadsman in the chains says he hears a shout. Presently we all hears it repeated, an' ten

minutes later the lighter that had sheered off when the boats was lowered, comes alongside with the niggers sweating at their long oars like bulls. And in the bottom of the boat was Josh, an' not only Josh but the barrel of rum, all dripping wet. Josh was lyin' there like one dead, an' had to be slung an' hoisted like the barrel, but we didn't let neither on 'em slip this time, you bet. The skipper asked no questions, but chucks a handful of dollars into the lighter, an' away we went.

"Next day Josh come round, but never spoke a word about where he'd bin to under the sea to no livin' soul, till he told me one night many months arter, as we lay off Iquique. But afore then, a sing'lar thing happened. When that cask was broached, it turned out to be full o' salt water instead o' rum. Josh heard of it but he didn't say nothin', an' the skipper never asked no question or said a word. But not long arter that, Josh told me the whole sarcumstance.

"When I heard the old man take on so that night," he said, "I was desp'rate riled, for 'twas no fault o' mine that it slipped from the sling; my monkey was up, an', thinks I, I'll go down an' see if I can touch it anyhow, an' without any more thought down I goes. I kin dive pretty well, as you know, an' stayed down a good spell, but no cask could I find among the weed, an' I was just feelin' like to bust an' turnin' for the top again, when I found I was tangled in a long creeping branch. I didn't lose my head, but turned round to free myself, when in strugglin' I seemed to slip downwards instead of up through the boughs of the weed, an' all on a suddint I finds myself in a sort of a garden, light as day, with green grass a-growing underfoot an' flowers an' trees overhead meeting like a roof, only all seaweed. Right in front was a lot of pillars and arches built of white coral that stretched away an' away till they was lost, like lookin' in the two big lookin'-glasses what faces each other in the cap'en's state-room, an' in an' out o' these arches queer sorts o' fishes was glidin' about, for 'twas all water down there, but somehow I seemed to find my breath all right an' not want to come up. An' the light seemed to fill the place warm like mild sunshine, for overhead where the weeds met it was black as night, but the roof was studded wi' star-fishes an' inimines all colours of the rainbow. But what struck me first was that there cask lyin' on the ground, an' round it was a school of mermaids an'

mermen, lookin' at it an' apparently wond'ring what it was, for they whisked it round an' round wi' the eddy of their tails an' fingered it all over. All at once, one catches sight o' me an' says: "Here's a man," she says, "from the dry land!" "No, miss," I says, touchin' my cap, "beggin' o' your parding, I'm a sailor, I am." "Kin you tell us wot this is, sir?" she says. "I kin," I says; "that's rum, that is." "Wot's rum?" she says. "Rum is the staff o' life," I says. "Law!" she says, "how funny! An' wot do you do with it, sir?" "Drink it," I says. Says she: "Would you be so kind an' perlite, sir, as to show us how you do it?" "Certingly," I says; "hev' you got a cup handy?" So they brings me a half-pint shell, an' I knocks the bung out an' draws a shellful. "But," says I, "I couldn't think o' drinkin' afore ladies. Arter you, miss," I says, passin' the shell. Well, there was a lot o' gigglin' an' whisp'rin', but at last she drinks it off an' seems to like it; an' then the others has a try at it an' the mermen too, me taking a shell in between each to show them the way, till at last we got very cumberfble an' the cask was empty. Then I suddinly remembers as it were about time for me to be gettin' back, an' I gets up an' says they'd have to 'xuse me 'cause my leave was up. But the mermaid as had spoke me first—she was settin' on my knee—she says: "Don't go yet!" she says, "what's your hurry?" An' with that she shakes her long golden hair, an' glimpses out at me under her eyelids. Nice-looking gal she were, too. But I said I must take the barrel back, as 'twas pertickler. Howsumever, she was like the rest of her sect and wouldn't take no for a answer, so she says: "It's a pity as a bein' like you should be wasted up there. Stay an' be one of us. Stay an' be mine!" an' blow me if she didn't heave her arms round my neck. An' all the others joins in chorus, an' comes round puttin' their cheeks again' mine, an' huggin', an' kissin', an' sayin', "Stay with us, thou lovely bein' from the dry land!" But all the mermen stood back leanin' again' the arches, lookin' precious glum, so thinks I, there'll be a row here presently, an' I makes a jump for the cask, shoves the bung in (forgittin' that the water had been running in all this while), takes it up, an' makes a spring for the roof with all that crowd of mermaids in chase. I should never ha' got away if it hadn't ha' been for the mermen; but they helped me through the weed, an' carried the barrel up for me.

I come up alongside the lighter an' was lifted in just as I fainted, or mayhap I should ha' been a merman myself now.'

"That's what Josh told me, hisself an' no other, an' never said no to a word of it, for six weeks arter that we got wrecked together an' the savages eat him. They'd got up a yarn on board previous that the dropping the cask over was a plant between him an' the niggers, an' that there was a line fast to it when it went, so that it was hauled in again directly; an' that they took it ashore in the lighter an' Josh, too, an' paid him the money agreed, an' emptied the cask an' filled it up with salt water, an' that Josh got drunk afore he was brought back to the ship. But I knows better, an' 'cause why? Here's a proof of it. Why don't we see no mermaids now, says you? 'Cause ever since they tasted that rum an' liked it so, they've been wanting some more, an' the news has spread among 'em all over the world; so, instead of comin' up on the rocks now an' singin', they're down searchin' all the old wrecks and sunk ships, lookin' for rum-barrels. That's how 'tis people says there aint no mermaids now!"

"But, Fern, how is it the salt water didn't mix with the rum when they drank it out of the shell?"

"There goes eight bells!" said Fern, who invariably went below the instant his watch on deck was up, and disappeared forthwith.

"What have you been doing forward?" growled the second officer, as I went aft to report the bell.

"Jipson's been—been showing me knots, sir!" I stammered, rather confused.

"Showing you knots? Ah, and jawing to you, I suppose, all the time?"

"He—he told me one or two stories about ships, sir, while he was showing me."

"Yarns, boy; spun you yarns, you mean," said the second officer, turning away with a grim smile; "never say 'telling stories' at sea!"

FAMILY GHOSTS.

It is just a year since I told the readers of ALL THE YEAR ROUND the story of the Glamis ghosts—terrible, grim, various, and numerous. No nobleman in the United Kingdom, most certainly none abroad, has so fine a head of spectres in his own preserves as Lord Strathmore; but less richly endowed ghost-

owners have specimens unique each in its way, and without that wearisome likeness which deprives the "hereditary curse" of any element of interest. It is too sorrowfully true that insanity and consumption are to a certain extent hereditary, and that gruesome prophecies may have been invented to agree with them long after they were generally recognised, but they do not say much for the fertility of the prophetic mind. Such stories appertain only to noble families. Nobody ever heard of a plebeian owning a family ghost. A banshee is equivalent to a patent of nobility, and in some parts of Ireland and Scotland the want of a genuine ghost attached to the premises is felt almost as a flaw in the pedigree, as a bar sinister.

I have already remarked that family curses are monotonous, and at times rather silly, but family ghosts are not to be dismissed in the same manner. I have not, myself, the slightest belief in supernatural manifestations, but, for all that, I have been compelled to leave a house because no servant would stop in it.

To all my observations my people simply responded, quite quietly and respectfully, that they would rather leave. Now, I knew that if one left I had better dismiss all, lest one should remain to tell the tale, but no option was left me and three batches succeeded before I could get one to stay. My first measure was to absolutely forbid all old family servants to come near the place. I confess that I hate, condemn, and thoroughly disbelieve in the "faithful retainer." He may be the best person in the world, but to me he is abhorrent. I hate Caleb Balderstone, who was too stupid to get credit in the neighbourhood. I loathe Leporello, whose conduct, when the ghost of the Commander comes to supper, is ridiculous, and I execrate Davus, Mascarille, Scapin, and the whole series of subsequent blackguards of similar type. What I complain of is that my servants left me simply because they heard noises. It is said, in one of the popular remarks most conspicuous for idiocy, that murder will out. Ghost stories assuredly will. I dwell in the heart of London, where there are noises enough and to spare, and my people actually objected to cries of the most trivial kind. So far as I could ascertain, a noise like an explosion, or the report of a pistol, was heard early in the morning, and at other hours various curious ringings and rattlings. I come home from work at all hours, but I never, to my great

regret, heard anything remarkable in my life. I should have liked it. To begin with it would have been as good as sixteen quarterings of nobility, and, moreover, would have, perhaps, given me the motive for that "original" English drama which I have contemplated for many years past. But there was nothing. And my servants went, and went, until the baker's young man, who appears to have been the mouth-piece of local tradition, was happily married and set up in business in a remote parish. I do not wish anybody any harm, especially at Christmas-tide, but I cannot wish that young man success in his business, for he was the cause of infinite annoyance.

My ghost was a poor thing, and nowise akin to the noble long-descended ghosts of antique families, such as the Boy of Corbie; the braceleted lady of the Beresfords; the rustling ghost—a mere frou-frou of a silken robe—at Newburgh Priory; the dead housekeeper who walks the long corridors and tapestried rooms at Rufford. It was very naught as compared with the dead drummer of the Oglivies; of the dead coachman and phantom carriage and horses which drive up to the door of Donington when a Hastings is to die. These are noble ghosts, like the card-player at Glamis, who goes on playing, till Doomsday, at the table over which he stabbed his opponent, and like that I am now about to discuss—a very noble ghost indeed, who appears only with proper ghost music, and that playing the "genteelst of tunes."

The ghost of whom I propose to discuss is not an English ghost. That, I admit, as a Briton, is a defect; but, on the other hand, it still exists. It showed its power only the other day, and frightened solid British diplomatic personages, which is saying a great deal. In telling the story, I am compelled, for obvious reasons, to suppress the names of the English diplomats, but, beyond this, I will tell the incident which occurred as related by them. This story is absolutely true.

I may say of husband and wife, that no two persons less likely to be influenced by ghost stories ever lived. The husband is a prosperous middle-aged man, born in the aristocratic and diplomatic purple, and his wife is a very handsome English matron of a type of beauty not generally supposed to be accessible to supernatural influences. Lord X. and Lady X. went to a great city in central Europe. Lord X. was appointed

resident, and her ladyship, of course, accompanied him. As it happened, the embassy was out of repair, and it became necessary to hire an occasional residence for the minister. An enterprising agent, or other interested person, recommended the long-disused mansion of the K— family. It was visited, found suitable, and taken accordingly. A few days afterwards, Lord X., meeting in the street a friend, a native of the city, said:

"Pray come and see us. We are not, by the way, at the embassy, but at the K— Palace."

"What!" said the native, evidently startled, "at that house?" and then, recovering himself, retreated with a commonplace remark and a promise to call.

There was nothing in this, of course. It would have been foolish to take notice of a sudden start. What it could mean was not worth thinking about; and the native grandee passed on.

Lord X. had moved into the K— Palace, when he met another native and invited him to call. The native magnate's countenance underwent an extraordinary change.

"You tell me," he said faintly, "that you are living in the K— Palace; that you have taken it for your family?"

"Most certainly, and signed the papers, and taken possession."

"I wish you joy, with all my heart," said the Hungarian noble. "Servus," he added, employing the Latin salutation of his country, as he raised his hat.

"Stop," said Lord X., now seriously discomposed; "do you know anything against the house? Are there bad smells? We think the house beautifully ventilated. The air seems very fresh and good."

"Nobody has, I believe, ever complained of want of ventilation in the K— Palace. If anything, it is too breezy," replied the Hungarian with a queer smile, as he made his escape.

"Pooh," muttered Lord X. as his friend vanished; "foreigners are all alike, big and little. They never care how stuffy a place is, but a puff of fresh air seems to kill them." And in this fine old English frame of mind he went home to dinner.

No sooner did her ladyship come down, than her husband saw that something was amiss. She was pale and silent, and seemed unusually serious and thoughtful. There was nothing much the matter, not very much, only the servants had been quarrelling among themselves and some of them

had given warning. There was little beyond the possibility of discomfort in all this, had it not been for the cause of the uproar downstairs. Lady X. had valuable jewellery, and there was, of course, a considerable quantity of plate in use at the temporary residence of Britannia's representative. Stringent orders had, therefore, been given concerning the locking and bolting of the doors at night. This duty was entrusted to the cook, who, on the night of arrival, looked to the locks, bolts, and bars of the establishment, made all fast, and rejoined his fellow-servants in the housekeeper's room. Presently came a complaint that one of the outer doors must have been left open, inasmuch as a draught of cold air was felt throughout the lower part of the house. The cook said it was "stuff and nonsense," he was quite certain he had locked all up. A second complaint of a freezing blast in the kitchen itself roused the cook from his apathy, and with many expressions of disgust, he "went the rounds" of the palace again, and assured himself that all was fast. So far no harm was done, but on the second night a similar experience occurred, and the cook, thinking a practical joke was being played on him—for cooks are as irritable as those other poets who spoil paper instead of dinners—got into a passion. His language was declared by the solemn English butler to be "that awful," that he for one was not going to put up with it. He had lived with Lord this and the Duke of that before he came to Lord X., and no such language had ever been used to him. Lady X.'s own maid also wished to go. The house was draughty, she said, "and nobody knew where the draughts came from. They rushed past, and made a noise, ugh! such a noise. Somethink" was wrong, and "the sooner her ladyship could suit herself the better."

Now, even triply blessed creatures with titles depend a great deal on those whom the grand old Tory nobleman classed as "the lower orders." It is disagreeable to lose the friends of one's youth, but it can be borne, while to lose the cook who can prepare bouillabaisse or golacz with equal skill is a nuisance to be avoided if possible. A lady's-maid, too, who knows her business, is not easily replaced. So Lord and Lady X. agreed that the whole business was a bore of the first magnitude, and then, like sensible people, ate their dinner, went into society afterwards, and forgot

their troubles altogether. Next morning Lord X. went to shoot wildfowl on the Danube, and remained absent for several days.

When he returned to the city and his house he was horror-struck at the change in his wife, who seemed thin, and pale, and also strangely hysterical. The cook was, happily, still faithful, but several of the servants, including all the foreigners and the lady's-maid, had gone, the latter declaring that, much as she was "beholden to my lady," she would sacrifice her wages rather than sleep another night in the K— Palace.

Lady X. was naturally in dismay at this domestic revolution. But this was not all. She herself was evidently greatly terrified. Being a highly cultivated and very sensible as well as beautiful woman, she had tried to stamp out the impression of something weird and uncanny in the palace, but had obviously failed in the attempt. The vast and luxuriously-furnished bedchamber had proved uninhabitable, and she had taken refuge in a smaller room, but not before being frightened almost to death. What had she seen? Nothing whatever—absolutely nothing! But no sooner had midnight tolled from the cathedral spire than a rush of cold air came into the room; as if all the doors and windows were open. And that was not all. Nothing was to be seen; but there was something, a very small thing, yet distinct enough to be heard. It was the flapping of wings. On the night following Lord X.'s departure, his wife had been awakened by a sudden chill, and turning up the lamp, got out of bed and examined the doors and windows. All were secure; but still there was a palpable disturbance in the atmosphere. And there was, at intervals, a slight sound as of the flapping of wings. Once it seemed to Lady X. that some flying creature, bird or bat, passed close to her cheek. The sound was distinct, and the strokes of the air as the thing flew past were distinctly perceptible. Then there was more fluttering, until it seemed that the flying thing settled on the canopy of the great state bed. And then the air became still. Lady X., thinking it not impossible that bats might have made a lodgment in the long uninhabited palace, went to sleep, and forgot the matter till she was aroused again by a sudden chill, again accompanied by the flapping of wings.

This occurred in the early morning, and

she at once aroused the household, and a hunt for possible bats was instituted. It was fruitless, and when it was over, somebody recollected that it was winter time, and that bats hibernate instead of flying about in cold weather. By the time this observation was made, a general panic prevailed, and so strong was the contagion that Lady X. herself became nervous and low-spirited. She determined, however, not to be daunted by the bat, or whatever it was, and once more retired to rest in the state bedchamber. Falling into a sort of half-doze, she was awakened by the fluttering of some creature round her head. She could hear the strokes of the wing, and feel each wave of the agitated air as it struck upon her cheek. Greatly startled and terrified, she sprang to her feet and immediately experienced the sensation of all the doors and windows being open. She called assistance, and a rigid perquisition was instituted. A pigeon might have come down the chimney, but the pigeon would remain, and again, the chances of two pigeons going down the same chimney two nights running seemed very small. Moreover, the rushing of wings had been heard and felt in sundry passages and corridors, and the servants had been terribly frightened.

Lord X., who like his cook had seen and heard nothing, thought the whole business hysterical folly, but he left the K— Palace, nevertheless, at once, and it could probably be rented now at a very moderate price. Perhaps even a premium would be offered to anybody who would undertake to live down the ghost.

For, as Lord X. afterwards found out, the phantom bat is a genuine family ghost. It would seem that of the princely race who once inhabited the palace, and whose name it bears, there was one lady notorious for errors, if not for crimes. As the story goes, her great desire was for a child, an heir to the coronet, and on one occasion she uttered this wish in reckless language accompanied by some horrible imprecation. Her progeny proved to be a monster of vampire form with great wings. No sooner did the unhappy mother see the dreadful creature, than she shrieked "Kill it! kill it! kill it!" And it was destroyed, but the palace has never since been habitable.

I cannot guarantee the truth of this part of the story. The supposed events happened a long way off and a long time

ago. But the narrative of Lord and Lady X.'s experience is absolutely true, and can be vouched for by many "persons of quality."

ONE CHRISTMAS NIGHT.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

TREGANNION in Cornwall is not to be found upon any map; but Tregannion, some eighty years ago, was a place of no small importance to a certain section of the community. When the profession of smuggler was one of some dignity, and was surrounded by a halo of romance, Tregannion was as flourishing a little collection of cottages as there was on the south coast. The whole place consisted of but some score cottages clustered round a toy church, and wedged in between two rugged masses of cliff. A single street, a solitary public-house, and one little quay sufficed for the wants of the population, which, all told, might perhaps, in the prosperous days of yore, amount to half a hundred souls.

News and information travelled but slowly to the remoter corners of our island at the beginning of the present century, so that Tregannion was suffered to flourish in its own way for some time before the Commissioners of Excise felt it absolutely necessary to send an active officer there for the protection of their interests. Tregannion resented this interference, and the luckless officer—one Lieutenant Porter of His Majesty's Navy—was murdered. So, when Lieutenant Charlwood, his successor, arrived, with the fullest powers to stamp out smuggling and to bring the murderers to justice, he found his post no sinecure. Tregannion, as it knew but little of the outside world, cared but little about it. So long as Tregannion luggers made good runs, and so long as Tregannion purses could jingle ill-gotten pieces, revolutions, earthquakes, pestilences, or famines might occur in every other shire in the land without awakening a particle of alarm or sympathy in the bosoms of the inhabitants of Tregannion. So Lieutenant Charlwood with a score of picked men occupied a range of white huts on one of the cliffs overlooking the innocent little village and harbour.

Had it not been for the arduous and exciting nature of the service upon which he was employed, Charlwood would have found existence at Tregannion monotonous enough. There were but four persons with whom he could associate. These were the parson, the Reverend Mr. Carey; the local medical

man, Dr. Windle; and an old Dutchman, one Cornelius Van der Meulen, who lived with his daughter in a great solitary white house situated upon the same cliff as the preventive station.

Mr. Carey and Dr. Windle were all very well. They had been gentlemen once no doubt, but long association with the rough spirits of Tregannion, and long absence from the civilised world, had rendered them little superior in manner and speech to the semi-nautical louts, amongst whom the one occasionally preached and the other dispensed medicines.

But with the old Dutchman the lieutenant struck up a fast friendship, and with Dolly Van der Meulen he almost became intimate. No one knew whence old Van der Meulen had come. He had lived at the Cliff House for the past quarter of a century, but rarely went even into the village. He seemed to have means, for the house—at least that part of it which was occupied—was well, and even luxuriously furnished, and he had no visible occupation. Charlwood's intimacy with Dolly arose in the first instance from compassion—compassion for a pretty, lively girl condemned to spend a lonely existence in a dismal old house with an eccentric old man. From compassion to love is but a short step, and Charlwood had not been six weeks at the station before he found himself head over ears in love with Dolly Van der Meulen. She was just the sort of girl, he said, he had always dreamed of for a wife. Thoroughly simple and homely in her tastes, she had the ease and grace of manner which, as a rule, sit naturally only upon women of the world. But what intensified his passion was to see that his love was returned. Dolly had never associated with men, and the appearance of a handsome young officer upon the limited stage of her life was to her a sort of vision. Perhaps she, in her turn, compassionated him upon being cast away in such a desolate, uncouth corner of the world. At any rate they met often, and walked together often.

But there was a rival.

Amongst the loungers at The Brig in Tregannion, was a long slouching fellow named Dan Pearce. To look at he was a lubber, to talk to he seemed half-witted, but Charlwood soon found out that, behind the low retreating forehead and the heavy square chin of Dan Pearce, there was as crafty and keen an intelligence as any in the place. Dan Pearce was con-

stantly at the Cliff House, and when at the Cliff House was invariably in close proximity to Dolly, ogling her with his great fish-like eyes, stammering out uncouth compliments in the broadest of dialects, and hanging about her like a great clumsy lap-dog. Dolly snubbed him when her father was away, but in his presence treated her swain, if not with cordiality, at least with toleration. Charlwood puzzled his brains to find out how so incongruous a being could have obtained a footing in the Cliff House, but could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion. To cheer the solitude of his long evenings, the lieutenant often asked the parson, or the doctor, or old Van der Meulen to dine with him, and upon these occasions would ask them about Dan Pearce, but was never able to get any direct information about him.

Meanwhile he had been so active and assiduous that the contraband trade of Tregannion dwindled to nothing—but, of course, though this was gratifying to his self-esteem, it brought him and his men into very bad odour. On more than one occasion individual preventive men were very roughly handled on the quay of Tregannion, and he himself was the recipient of many an ill-spelt, ill-written epistle, threatening him with death. But he treated the feeling with contempt—only one thing annoyed him, and that was that he had not received a single reply to his very satisfactory despatches to Plymouth, the local head-centre of the coastguard.

"Hang it!" he would say, "many a man in the service has been promoted and even decorated for doing less than I have. I'm condemned to pass the best years of my life in this hole, as a sort of human rat-catcher, when I might be tackling the French, and I don't even get a compliment, much less a step or an increase of pay."

As a rule he sent his despatches to Fowey—the nearest post town, some twelve miles away, under the care of a boy who was employed in the garden of the Cliff House. It suddenly occurred to the lieutenant that this boy might not be entirely trustworthy, so one evening he posted himself behind a clump of trees bordering the road by which the boy must pass, some five or six miles on the way. He waited for three or four hours, but the boy did not appear at all. Luckily the despatches were dummies. Here was the solution of the question of replies to his budgets; now he had to discover the delinquent. So one night, instead of trusting the bag to the boy, he took it

himself. He started at the same hour that the boy usually did, and even, through Dolly, borrowed the old Dutchman's pony. The night was very dark, and the ruse was successful. Not more than half a mile on the road, a figure with a lantern sprang out, crying, "Why the devil are you going so fast to-night, boy? Pull up!"

The lieutenant made himself as small as possible behind the pony's head, allowed the speaker to approach him, and suddenly seized him by the collar. It was Dan Pearce. When Pearce saw how he had been deceived, with a terrible oath he shook himself clear and vanished in the darkness.

"There'll be trouble with that youth, I can see," said the lieutenant to himself as he rode back. For the future he sent his despatches by one of his men, and consequently received from time to time very flattering notices of his services from the powers at Plymouth. Still he was uneasy in his mind. Apparently nothing could be more absolute than the check given to the smuggling trade at Tregannion; scarcely a boat put to sea, the quay was always deserted, and The Brig always full. He had been at the station now nearly three months, and only two runs had been attempted. But there were indications, familiar only to the practised eye, that behind the scenes something was going on. One hazy morning a large schooner was observed off Quelley Point; then the fog hid her from view, and when it finally dissipated, there was no schooner to be seen. A coast-guard outpost met Dan Pearce one dark night riding furiously along the Fowey Road; upon another occasion he was observed on the beach at Quelley Bay talking earnestly to the doctor; for several Sundays in succession the parson held no service in the little church; several strangers had arrived in Tregannion, and meetings with closed doors were held at The Brig; there was a great deal of earnest conversation going on between knots of men—knots which dispersed at the approach of a preventive man—altogether, Charlwood deemed it necessary to be on his guard and to trust nobody.

One evening old Van der Meulen came to see him. The old fellow affected a great liking for the young lieutenant and would spend hours yarning with him, smoking a pipe with a bowl like the hull of one of his native galliots, and drinking the strongest of schnapps.

"Vell, mine leutenant," he said as they drew their chairs round the fire—"vell—ant vot noosh have you of our friends the

runners? I tink you have frightened dem. In course I hears a great deal about dem."

"Yes," thought Charlwood, glancing keenly at the old man, "I expect you do."

Utterly unconcerned at the look which the lieutenant meant to be piercing, Van der Meulen went on: "But I must say dat I have never known dem so quiet as since you have been here——"

"You pay me a great compliment," said Charlwood, "but I tell you frankly, I don't think it's over yet. Now, for instance, I am sure you will pardon me if I say I cannot understand how you can admit such a man as Dan Pearce to such intimacy as you do. Of course it is no business of mine, but if you knew as much about him as I do——"

"Know as much about Dan as you do!" interrupted the old man somewhat pettishly. "Why, mine very goot friend, Dan Pearce has been friend of mine many years. I give to you dat he is of uncertain temper, but he is very goot man is Dan, very goot man. Besides, you know he is de fiancé of my daughter Dolly."

The lieutenant fairly jumped from his chair. "Engaged to Dolly!" he said. "No, Van der Meulen, you're joking with me. Is it really true?"

"Yaes," said the Dutchman without moving a muscle of his face, "dat is drue. Dan Pearce is engaged to my Dolly; and vat den?"

"Nothing, nothing," replied Charlwood, meaning of course not only something, but a great deal.

Then the conversation changed, and the pair sat until it was time to visit the posts. So Charlwood left the Dutchman at the path leading to the Cliff House, and pursued his way with the uneasy feeling that there was a mystery somewhere.

Charlwood received the answer "All's well" at each post, and returned to his hut. He had not been in more than five minutes, before he heard a tap at the door. Jumping up, pistol in hand, he opened it. John Logsdail, his chief petty officer, stood there.

"Well, Logsdail," said the lieutenant, "what is it?"

"Well, sir," said the tar with a salute, "I think it is right to tell you that old mounseer over there at the Cliff House has just drove off on the road to Fowey in a cart with two other chaps."

"That's a queer thing," said Charlwood, "why he only left me half an hour back. Could you make out who were his companions?"

"Not 'xactly, sir," said Logsdail, "but

one looked like that 'ere Dan Pearce, and t'other weren't unlike the doctor."

"All right" said the lieutenant, feeling that all was wrong, "keep a good look-out on the house."

The man saluted and went. Next morning the lieutenant was out early, and bent his steps towards the Cliff House. At a distance he could see Dolly in the garden, and he felt his heart beat hard as he approached her. Never had she seemed so bewitching, as she stood there with her beautiful brown hair clustering under a garden hat, and her dress tucked up so as to display the tightest of red-girt ancles in the most coquettish of shoes. She greeted him with an unusually cordial smile, and told him that she was alone at home.

"Then I may come in," said Charlwood.

"Well," she said, "father's very particular, but he's away at Fowey on business—he has a lot of business, you know; I don't know what it is, but it often keeps him away at night, and brings him in contact with a lot of funny people. So come in."

The lieutenant vaulted over the low garden wall, and stood by her side. They talked for a long time about a variety of matters, before Charlwood could bring himself to broach the subject uppermost in his mind. At length he took one of her hands in each of his, and said:

"Dolly, I've heard very bad news of you. You know that I love you, truly, honestly, and honourably, and you have told me that you love me."

"And so I do," said Dolly, looking into his face with her bright eyes. "Who has told you anything bad of me?"

"Your father told me last night," answered the lieutenant, "that you were engaged to Dan Pearce."

"That I am engaged to Dan Pearce!" repeated Dolly. "Why, my dearest one, do you think I would see you and talk to you and tell you my heart as I have done so often, and all the time be doing the same to another man? And he, of all men! Surely you don't believe it?"

"No, I don't," said Charlwood, "but your father told me so distinctly, and I have seen Pearce so often here, that I made up my mind to see you and learn the truth at your own lips."

"Well then," said Dolly, "don't believe a word about it. I am mistress of my own heart, and no one has a right to give it away, just as they would give a flower or a glass of drink."

"No, my dear Dolly," answered the lieutenant, "but people have a right to steal your heart if they can."

"No, people have no such right," said Dolly with a coquettish toss of the head, "if I like to give it away, why——" Here she paused and became deeply interested in a knot of ribbon.

"Well?" said Charlwood.

"Why—well and good," answered Dolly, "I can do so—perhaps I have done so."

This was meant cruelly, but the young officer did not take it in that sense.

"To me," he said, "haven't you, Dolly? Say so. You've given it to me."

And as she murmured "Yes," he threw his arms round her, and without doubt would have kissed her, if a harsh voice had not broken in:

"Ullo! Ullo! Mine Gott and tunders! Dis is a pretty sight—very near kissing I tink dat time, only I came in and spoil de fun. I say, lewtenant, you know what I told you?"

And the old man drew Dolly's arm into his, and went into the house, leaving Charlwood standing in the garden, astonished and rather shame-faced.

Weeks passed, and yet nothing happened. Dan Pearce still hovered about the Cliff House, and once or twice endeavoured to make acquaintance with the preventive men. The strictest watch was kept day and night upon all roads and paths in the neighbourhood, yet nothing stirred. News reached Charlwood daily that, on account of the war, the contraband trade was more active than ever, yet nothing could be more peaceful and homely than the aspect of Tregannion. Van der Meulen came in as usual, talked, smoked, and drank, the parson and the doctor visited occasionally, but Dolly had never come near the hut since the affair in the garden. Yet the lieutenant was uneasy, not about the smuggling, for he trusted his men too well, and had made his dispositions too skilfully to be anxious on that account, but about the murder of poor Porter. The Government reward had been doubled; correspondence upon the subject was constantly passing between Plymouth or Fowey and Tregannion; the murderer was said to be in Cornwall, even in Tregannion, and the lieutenant was requested to spare no efforts in trying to discover the perpetrator or perpetrators of the crime. This was no easy job, for the folks in Tregannion stood aloof from the preventive men, and were bound by a sort of

Freemasonry to have no dealings whatever with them.

One evening the lieutenant was smoking a pipe by his solitary fireside, and was about to turn out for a round of inspection, when he heard a very gentle tap at the door. He opened it, and to his astonishment saw Dan Pearce.

"What on earth do you want?" asked Charlwood.

"Important business for you and me, sir," answered Pearce.

"Important business?" said Charlwood. "Why, what sort of important business can you have with me? Now look here, I'm up to most dodges, although I daresay you think I am not. I'm armed. Just throw up your hands."

Charlwood covered him with his pistol as he spoke, and Pearce submissively threw up his arms. Charlwood felt him over, and made certain that he had no knife or pistol about him.

"Now then," he said, "your business. Quick, for I have mine to attend to also."

"Nobody can hear us?" asked Pearce.

"Not a soul," answered the lieutenant.

"Up to now," said Pearce, "you've looked upon me as your enemy. I'm now going to be your friend. You love Dolly Van der Meulen."

"Well, what is that to you if I do?" asked the lieutenant impatiently.

"Well, this is what it is to you. She is promised to me by her father, in return for a signal service I have done him. You cannot prevent our marrying."

"Oh yes, I can," said Charlwood.

"No, you can't," pursued Pearce. "At a word from Van der Meulen, Mr. Carey will marry us on any day at any moment."

"A nice crew you are here," remarked the lieutenant, "all in the same boat."

"Yes," replied Pearce, "we're all tarred pretty well with the same brush. Anyhow, I will give her up to you, and not only that, I will deliver up the murderer of Lieutenant Porter, if you will undertake to pay me the Government reward of five hundred pounds."

Charlwood was astonished. "What guarantee have I that the man you deliver up is the real murderer?" he asked.

"You will see," answered Pearce. "I am the only man in Tregannion who saw the murder committed. Look here, do you know this?"

And he took a letter from his pocket which he handed to Charlwood. It was

one which he himself had written to his old shipmate shortly before the tragedy.

"Furthermore, I have a document at home," continued Pearce, "binding me to eternal secrecy at a price, in the writing of the murderer."

The lieutenant strode up and down the room. At length he sat down, and began to write. "The bearer of the present, Daniel Pearce——"

As he finished the second name, a bullet crashed through the window, and Dan Pearce fell pierced to the heart. Before the lieutenant had time to recover from the sudden shock, another flew past his head and buried itself in the wall. He ran to the door, and burst it open. Two or three preventive men, alarmed by the sound of firing, came hurrying up. All else was dark and silent as the grave.

CHAPTER II.

It was never known who fired the shot that killed Dan Pearce, but the lieutenant naturally guessed that the man who fired it was the murderer of Porter. Old Van der Meulen came in the next morning, apparently unconscious of what had taken place, and expressed great surprise and horror when he was told of it.

"Vell," he said, "dey are a rough lot here, and I have seen enough of dem to know dat dey tink no more of killing a man than of drinking a cup of spirits."

"The man who did it," said Charlwood, looking the old man full in the face, "knows something about poor Porter, and if I stay here twenty years I'll find it out."

The Dutchman puffed a great cloud of smoke out and said, "Dat you never will."

Christmas approached, and nothing happened to break the monotony of life on Tregannion Cliffs. The lieutenant thought of the jovial party assembled in the old family hall far away in Kent, but however much he longed to be with them, his sense of duty was too strong to allow him to apply even for a few days' leave of absence.

"At any rate," he thought, "I'll have a little celebration here on my own account." So he sent notes to the parson, the doctor, and old Van der Meulen, requesting their company to dinner on Christmas Day. Of course all three accepted cordially, and what gave him the greatest pleasure was that the old Dutchman actually asked to be allowed to bring Dolly.

Since the death of Pearce, the lieutenant had seen much more of his sweetheart, and

the old Dutchman, far from discouraging the meeting of the lovers, seemed anxious that they should be together as much as possible. So the lieutenant, intending to be politic as well as hospitable, resolved to ask the old man formally for the hand of his daughter after the Christmas dinner.

About a week before Christmas, Logsdail the boatswain came into the lieutenant's quarters with a serious face.

"Well, Logsdail, what is it?" asked the lieutenant.

"Well, sir," said the man, "we've been keepin' a sharp look-out on the Cliff House as you ordered, and we aint se'ed nothing, till last night. I was asleep in my bunk about a quarter afore twelve, when Tom Hoadley, what I'd put on watch, wakes me up and tells me there's something a goin' on at the Cliff House. So I goes out. All was dark, so dark you couldn't hardly see your hand. All of a sudden we sees a light in one of the windows of the Cliff House, which is very unusual at that time o'night. Then we gets nearer and we sees the old mounseer go out with a lantern in his hand. We follows him, keeping well behind the bushes, as far as Quelley Bay. There he meets other men with lanterns, and they all keep talkin' together about half an hour. Then mounseer goes back to the Cliff House, and a man rides off on the Fowey Road. Then all was dark again, and nothing more was to be seen."

"Very well, Logsdail," said the lieutenant, "post off to Fowey. No, go by sea. Take the cutter, and tell the lieutenant in command with my compliments to send twenty men—a few every day—by Christmas Day. If anything's to be done, they'll do it then. All Tregannion knows about my dinner, and they think they'll catch us napping."

Christmas Day came in a violent snow-storm. The line between sea and sky was barely distinguishable, but the roar of the breakers upon the rocks below was audible above the sweep of the storm. The wild barren country looked doubly weird in its white shroud, and the only consolation that the poor blue-jackets on guard had, was that there would be a good dinner at mid-day and a chance of something even better before next dawn. The Fowey men had arrived as arranged, slouching in as rustics, or creeping along shore in fishing-boats. After having satisfied himself that everything was in readiness for immediate action, the lieutenant set about decorating his hut as best he could. With half-a-dozen

signal flags and some evergreens, with the aid of a couple of nimble-fingered blue-jackets, he made the little plain whitewashed room look quite bright and cheerful. After the mid-day meal, he arranged his liquor, unpacked a welcome hamper from home, started Jim the cook at his work, and by six o'clock was in full uniform, awaiting the arrival of his guests.

He had not long to wait, for as the clock struck the hour, the Rev. Mr. Carey and Dr. Windle arrived. From a slight incoherency in their speech, and a more than slight aroma of alcohol which they introduced with them, the lieutenant divined that they had been somewhat anticipating the festivities of the evening by potations on a private scale.

"What a night for a run!" said the parson.

"Aye," remarked the doctor, "I've known runs on worse nights than this. D'ye call to mind when Porter——"

Here he was interrupted by a violent kick from the parson, which did not pass unnoticed by Charlwood. Old Van der Meulen and his daughter were not long after in arriving. The old man was in excellent spirits, and shook hands with the doctor and the parson as if he had not seen them for years. Dolly was beautiful. Never had the lieutenant been so fascinated with her; the keen air had imparted a bright fresh colour to her cheeks, and she was becomingly, and for Tregannion, luxuriously dressed. Charlwood merely pressed her hand, but old Van der Meulen sung out, "Salute her, man, salute her! Dip your colours; I'll warrant that although you're a king's ship and she's a stranger, she'll hoist hers." So he kissed Dolly, bashfully as if it was for the first time, and Dolly hoisted her bright colours accordingly.

Two brawny tars brought in the dinner. The little room soon rang with jest and laughter. The parson's puns were outrageous, the doctor's yarns of old days side-splitting; old Van der Meulen retailed some of the choicest of his varied experiences, whilst Dolly laughed, and blushed, and seemed thoroughly to enjoy herself. When the plum pudding had disappeared, the table was cleared, clean glasses and pipes produced, and the chairs drawn round the fire.

"Excoose me one moment," said the old Dutchman before he sat down, and he went out, presently returning with two little casks under his arms. "Now, my vary good leutenant, I dake the liberty to offer you a

present. This is genuine right Hollands—schnapps of de first quality. You must not ask if it has paid duty. I can't get any more, much tanks to you and your fine fellows, but dat is no reason why you should not try it."

So one of the casks was broached, and glasses filled. The lieutenant rose.

"Before you drink, Miss Van der Meulen and gentlemen, I will ask you to join me in one toast. I'm not going to make a speech, but I'll simply ask you to drink, 'The King, and God bless him.'"

This was drunk with much enthusiasm, the parson and doctor in particular cheering till the tears ran down their cheeks. Even Dolly drank her glass of claret without leaving a dreg, a proceeding which made her cough and caused much merriment. Then the Dutchman gave a vigorous sea-song and chorus which he had picked up in the Southern Seas, which was none the less effective for being delivered in broken English. Then the Rev. Mr. Carey made a long speech about the fair sex, and asked the gentlemen to drink "Miss Dolly Van der Meulen."

"And her husband that is to be, whoever he is," added the old Dutchman, a speech which made Dolly and Charlwood look silly and turn red, and caused a hearty burst of enthusiasm. Then the lieutenant gave an old Kentish plough song, and the doctor proposed the lieutenant's health. So the fun went on till the clock boomed twelve, when the doctor and the clergyman, after having found their legs with much difficulty, declared that it was time to go. The lieutenant, observing that they might mistake the path over the cliff edge for the right one, offered them an escort, but they sturdily refused, so, with much handshaking and renewal of good wishes, they went out into the night.

So Dolly, the lieutenant, and the old Dutchman were left together. The first cask had been emptied—principally by the two departed guests—and Van der Meulen broached the second, saying:

"Now, mine lewtenant, de oder cask was good, but I tink you will find this better. I would not open it before those two barrels of men, for they had drunk just enough not to know good drink from bad. It is vat you call putting pearls before pigs to put good Neerwinden Schnapps before dem." And he filled the lieutenant's glass to the brim. "Take it off," said the old man, "it is not strong, although it is so good."

Charlwood declined, but took a good sip.

He had scarcely put the glass down before the room swam before his eyes, the figures of Dolly and her father seemed to reel like two indistinct dark masses of cloud; he just saw the old Dutchman standing up looking at him with a diabolical scowl, he heard the door burst open, a confused sound of shouts and musketry, a scream from Dolly—and he fell senseless on the floor.

When he recovered his senses he was in a strange room, and Dolly was bending over him. He sat up and asked: "What is it, Dolly, my darling? Where am I? Where are Carey, and the doctor, and your father?"

"Hush, my dearest," said Dolly. "You must not talk, we've had a fearful night."

But with an effort the lieutenant rose, and insisted upon going out. Such a scene met his gaze when he got out of the door as he had never witnessed before, although he had seen some service. He was in the entrance hall of old Van der Meulen's house. In one corner lay a body covered with a tarpaulin. The lieutenant raised it and he beheld old Van der Meulen, with the same expression on his face as when he last saw him indistinctly in his own room. Every article of furniture was broken; the walls were splashed with blood and indented with the marks of bullets; the sturdy flooring was torn up, and strewn with muskets, cutlasses, and shreds of clothing.

"Go back to your room, my Dolly," said Charlwood, "this is no sight for a woman. I am all right now."

So Dolly retired, and the lieutenant went out. In the garden lay in a row half-a-dozen corpses; the snow was torn up and scattered in all directions, even the bushes were broken. Logsdail met him.

"We thought you was dead, sir," he said; "the men will be mad with joy when they know you're all right."

"Tell me all about it, Logsdail," said Charlwood.

"Well, sir," said the boatswain, "afore we had time to alarm you, the beggars had started their business. Old mounseer there played a werry deep game, leastways as regards you, but we weren't to be took in. There must have been a hundred of 'em. They landed in the snowstorm, from that schooner you remember we sighted t'other day. They ran about fifty barrels up to the house, afore we heerd 'em. They did fight like reg'lar devils, sir. I should think we was at it for a couple of hours, all the way up from Quelley Bay to the house, sir. P'raps you'd like to see who we nabbed, sir, as pris'ners. This way, sir."

Charlwood followed Logsdail to the stable, and there he saw the Rev. Mr. Carey and Dr. Windle, tied up, under the guard of a blue-jacket. They were clad in sea-coats and wore big boots, and were as unlike orthodox members of learned professions as could be imagined.

"Them two, sir," said Logsdail, "fought as well as any of 'em. If that 'un," pointing to the parson, "uses his tongue as well as he does a cutlass, he'll do a lot of good at Botany Bay."

"How many men have we lost?" asked the lieutenant.

"Half-a-dozen killed outright, sir," answered Logsdail, "and a round dozen wounded. Poor Tom Hoadley got a bullet in the mouth, and there aint one of us but has got a mark or two—some of 'em pretty ugly ones."

"And you've let none of the runners escape?" asked Charlwood.

"Not one, sir," answered Logsdail; "half-a-dozen of 'em tumbled over the cliff, another half-dozen tried to get off in their boat, but we sank her before she got ten yards from the shore. The old man and his daughter carried you to the house; he was so savage with her for screaming that we thought he'd have killed her. Then he stood at the front door blazing away with his pistols, until some one fetched him a cut on the head and someone else put a bullet into him, and between the two he fell, swearing away like a good 'un in his own furrin lingo."

"Why did they carry me away?" asked Charlwood.

"Lor, sir," answered the boatswain, "your lamp was bowled over, and the whole place burnt to nothing in less than ten minutes arter you was took ill. He wanted to leave you, but miss, she said as how she'd shoot him if he did, and it's my mind that she'd have done it, for she caught hold of one of your pistols, and looked like a young tigress, so said poor Tom Hoadley."

To cut a long story short, by the failure of this last desperate effort of the smugglers, a deathblow was dealt to the trade of Tregannion. The place in fact ceased to be inhabited; the landlord of The Brig took himself to a more lucrative sphere; the quay gradually rotted away; no fresh appointment was made to the cure of Tregannion, and in a few years all that was left was the preventive station on the cliff.

Dolly, by the death of her father, was left homeless and, with the exception of Lieutenant Charlwood, friendless. So of

course he obtained an early leave of absence, took her home with him, and the same Gazette which announced his captain's appointment, set forth that he had made her his wife. When he left the service in course of time, John Logsdail quitted also, and became butler to his old commander, and many scores of times had they to relate their respective adventures upon that Christmas night.

"OPEN SESAME."

CHAPTER II. THE COMMUNARD.

"It is not often we have the child to ourselves—eh, sister?" said M. Brunet as soon as Madame Souchet had gone, putting an arm round Marie's waist. "But she is quite grown up. We shall have to find her a husband before long."

"If it rested with you and me, Lucien," replied Madame Desmoulins gravely, "I am afraid we should be at a loss. Happily, Madame Souchet has charged herself with the future."

"Bah! Madame Souchet!" cried Brunet scornfully. "A fine one she to choose a husband!"

Madame Desmoulins shook her head disapprovingly at her brother and frowned.

"And I have got something to tell you," began Marie reluctantly. "I am to ask your permission, mamma—she bade me do it—to ask your permission— She has found somebody, she says, who wants to marry me. At least, he doesn't want to particularly, but his friends want him."

"Sapristi!" muttered Brunet. "She has stolen a march upon me."

"My dear," said Madame Desmoulins, taking Marie by the hand, "it is not for me to oppose anything that your benefactress may wish. But has he won your heart—this somebody?"

"Oh no!" cried Marie. "I have only seen him once or twice. He is fat, with little eyes, like a pig's, and seems to care for nobody but himself."

"I know him," cried Brunet. "A young doctor, Cavalier's nephew, Madame Souchet's great ally. I heard of him, the other day, refusing to visit a poor dying woman till he had his fee paid down into his hands."

"I won't hear any more," interrupted Madame Desmoulins. "It is not becoming in a girl to laugh at a man who may become her husband, and you ought to know better than to try to set her against him."

"But if I can find a better match—a good-looking young fellow who will soon

have his own business as a notary—a fine generous lad, devotedly fond of Marie—father rich, and family all that can be desired?"

"Oh, my uncle!" cried Marie, clasping her hands, and looking gratefully into his face; "all this is like a fairy tale!"

"It is that and nothing else," said Madame Desmoulins scornfully. "I know whom you mean—Charles, the banker's son. But reflect, Lucien; his father is the most grasping man in Canville, and Madame Souchet and he are deadly enemies. Can I give Marie a dot? Can you, Lucien?"

"Hum—perhaps; who knows?" said Brunet mysteriously. "I may have savings."

"You, Lucien?" cried his sister with a bitter incredulous smile. "You with savings, when a five-franc piece burns a hole in your pocket!"

"Or I may have received a legacy," continued Brunet. "But, however that may be, I have one piece of advice to give you: don't dispose of Marie's hand without consulting me. And, Marie, don't give way to despair. There is always your uncle thinking of your welfare, my child."

His voice trembling with emotion, his eyes suffused with moisture, gave these words of his peculiar emphasis.

Marie threw her arms about his neck and kissed him effusively. Her mother raised her eyebrows, and went on stitching.

Lucien darted out, using his handkerchief energetically.

"He has an excellent heart, that poor Lucien," said Madame Desmoulins after a long interval of silence; "but to trust to him is leaning upon a broken reed. What can he do for you, who has never been able to do anything for himself?"

"But, mamma, everyone thinks so highly of Uncle Lucien."

Madame Desmoulins shrugged her shoulders, as if with her all that did not go for much. Then, as it was growing dark and she could no longer see to work, she rose and went to the window.

All was now quiet in the place. The top of the tall mast, shorn of its gaudy trappings, shone like gold in the rays of the setting sun. A faint, but savoury smell was wafted over from the kitchen of the hotel, reminding her that everybody was feasting now and making merry with friends. The notables of the town were with the maire. The very poorest had some friend, not quite so poor, to give him hospitality; but she, deserted and neglected by all the world, might sup alone upon her hard-earned crust.

But no! she would not sup alone, after all, that night, she recalled with a bitter sigh. She, too, would have her guest—an exile, proscribed, and under the ban of the law, liable to be tracked and hunted down like a wolf, would come to-night and claim her hospitality. And, dangerous as it might be for her, she could not refuse it. Then she would hear the pitiful story of her husband's death. This young fellow, a hardened sailor, active and full of life, had somehow survived. But her husband—poor Ernest!—had surely succumbed. Still, certainty would be something. Perhaps, knowing that, life might still have something in store for her.

"Mother, you don't seem a bit glad to have me," cried Marie, interrupting her mother's reflections by throwing her arms about her; "and I have been looking forward to being with you and talking over old times."

"Yes, I am glad to have you, child," answered the mother wearily, "if not to talk about old times. But I am in some perplexity. I expect a visitor, somebody who knew your father, and I think he brings me news of his last days."

"Ah, poor papa!" cried Marie, her eyes suffused with tears. "I am always thinking about him. I know that people call him wicked. I have heard nothing else since I came to Madame Souchet's. It was the same song at the convent—everywhere. But I have not quite believed it. I remember too well. Oh, mother, was he not kind and good?"

Madame Desmoulins hesitated how to reply. For Marie's own sake she should not be encouraged to dwell upon these memories. The girl inherited a good deal of her father's temperament. It only needed a spark to fire this ardent nature.

"And do you know," Marie went on, an angry glow coming into her dark eyes, "what has set me so much against this marriage they propose for me? Aunt Sophie was talking with M. Cavalier about the dowry, and he said with a vile little laugh: 'With a convict in the family, you must be liberal.'"

"Well," cried the mother, "and what else do you expect them to say? These are the people you have to live with. Is it not better than beggary and exile?"

Marie was silent and seemed not too certain on which side lay the balance of advantages. Then suddenly, with a change of mood:

"Yes, I have it now. I am sure I know

who is coming. It is the sailor who climbed the mast so gallantly. I was sure I remembered the face. Mamma, you will let me see him too? You will let me hear all about my poor father?"

"No, no!" cried the mother. "It must not be. There would be terrible danger."

At this moment came a soft, but decisive and urgent knock at the door.

"It is he, I am sure of it," whispered Madame Desmoulins to her daughter. "Take the lamp and your work, and go into my bedroom. No, I will not permit you to see him!"

Marie looked rebellious but still obeyed, and, gathering her belongings together, left the room. Madame Desmoulins went to the door and opened.

"You recognise me, madame," said a manly pleasant voice as Madame Desmoulins, a candle in her hand, eagerly scanned the features of her visitor, a man in the prime of life, but with features lined and worn. He was dressed in the blue serge of a seaman, but had a certain air of distinction about him.

"Yes, I recognise you, monsieur," said Madame Desmoulins with a suppressed sigh. Something in the coldness of her tone seemed to disappoint and wound her visitor, who must have expected a more cordial reception.

"Is my visit unwelcome, madame?" he asked with some pride.

"No, no; enter, monsieur, and be welcome," cried Madame Desmoulins. Then as she closed the door upon him: "You must not be offended. I recognise you perfectly; you are M. Victor Delisle, who so often visited us in Paris. But it is necessary to be cautious, monsieur," all this in a low voice, "we have neighbours who, perhaps, are not over friendly," with a suspicious glance around.

"I understand," said Delisle, nodding. "You saw me just now. I was reduced to my last sou; but now I am rich," exhibiting his prize, "and at the expense of the municipality of Canville." Delisle laughed with full enjoyment of the situation.

"Ah, you can laugh, monsieur," said Madame Desmoulins, almost reproachfully.

"Laugh? Yes," cried Victor; his rich mellow voice could not long be kept subdued; "we shall laugh often enough together in the future. And with an empty stomach one laughs at a little."

"You are hungry, perhaps, monsieur?" said Madame Desmoulins, rousing herself to a perception of her duties as hostess.

"Madame, I am famishing," said the sailor, smiling pleasantly.

"Then you must eat before talking, and alas! the resources of my kitchen are scanty."

"Madame, I have discovered what Communism means: it is to share your crust with some poor devil while other people eat the meat."

"Hush!" again cried Madame Desmoulins in a warning tone, as she placed a loaf and a jug of thin cider on the table.

Delisle stretched forth hungrily towards the provisions. Then as a sudden thought struck him, he paused and looked around.

"And la petite!" he cried in a loud voice.

"How, la petite?" demanded Madame Desmoulins, who spread herself out between her visitor and the door of the adjoining chamber, like a hen defending her chick.

"Why, the little Marie—where is she? Does she remember me, the little puss?"

Madame Desmoulins again by a gesture implored him to moderate his voice.

"Ah, she sleeps, perhaps?" said Delisle in a tone of extreme tenderness. "You have put her to bed in good time. Many a night under the tropics we have lain awake, her father and I, and talked of la petite. 'She sleeps now,' her father would say; 'perhaps, if I try hard, I can make her dream of me.' He was full of fancies, you know, the poor man."

Madame Desmoulins sighed. Perhaps it would have pleased her better, have softened her more, to hear that her husband had been thinking of her. But Delisle had no afterthought in what he said.

"That little child, madame," he went on, "has been a kind of guardian angel to me all through my troubles. Perhaps it was because he thought so much of her that I took to thinking about her. Poor man, it was hard to see him, when he was down with the fever for the last time, eyes half closed, pulse almost gone, you could hardly tell he breathed. Well, I bent over him, fancying he was gone, and then he pressed my hand, his lips moved. I could not make out what he said, it was a message for somebody, no doubt, and I just caught the words, 'La petite.'"

The speaker started, and looked suspiciously round as a sound struck his ear. It was a low sob. Next moment the door of the chamber opened, and the sailor sprang to his feet. But his limbs relaxed, and a pleasant smile came over his face as he saw that the intruder was a young girl.

"Mother!" cried Marie between her

sobs, "I could not help hearing it was about papa—about his death."

"Nom de Dieu, death!" cried the sailor joyously; "of what have you been thinking? He is alive—in London, and has sent me to bring you to him, both of you. But," he cried, holding Marie at arm's length, "this la petite! No, no!"

"It is my daughter," interposed Madame Desmoulin coldly. "You understand, in our distress, relations have taken care of her. She has formed ties. She is on the point of being married."

Delisle turned away with a groan of disappointment.

"Then it isn't la petite," he said sadly. "I awake and it is but a dream. The world has gone on living, and we have been dead."

"But, monsieur," interposed Marie tremulously, "I am still the same; just myself and nobody else, and I think I remember you."

"Yes, there is just a look of la petite in the face," cried Delisle, examining the girl's face with a frank tenderness that brought a glow of colour to the cheeks.

"Monsieur," urged Madame Desmoulin earnestly, "all this is pleasant but perilous. Neighbours will listen, perhaps. Let us talk of other things. Marie, as you are here you shall sup with us, and then I must take you home. All the news about your father you shall hear at a future time. Eat, monsieur, for time presses."

"Ah," cried Marie joyously, after a glance at the frugal banquet. "Tenez! I had forgotten," and she ran to a basket hanging from a nail. "Madame Souchet made me bring a few things lest you might be unprepared."

There was half a cold fowl, some pâté de foie, a bottle of red wine, and a brioche of a warm orange colour.

"You are an enchantress, mademoiselle," cried Victor with an admiring glance at the young girl's animated face. Then he looked at Madame Desmoulin, who was sunk in a sombre reverie. And she had just heard news of her husband, and might have been expected to be full of joy and gratitude!

But Marie made up for her mother's coldness. It was a delight to her to provide for the wants of her new friend. She was too much excited to eat herself, and Madame Desmoulin only nibbled a crust of her own loaf. The sailor, however, did duty for them all. He laughed at his own gluttony. He exclaimed against

it, but hunger was too strong for politeness. He ate ravenously, wolfishly.

"Well, I am provisioned for another cruise," he exclaimed joyously, when everything was finished; "and for my next meal I have always a resource," taking out his watch and examining it with pride.

"Pardon me," began Madame Desmoulin; "you talked just now of taking me to join my husband." She carefully omitted all mention of her daughter. "Then I presume my husband has provided you with funds for travelling. The watch is very well for one, but it would hardly do for two."

"Parbleu!" cried the sailor joyously; "it is big enough. And we have travelled half round the world with less. Still, with ladies I admit—but do not be anxious, madame, all that has been provided for."

"Then I have only to pack my trunks; it will not take me long."

"And I, mamma?" cried Marie, with tears in her eyes. "Are you going to leave me behind? Am I not to see my father?"

"I should not like to meet him if I left you behind," said the sailor softly. "Madame, of course we shall take la petite!"

"How is it possible?" asked Madame Desmoulin. "Marie no longer belongs to us. Her marriage is arranged for—"

"But her father should have something to say about that."

"It is not my fault," rejoined Madame Desmoulin, "that she was resigned to the care of others."

"Nor his either," replied the sailor warmly. "Parbleu! one does not visit a penal settlement for the mere fun of the thing. Madame, your husband is a patriot, a hero, a martyr."

Madame Desmoulin nodded her head sadly as if she might have had something on her side to say, but did not think it worth while to say it.

"That would not be the opinion of the gendarmes, it's true," continued the sailor in a light mood. "Pouf! there was one down below who watched me as a cat might a mouse."

"Hush!" cried Madame Desmoulin, raising her hand in warning.

Certainly the tread of a heavy foot could be heard on the stairs, a solemn judicial kind of step, with something of a martial ring about it too. Then a vigorous knocking. "Open in the name of the law."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER XII. WHAT IS A RUPEE ?

"No ; nothing can go very wrong at an English country house," thought Doyle, as he watched the disappearance of the train which carried away his troublesome daughter. "I've done right by the girl. Whatever nonsense she learns there, they won't teach her that a dirty foreign fiddler who writes threatening letters is an eligible parti ; their slang is bad enough, but it's better than—well, than hers. Better have her a fine lady than let her make a fool of herself in her own way. And yet—I'm glad she spoke up for the fellow, cad and sneak as he must be. I wish she'd been a boy—I should have known what to do with him. But a daughter—you may teach her and train her, and think you know every thought in her head and every feeling in her heart ; and then, all at once, you find out that not only has she a secret, but that her very nature is the opposite pole of what you fancied ; that your training has been but a shower on a duck's back ; that so far from knowing every thought, you have never known one. I wonder if it's really true that women have souls ; or whether they've only got empty places stuffed up with the stray scraps of other people's, which they can't even digest properly. Going wrong for want of amusement, indeed ! Well, I suppose Mrs. Hassock knows her own sex ; and a fine sex it must be, that can't keep straight unless it's treated like a child. And I to saddle myself with a daughter, ready made, not even my own, whose nature I couldn't even fancy I knew ! I

wonder what insanity could have made me dream of doing such a thing. Well—I'm a free man again, for a little while, without so much as Mrs. Hassock to bother me. I can live my own life again, and do as I please, without having to spend morning, noon, and evening in trying to fathom that girl—and trying in vain."

So he thought, out of the depths of the profoundest inexperience ; and so, by way of a relief from the worries of the last few days, he welcomed liberty once more, and his return for awhile to the solitude which, till his rash adoption of Phoebe, had become the law of his being. He did not even go home to dine, but, out of a sense of duty to a holiday of recovered freedom, went off to Richmond, and feasted—all alone. He had no more than the healthy masculine turn for gourmandism, and certainly no preference for Richmond in winter over Harland Terrace, where he had his comforts round him ; but it seemed the right and natural thing for a man, whose woman-kind had given him a holiday. It was the sense of irresponsible liberty that he had planned to enjoy. But, so far from enjoying it, he was bound to confess that his first day of freedom turned out a failure ; and when, after a cold and dismal journey back, he reached the house which was now his own as much as solitude could make it, he felt, for the first time in his life, alone.

And, when he came down to breakfast next morning, at the usual hour, he had to own that he missed, most unreasonably missed, the girl who had become nothing but an unprofitable trouble to him, and from whom he had parted yesterday, as he had supposed, so gladly. It annoyed him to realise that it would have been a sort of pleasure, something more than a comfort,

to see her in her usual place behind the urn. What was there for him to miss in Phœbe? Not a pretty face to look at, because at breakfast-time he looked at little but the morning paper, and because a much prettier face would have been at least equally disregarded. Certainly not her conversation, because, in his company, want of conversation was one of the most pronounced characteristics of Phœbe. Not her brightness, for he had never found her bright; not her good-humour, because for the last week she had been playing an openly sullen part. It was her mere personal presence that he missed somehow, and for want of which the house felt cold and empty. He could never have dreamed of the possibility of such a thing. Had she been the simple-natured and pleasant companion, the approach to a real daughter, that he had once dreamed of making her, it would have been a different affair. But she had from the outset been a disappointment, and had of late been a fountain of daily anxiety and hourly trouble—and yet had she been an angel he could not have missed her more! The discovery troubled him. He could not help glancing now and then over the edge of his newspaper at her empty place, and once he passed his empty cup towards where her absence was, to be filled. He certainly lighted his cheroot at the breakfast-table—a luxury which he had given up out of respect for the atmosphere of a lady's parlour—but he withdrew after the second whiff to his own den. He had missed even her common good-morning. For the second time in his life he felt alone; and it was not because he was by himself—that was a matter of course—but because Phœbe was away for one day out of a life which had done perfectly well without her for something like half a century. It seemed incredible that such a girl should have stamped even a day of a man's life with the seal which is supposed to belong only to exceptionally strong natures, whose faults are missed more, and charm more, than the graces and virtues of weaker people are and can. "This won't do," thought Doyle. "I mustn't bother my head too much about the girl. I've done the best I can for her; and it's for her sake I put up with her and her vagaries—certainly not for my own." So he went out into the streets, which had no associations with Phœbe, at least so far as he was concerned. But he did not go again to Richmond. He spent his evening at home, and felt that the house without Phœbe—

dull, sullen, disappointing, perverse, altogether troublesome as she was—was an empty shell. And houses, as all the world knows, are but reflections of the lives that are lived in them.

"I must do something or other before bedtime," thought he. "Let me see—I'll write to Phœbe. I ought to tell her to enjoy herself and not hurry home. That would never do, with a fellow like that hanging round the street corners. I ought to tell her that—that—I don't miss her at all."

It is a pity that the condition of John Doyle's mind could not have been photographed, and sent by post to Sir Charles Bassett of Cautleigh Hall. For through and round the Hall, in the eyes of its owner, was stalking the ghost of Rayner Bassett; the ghost, not of a dead, but of a living man. His interview with Doyle had been very much the reverse of a relief to his mind. He had not failed to note how completely the latter had changed, in look, in bearing, in all essential things, from the Jack of ancient Bohemia; how he had assumed the dignified gentleman, as a prudent man will who intends presently to bid for county sympathies. There had been none of the genial readiness on Doyle's part due to the recognition of an old friend and comrade after a parting of many years, and more especially when there was no lack of such readiness on the other side. He had held off his old friend like an enemy, for no overt cause; yet, after refusing that friend a sight of his daughter, after refusing every offer of hospitality, he had, under the influence of some violently inconsistent afterthought, sent his daughter, alone, to Cautleigh Hall. Why—and to what did such things point and lead?

The points of the case, as they shaped themselves in Sir Charles Bassett's anxious, acute, and sensitively diplomatic mind were clearly these:

Rayner Bassett, notoriously a scamp, had gone under water to avoid transportation; that is to say, he had every imaginable reason for changing his name.

On the tested authority of the parish register of Helmsford, one John Doyle had, at a certain date, been married there to one Mary Cox, spinster.

The true name of this John Doyle who, on that date, married Mary Cox, spinster, at Helmsford, was Rayner Bassett. And Rayner Bassett is by no means a common

name—still less a name that two bearers of it would, at the same time, have reason to change. And, on the same alarmingly good evidence, one daughter was born to Mary Cox and Rayner Bassett otherwise John Doyle.

Then the cloud had gone over Rayner Bassett for good (as everybody held it) and all. But, at a completely consistent period, there emerged, from a cloud, though still living under one, a John Doyle, of unknown origin, but as notorious a black sheep as Rayner Bassett had been, with this difference—that the scamp had, by the natural law of development, become emphasised into blackguard. And yet into a blackguard with such relics of the educated gentleman as a man of gentle origin would inevitably retain.

Then John Doyle, or Rayner Bassett, also had disappeared—this time, not in Bohemia, but in India. And, as he had absolutely no expectation of becoming heir to the title and estates, and was absolutely cut off from his family, it was unlikely that he should, save by the merest accident, come to learn that they had fallen into the hands of one who had less right to them than he.

But—though still with a more than doubtful repute—he had come home. And, even as John Doyle, otherwise Rayner Bassett, was the father of one daughter, even so one daughter had come home from India with Rayner Bassett, otherwise John Doyle.

So much for the facts; and a sufficiently ugly story they made. But why did he not at once declare himself, and assert his unquestionable claim to his title and his land, and to all the arrears of income during his nephew's wrongful possession?

There could be only one possible reason—that his case was at present an imperfect one, from a legal point of view. And though Sir Charles Bassett was of course unable to guess the precise nature of its imperfection, it was easy enough to make a list that would include the weak point, whatever it might be. It might be some difficulty in proving his identity with Rayner Bassett in such a way as to avoid bringing to light his marriage under a false name, or his reasons for assuming the name of Doyle. Or it might be that he was waiting to assure himself that time had effectually disposed of evidence which might make his claim end in a conviction for forgery. Or he might as yet be uncertain whether his nephew might not, after

all, have taken the land under some settlement or will. Or he might be in a state of indecision, on other grounds besides these, whether his position was strong enough for a complete claim, or only for a compromise. Or, finally, it might be that his whole case had as yet taken no definite form—that he was nothing more than suspicious of his nephew's wrongful possession, and had everything to learn, in the hope that he might obtain everything; in the certainty of a blackguard that, though entitled to nothing, he might be bribed to keep the existence of such a Bassett a secret from the world. In either of these cases, there was ample reason for his sending a spy into the enemy's camp in the person of his daughter, whether she were an accomplice or merely a more or less innocent tool. She would learn how far Rayner Bassett's forgery continued to be a local tradition, and if any evidence thereof remained. She would learn without trouble, whether Sir Charles held under a will or as heir-at-law. She would learn the characters of the people with whom her father would have to deal. If merely her father's tool, she would drink evidence in with the air of Cautleigh; if his intelligent accomplice, she would find the place a teeming mine, while her position as an invited guest would place her presence beyond suspicion. Why else had she been sent there? Her very coming was a moral confirmation of all.

"And so he has fallen into his own pit," thought Sir Charles. "No—I won't bolster up his case by the addition of a single feather. This is a matter of justice; not of law. Not all the lawyers on earth shall persuade me that Sir Ralph Bassett should be robbed of his lands by a blackguard and a forger, who happens to have a base legal right on his side. When law works injustice, its reason fails. Let him try his worst, and let her come. If it's to be a war of wits, I'm neither too old, nor too young, to be a match for a girl."

So, from the moment of her arrival, he watched Phoebe closely, under the flattering pretence of paying exceptional attention and honour to the daughter of a dear and long-lost old friend. At first he found her shy—silent among women, monosyllabic with men, and evidently unused to the manners and customs of any sort of society. "She's nothing more than a tool," thought he after the first day. "Her letters home may be just what I please." But presently he became aware that, if wholly innocent

of her mission, her innocence was likely to prove more useful to her father than any amount of cunning. At the end of three days, her host's sharpest eye could not find a sign or slip in her to show that she had not lived, ever since she was born, in the circle to which she had been an utter stranger three days ago. "That girl's a born actress, if ever there was one," thought he at the end of the fourth day, with rather less confidence than before in the extent of the superiority of his wits to hers. "And she has a quick study—I wonder what her rôle has been before that of county lady? But don't overdo your part; you show more tact than is natural, mademoiselle. Girls who have lived out of the world till your age don't learn all its tricks in the twinkling of an eye."

So he watched Phœbe Doyle more closely still. But, though he watched patiently as well as keenly and minutely, he went unrewarded until, one day, the Mrs. Urquhart whom Sir Charles had proposed for Phœbe's chaperon during her journey down happened to ask:

"Sir Charles, what is a rupee? Exactly, I mean."

"I'm ashamed to say that I don't know," said he. "But Miss Doyle will know. Miss Doyle, what is a rupee?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said she. "But it seems to sound something like the name of a flower."

"I fancied it was money," said Mrs. Urquhart, without seeming surprised at Phœbe's answer. But Sir Charles, though he changed the topic at once, had made one discovery—that Miss Doyle's knowledge of India was not above the level of Mrs. Urquhart's own. From that moment he made a point of never mentioning India in her hearing again. No cross-examination was needed to convince him that a woman who has never heard of rupees is as likely to have lived in India for a single hour as in the moon for a hundred years.

But this was nothing to the discovery that he made after a few days more.

He was walking alone through the park one afternoon, not along the avenue between the house and the lodge gates, but along a branch path towards a distant postern, when he saw Stanislas, Ralph's new foreign valet, come out of a copse and proceed along the path some distance in front of him. Of course there was nothing in this, because Stanislas might very well have some errand for his master. But, on reaching a point in

the path from which the house was not visible, he saw the valet stop; and then, from a clump of trees on the other side, came a girl for whom Stanislas had evidently been waiting. Sir Charles could not doubt his own eyes. And his eyes told him that the girl was Phœbe Doyle.

Had the encounter been accidental, the lady guest would have received the manservant's salutation and passed on. But she did nothing of the kind. Sir Charles, stepping behind a transparent bush, saw no salutation on the valet's side, while Phœbe stopped and entered into earnest conversation. It was as clearly a rendezvous as anything could be. Sir Charles felt no compunction whatever about secretly witnessing a conversation of which he could not, fortunately or unfortunately, hear a word. On the contrary, he would, as the minister of right and justice, have willingly at the moment have become deaf with one ear on condition that he might hear at an unnatural distance with the other. Of course it was no common, or rather uncommon, intrigue between a lady, or one who passed for such, with a serving-man. He thought he knew Phœbe at least well enough to acquit her of anything of that kind. But that she had not met the fellow accidentally or without ample cause was clear. The conversation was long, and was remarkably animated on the valet's side. She, with her back towards Sir Charles, spoke earnestly. He, with his face in full view, clasped his hands, waved them, and laid them on his chest, and went through various other feats of pantomime. Finally she handed him what looked like a letter. And then they parted—Phœbe towards the house, Stanislas towards the postern. Sir Charles kept his hiding-place till she had passed him, and then, when she was out of sight, returned to the house by another way.

This did not look like the innocence of an unconscious tool—this looked like plotting, in some half intelligible way. Was Phœbe writing letters which she feared to entrust to the post-bag for fear lest her host should stoop—he, a Basset and a gentleman—to overhaul what his guests wrote to their families and friends? Was she, the spy-in-chief, employing the servants of the house as under-spies? What should she discover that required all this mystery? It ought to be something of dangerous importance indeed. He went into the library and sent for Ralph.

"Ralph," said he, "I want to know where you picked up that foreign fellow of

yours. I've been always meaning to ask you, and always forgetting. It came into my head just now, and so I sent for you for fear it should go out again."

"You mean Stanislas? Oh, I wanted a man of that sort—one that I can take abroad, without having to look after him. I don't care to have an Englishman. They're no use except to open doors, and let in the people one doesn't want to see. Stanislas seems a first-rate sort of a fellow—he's a Pole, but he knows French better than I do, and has been all over Europe, and seems able to turn his hand to most things. He was in the orchestra at a theatre before he came to me."

"At a theatre—eh? And why isn't he at a theatre now?"

"He got thrown out of his engagement from the house closing, so he tells me."

"And how did you hear of him?"

"Oh, from—from a theatrical friend of mine, who knew I wanted a sort of foreign valet, and happened to know that the man wanted a place of any kind."

"I don't want to pry into your private affairs, you know, but was this theatrical friend of yours monsieur, or madame, or mademoiselle? There was an ominous pause after your first 'from.'"

"Mademoiselle. But a very good girl."

"Of course. And she gave the man a character, I suppose? Honest—sober—"

"Oh, good enough—"

"That's all I wanted to know. You see I like to know, for the sake of the morals below stairs, who my household are. I'm quite content—a good enough man highly recommended by a very good girl. What do you think of Miss Doyle?"

"Miss Doyle? Isn't that for me to ask you?"

"Why so?"

"Because she seems a special favourite of yours. You've hardly given anybody else a chance of forming an opinion, you see."

"And you think it's hardly fair for a man of my venerable antiquity to take notice of the prettiest girl within reach of his eyes? Yes—and the nicest girl too, when you get to know her, and with plenty of nature, not spoiled by over-training. You see I like to know what I've got above stairs, as well as below. I never came across a girl of her age who was so little of a bore; she neither sings, nor plays, nor reads, nor writes, nor talks about the people who do—if she only knew how to ride, she'd be

within an inch of perfection. And I believe she could learn to ride in an hour. A man might make her anything he pleased Now don't look at me as if I were going to give you a step-mother. In the first place she wouldn't have me; and in the second place, I wouldn't have her. I only hope you'll give me a step-daughter half as worth having as Phoebe Doyle. There—I've let out my enthusiasm, which has been bottling itself up ever since she has been here. I am in love with her, in a paternal way. I was in hope you'd have sung her praises; but as you didn't, they had to be sung, all the same."

"That's what they call hedging," his reflections ran, as soon as he was alone again. "Whatever she is, the girl isn't a fool; she wouldn't say no to Ralph; and if the worst came to the worst, the worst would turn out to be second best if Ralph were husband of the heiress and father of her children. He's soft enough about women to fall in love with any girl he's thrown with, and to fall out again if I see any reason to change my mind—as Heaven grant I may. Ah, my good uncle, if you lose, I win; if you win, you'll have to win for me and mine. I wouldn't have missed seeing what I've seen to-day for a thousand pounds. So this precious valet comes from a stage lady—eh? If that stage lady isn't my uncle's catspaw— He seems to like working with women. And he's right, by Jove. So will I. Come in!"

"A gentleman, Sir Charles, to see you on business," said the footman, bringing him a card on which he read, "Messrs. Crowe and Beevor, George Street, Westminster."

"I will see him here," said Sir Charles.

"I have come," said the visitor, "to inspect and report on some drainage works, about which you consulted us a little while ago."

"Of course—I remember. But I'm afraid I must confess that since I had the pleasure of consulting you, the matter has rather gone out of mind. It is possible I may not determine to set about the affair—which will be a long and heavy one, as it means nothing less than the entire reclaiming of a large tract of waste land, for some time to come. Still, there is no harm in our knowing how the land lies—if it is practicable, and what ought to be tried. Are you Mr. Beevor or Mr. Crowe?"

"My name is Nelson," said Philip. "But I have their instructions—"

"I need not tell you, Mr. Nelson, that the man who is honoured with their confidence, most implicitly has mine. I am very pleased to make your acquaintance indeed. I hope you are in no very pressing hurry to return?"

"I am entirely at your service, Sir Charles. I have no other engagement at present—"

"All the better; for I have—a great many. It is too late and too dark to do anything to-day—and to-morrow—but we leave to-morrows very much to themselves here. Meanwhile, till I can drive you over to the Holms, you will I hope be my guest? But of course you will—there is no other place for you to stay."

Philip was unwilling enough to accept, but he could hardly refuse; and the baronet's easy courtesy attracted him no less than his own bearing had, by force of contrast, pleased Sir Charles. He did not know that he had entered a house full of uncongenial guests with uncongenial ways, or he would certainly have invented some excuse for putting up at the village tavern. But as it was, and as a matter of business, he let himself be led to a rather out-of-the-way bachelor's bed-room, to have his battered valise unpacked, and to be left by the man who had been told off for this duty with the information that he had a good hour before dinner.

It need not be said that Philip Nelson had never found himself a visitor in a great house before, and that he was entirely without the tact which should have saved him from being a good deal at sea in his new quarters. But his was neither the character, and infinitely less was his the present mood, to care a straw whether what he did or how he looked was the right thing or the wrong. If it were his fate to be set down by his host for a boor, what then? He did not pretend to be a gentleman; he only aimed at being an engineer, and took a certain sort of pride in not mixing the two things. If he had not the bearing of a gentleman, in the better sense, and in spite of himself, one may be sure that his host would have been very much less hospitable. But he was happily unconscious of the distinctions drawn by gentlemen who have the good sense to wish to seem like what they are; so when the last gong proclaimed that dinner was being served, he found his way into the drawing-room, absolutely indifferent to the fact that he did not even possess a suit of dress clothes.

But he was not indifferent to the discovery that he suddenly found himself among a number of very fine people in a brilliantly lighted room, all talking and laughing together, and yet not too much occupied with one another to have no eyes for him. The plain engineer, who flattered himself that he looked down from his rude height upon gentlemen and ladies, was ashamed of himself for feeling shy.

But his host came forward, and shook hands with his most recent guest before them all. "Welcome to Cautleigh Hall, Mr. Nelson," said he. "I won't keep dinner waiting while I introduce you to everybody all round—you will know us all, by nature, in an hour. But I must introduce you to the lady whom you will take down. Mr. Nelson—Miss Doyle."

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THE Comedy of Errors was first printed in the first folio collection of Shakespeare's plays in 1623. Francis Meres, however, in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, cites the poet's *Errors*, with other of his works, in proof of his being already "among the most excellent in both tragedy and comedy for the stage." It is clear, indeed, that the comedy is one of Shakespeare's most youthful works. Malone assigns it to the year 1592. Other commentators would give the play even an earlier date. *Dromio of Syracuse* speaks of France as "armed and reverted, making war against her heir." Now Henry of Navarre became "heir" of France on the death of the Duke of Anjou in 1584. And Henry the Third, assassinated during the siege of Paris, died in 1589, after he had named Henry of Navarre as his successor. English feeling was much shown in favour of Henry of Navarre, who had not yet turned Roman Catholic. Queen Elizabeth helped him with money and troops. It has been suggested therefore from this speech of *Dromio's* that *The Comedy of Errors* was written some time between 1584, when Henry became heir of France, and 1589, when ceasing to be heir he was *de jure* if not *de facto* King of France.

The play is founded on the *Menecchmi* of Plautus; but Shakespeare probably did not derive his subject directly from the Latin text. There exists an early translation of the *Menecchmi* by an author who merely publishes his initials, W. W., and describes his performance as "a pleasant

and fine conceited comedy taken out of the most excellent witty poet Plautus; chosen purposely from out the rest as least harmful and yet most delightful." The version is of a free and easy sort, W. W. occasionally introducing matter of his own, as when he makes Menecmus order for dinner "some oysters, a Mary-bone pie or two, some artichokes, and potatoes, roots, etc." He is careful, however, to mark with an asterisk every alteration of "the poet's conceit, by occasion either of the time, the country, or the phrase." This translation was not published until 1595; but the printer in an address to the readers of the book states that the writer, "having divers of this poet's comedies Englished for the use and delight of his private friends who, in Plautus's own words, are not able to understand them," had been prevailed upon to let this one go further abroad "for a public recreation and delight," though very loth and unwilling to hazard it to "the curious view of envious detraction." Was Shakespeare one of the private friends of W. W. who were permitted to see the translation of Plautus before it was printed? Possibly; but there is much in Shakespeare's play that is not in Plautus, while no close resemblance is discoverable between the dialogue of Plautus as W. W. has translated it, and the diction of The Comedy of Errors. Moreover, Shakespeare's play possesses additional incidents of pathos in connection with the story of Ægeon and his wife Æmilia, and the love of Antipholus of Syracuse for Luciana; while new situations of humour arise from the introduction of twin servants in attendance upon the twin masters. It has been judged, indeed, that the Comedy of Errors had its origin in an older English play which is no longer extant, an adaptation of the Menecmichi of much earlier date than the translation published in 1595. On New Year's Night, 1577, the "children of Paul's" acted before Queen Elizabeth at Hampton Court a play called The History of Error. And on Twelfth Night, 1583, there was presented by the Lord Chamberlain's servants before her majesty at Windsor a play described as The History of Ferrar, which the Accounts of the Revels at Court show was equipped for performance with "divers new things, as one city, one battlement of canvas, three ells of sarcenet, and ten pairs of gloves, etc." For some time it was supposed by Boswell and others that this History of Ferrar was a play by one

George Ferrers, an early poet, lawyer, and dramatist, who filled the office of Lord of Misrule at the Court of Elizabeth, but there is more reason in the supposition that the clerk who prepared the account, writing by ear or from dictation, set down The History of Ferrar for The History of Error. It has been thought likely, though there exists no direct evidence in the matter, that this early History of Error, performed in 1577 and in 1583, was a play derived from the Menecmichi of Plautus, and that it furnished Shakespeare with the materials of his Comedy of Errors, rendering unnecessary his recourse to the translation of W. W. The Comedy of Errors is shown to be an early play by the fourteen-syllable verses which so frequently occur in it. This old measure was known to the language as far back as the time of Chaucer by the name of "rime dogerel." It was going out of fashion, however, in Shakespeare's time. At any rate, it appears in but three of his plays: Love's Labour's Lost, The Taming of the Shrew, and The Comedy of Errors. But this characteristic of the Early English drama could hardly have been absent from The History of Error of 1577 and 1583. If Shakespeare borrowed from that old play, no doubt he borrowed, among other matters, its "rime dogerel."

Mr. Swinburne has written of The Comedy of Errors: "What is due to Shakespeare, and to him alone, is the honour of having embroidered on the naked old canvas of comic action those flowers of elegiac beauty which vivify and diversify the scene of Plautus as reproduced by the art of Shakespeare. In this light and lovely work of the youth of Shakespeare we find, for the first time, that strange and sweet admixture of farce with fancy, of lyric charm with comic effect, which recur so often in his later works, from the date of As You Like It to the date of Winter's Tale." The play, it may be noted, is so far true to its classical origin that it preserves in a great degree the unities of time, place, and action. The incidents of the story are all supposed to happen in the course of one day in the city of Ephesus. The play has even been represented, as Capell proposed, without change of scene, the whole action occurring in "a public place," although this has involved some sacrifice of probability and of the convenience of the characters. The editors have usually favoured a shifting of the scenes from a hall in the duke's palace

to the mart, the house of Antipholus of Ephesus, a street before a priory, etc.

The Comedy of Errors is essentially farcical in its humours. As Coleridge says: "A proper farce is mainly distinguished from comedy by the license allowed, and even required, in the fable in order to produce strange and laughable situations." Upon the English stage farce has always proved an acceptable form of entertainment, with a proviso, however, that it shall not be unduly prolonged. In performance, therefore, it has been usual to reduce the length of The Comedy of Errors, to present it as an after-piece in a compressed form, its five acts cut down to three, sometimes even to two. It has certainly pleased upon the stage, if there have been difficulties in the way of its frequent representation. It offers no great temptations to the more distinguished actors. It has never been what may be called "a players' play." Few theatrical names of note are associated with the performances of the work. Then there are physical difficulties inseparable from its representation which the actors, however adroit, may well fail to surmount. The performer of Antipholus of Syracuse, for instance, if he does not abandon his personal identity altogether, must hold it in suspense, as it were, while he assumes an aspect which must be common to himself and to a brother player. If he does not sufficiently resemble Antipholus of Ephesus, what becomes of the dilemma of the play? Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse should be in look, voice, gait, gesture, form, and stature, the precise counterparts of Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus. The dressers of the theatre, by skilful use of the appliances of the tiring-room, may do much in aid of the required resemblance. There is great magic in the false colouring and false hair, the padding and painting of the stage, but there cannot be complete alteration of a man's weight, height, or girth, remodelling of his limbs, or recasting of his features, while the voice does not easily maintain continuous disguise of its tones. Shakespeare, it may be observed, by adding twin servants to the twin masters has just doubled the difficulties of the original plot, "increasing the perplexity," a critic has noted, "but at the same time increasing the improbability," while augmenting very much the embarrassment of the actors, who, able, perhaps, to produce from amongst them one set of twins sufficiently alike,

may be greatly troubled to find the second set.

Hazlitt wrote of the play that the curiosity it excited was very considerable, "though not of the most pleasing kind. We are teased as with a riddle, which, notwithstanding, we try to solve. In reading the play, from the sameness of the names of the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios, as well as from their being constantly taken for each other by those who see them, it is difficult without a painful effort of attention to keep the characters distinct in the mind." Moreover, he apprehended that on the stage—apparently he had never seen the play acted—"either the complete similarity of their persons and dress must produce the same perplexity when they first enter, or the identity of appearance which the story supposes will be destroyed."

As a rule, the audience are obliged to be content with but a tolerable and approximate resemblance between the brothers, and to depend upon imagination to supply the unavoidable discrepancy. On the antique stage the difficulty was of a contrary sort; the Roman actors wore masks which effectually disguised and rendered it scarcely possible to distinguish them. In the Amphitryon of Plautus, Mercury, about to assume the appearance of Sosia, states in a prologue that he intends to wear some feathers in his cap that he may be known from the real Sosia.

The stage of the Restoration apparently knew nothing of the Comedy of Errors, nor for long years afterwards was the play forthcoming. But at Covent Garden Theatre in October, 1734, after the representation of Mr. Banks's tragedy, The Unhappy Favourite, or, the Earl of Essex, there was produced a comedy in two acts, "never acted," announced to be "taken from Plautus and Shakespeare," and entitled, See if You Like It, or, 'Tis All a Mistake. This play, there can be no doubt, was founded upon The Comedy of Errors, but the adaptation was not printed, and, having been performed a few nights, disappeared from the theatre. The performers were Miss Nora, Miss Binks, and Messrs. Stoppelear, Ghapman, Aston, Mullart, Ridout, and James. On the 11th November, 1741, The Comedy of Errors was produced at Drury Lane Theatre, and some four or five performances of the work were given during the season. There is no hint of adaptation in this instance,

and probably the text was followed without much alteration or retrenchment. The names of the players have not been ascertained. Kirkman, in his *Life of Macklin*, enters Dromio of Syracuse in that actor's list of characters. He was a member of the Drury Lane company in 1741; it was then probably he first sustained the part of Dromio of Syracuse.

Under the new name of *The Twins*, *The Comedy of Errors* reappeared upon the stage for one night only in April, 1762, at Covent Garden, on the occasion of the benefit of Mr. Hull, an admirable actor of old men, memorable also as the founder of the Theatrical Fund for the relief of distressed actors. The playbills announced that the play had not been acted for thirty years, the statement referring probably to the production of See if You Like It in 1734. A new prologue by Smith was delivered, and Mr. Hull, who appeared as *Ægeon*, was assisted by pretty Mrs. Vincent, famous for her good looks and good singing as Polly in *The Beggar's Opera*, and admirably mentioned in the *Rosciad*; by Mrs. Ward, Mrs. Lessingham, Mrs. Stephens; by the comic actor, Shuter, who probably played Dromio of Syracuse; by Dunstall, Gibson, and others. It was of Shuter that Churchill wrote:

Shuter, who never cared a single pin
Whether he left out nonsense or put in.
Who aimed at wit, though, levelled in the dark,
The random arrow seldom hit the mark, etc., etc.

In 1779, at the same theatre, the comedy, no longer called *The Twins*, but with its proper title restored to it, was reproduced with alterations, and enjoyed several performances. This version, arranged by Hull, probably did not differ from the play of 1762. Hull still represented *Ægeon*, with Mrs. Lessingham as *Luciana*, Mrs. Jackson as *Adriana*, and the beautiful Mrs. Hartley as the *Abbess*. The comedians *Quick* and *Brunsdon* appeared as the two *Dromios*; the *Antipholuses* were *Lewis* and *Whitfield*, with *Wewitzer* as *Dr. Pinch*.

Other versions of the play in three and two acts were prepared by a Mr. Woods, and under the title of *The Twins*, performed and printed in Edinburgh in 1780. It is not clear, however, that Mr. Woods's adaptations ever underwent representation on the London stage. He pleaded in a preface that his alteration had become necessary, forasmuch as the length and frequent repetitions of the original play had been found to produce "an intricacy

that perplexes and a sameness that tires an audience." He had first reduced the comedy to three acts, when he perceived that in his veneration for the author he had retained too many scenes, and that an excess of confusion still remained; so he made further excisions, flattering himself that in its altered form the piece would be considered "not an unacceptable addition to the list of theatrical entertainments." Mr. Woods' edition concludes with a tag:

The troubles sent by Heaven ne'er come amiss,
They're but designed to improve our sense of bliss.

In 1793, still at Covent Garden, the comedy was again revived for the benefit of Brandon, the box-keeper. The veteran Hull was again *Ægeon*; Mrs. Mattocks and Mrs. Esten appeared as *Adriana* and *Luciana*; the twin servants were *Munden* and *Quick*; the twin masters *Pope* and *Holman*. Probably Hull's acting edition, which was now first printed, was followed upon this occasion. In 1798, another representation of the comedy took place for the benefit of one Rees, a performer noted for his powers of mimicry, who appeared as *Dromio of Ephesus*, that he might demonstrate how closely he could imitate the voice and manner of *Munden*, the personator of the other *Dromio*. Mr. Rees could imitate very well, but he could do little else, and obtained but slight applause as an original actor. It was told of him that his close imitation of Mr. Philip Astley, of the *Royal Amphitheatre*, so enraged that equestrian performer, that he laid violent hands upon the mimic, who subsequently brought an action and recovered damages for the assault.

In 1808, and again in 1811, *The Comedy of Errors* was reproduced, *Munden* being still the *Dromio of Syracuse*, while his brother of *Ephesus* was now undertaken by *Blanchard*, an excellent comedian, although in this instance he was found unsuited to the part he played, in that his height much exceeded *Munden's*; the chance of one *Dromio* being mistaken for the other being, therefore, much reduced, and the illusion necessary to the success of the play in great part destroyed. "The two *Antipholuses*, these two so like," were personated now by *Pope* and *Charles Kemble*, and now by *Jones* and *Brunton*. *Simmons* played *Dr. Pinch*, and *Mrs. Gibbs* *Adriana*. *John Kemble* expressly revised the text of Hull's adaptation, and published his new acting edition of the comedy in 1811.

Munden was a pupil of *Shuter*, but in comic variety of impersonation seems to

have fairly surpassed his master. His Dromio was much admired. "In the grand grotesque of farce," as Charles Lamb wrote, "Munden stands out as single and unaccompanied as Hogarth. . . . He is not one, but legion; not so much a comedian, as a company. If his name could be multiplied like his countenance, it might fill a playbill. He, and he alone, literally makes faces. Applied to any other person, the phrase is a mere figure, denoting certain modifications of the human countenance. Out of some invisible wardrobe he dips for faces, as his friend Suett used for wigs, and fetches them out as easily. I should not be surprised to see him some day put out the head of a river-horse; or come forth a peewit or lapwing, some feathered metamorphosis." Talfourd described him as the most classical of actors; as being in high farce what Kemble was in high tragedy. The lines of the two artists were, of course, sufficiently distinct; but the same elements were discoverable in both: "the same directness of purpose, the same singleness of aim, the same concentration of power, the same iron casing of inflexible manner, the same statue-like precision of gesture, movement, and attitude. . . . There is something solid, sterling, almost adamant in the building-up of his grotesque characters. . . . When he fixes his wonder-working face in any of its most amazing varieties, it looks as if the picture were carved out from a rock by Nature in a sportive vein, and might last for ever. . . . His most fantastical gestures are the grand ideal of farce. . . . His expressions of feeling and bursts of enthusiasm are among the most genuine which we have ever felt." It is to be added that Munden possessed great power of pathetic expression; his performance of Old Dornton, in *The Road to Ruin*, of which character he was the original representative, was judged to be most affecting in its display of simple and natural emotion and distress.

In his *Reminiscences*, Michael Kelly has related how, about 1785, *The Comedy of Errors* was converted into an Italian opera, *The Equivoci*, for the opera-house of Vienna, with music by Storace, the libretto by the poet of the theatre, one Du Ponte of Venice, of whom Kelly writes that, "originally a Jew, he turned Christian, dubbed himself an abbé, and became a great dramatic writer." Storace's music was "beyond description beautiful." Much ingenuity had been employed in preserving

the main incidents and characters of the comedy, and the success of the opera was very great. Kelly personated Antipholus of Ephesus, and a Signor Calvasi Antipholus of Syracuse. "We were both of the same height," Kelly writes, "and we strove to render our persons as like each other as we could." It was even proposed that the opera should be transferred to the stage of Drury Lane, the Italian libretto being retranslated into English. Kelly suggested this to Sheridan, who approved of the plan, "and said he would give directions to have it done; but he never did." Yet the music was made available after a fashion in England. A trio, "Knocking at this Time of Day," and a sextet, "Hope a Distant Joy Disclosing," introduced in Prince Hoare's favourite after-piece, *No Song, No Supper*, really belonged to the score of Storace's opera, *The Equivoci*. Kelly continues: "The music used where Antipholus seeks admittance into his house, and his wife calls the guard, was that fine chorus in *The Pirates*, 'Hark! the Guard is Coming,' and was certainly one of the most effective pieces of music ever heard. Both the songs sung by me in *The Pirates* at Drury Lane I had sung at Vienna in the same opera of *The Equivoci*. Storace in this way certainly enriched his English pieces, but I lamented to see his beautiful Italian opera dismantled."

In 1819, *The Comedy of Errors* was really converted into an opera at Covent Garden Theatre—without any borrowing from Storace's score, however; the music being composed or compiled and arranged by Bishop. The adapter of the play was Frederick Reynolds, who had been concerned in manipulating for musical purposes other of Shakespeare's works. Reynolds excused his tampering with the text on the ground that the plays had been long neglected, and without the musical embellishments he had contrived would not have been presented at all upon the stage. As an opera *The Comedy of Errors* enjoyed some forty representations. The comedians Liston and W. Farren personated the two Dromios, with Blanchard as Dr. Pinch. Jones reappeared as Antipholus of Syracuse, and the singer Duruset as Antipholus of Ephesus. Mrs. Faucit represented the Abbess, and the parts of Adriana and Luciana were played and sung by Miss Stephens and Miss M. Tree. The interpolated songs were selected chiefly from the other plays of Shakespeare, the adapter

adding certain short speeches to serve as "cues" for the music; otherwise his alterations were not considerable. Luciana enters in the first act that she may sing a solo, and at the close of the act a new scene is added in order that a sonnet and a glee may be introduced; Antipholus of Ephesus entering with the merchant Balthazar and wishing him good-night. In the second act Adriana abruptly mentions the name of Barbara, and forthwith sings the Willow song from Othello; Luciana speaks of fancy, and "Tell me where is Fancy bred," from *The Merchant of Venice*, arranged as a duet, immediately follows; Antipholus of Ephesus in the same chance way refers to the greenwood tree, and the glee from *As You Like It*, "Under the Greenwood Tree," is the consequence. In the third act Antipholus of Ephesus recollects that on the previous night he dreamt of St. Withold (St. Withold at Ephesus!), and promptly he favours the audience with Edgar's song in *King Lear*, beginning "Saint Withold footed thrice the World!" Adriana and Luciana sing other songs, and a new scene is introduced of a river surrounded by snow-capped mountains. "We should be obliged to Reynolds," writes Genest, "if he would inform us in what book of geography he met with these mountains covered with snow in the neighbourhood of Ephesus." Balthazar enters with huntsmen and others, and sing a chorus. In a like manner are introduced a duet about the nightingale, drinking songs for Balthazar and Antipholus of Ephesus, and upon accidental mention of morn's tuneful harbinger, the song of "Hark, the Lark!" from *Cymbeline*. The operatic adaptation ends with a new scene of the interior of the Abbey, and the execution of a final grand duet by Luciana and Adriana. Reynolds expressed a hope in the advertisements of the play that his new scenes might be pardoned him, for without them the new songs could not have been introduced. Genest in reply assures him that "the only sentiments which the real friends of Shakespeare can feel towards him are—indignation at his attempt, and contempt for the bungling manner in which he has executed it."

Reynolds's adaptation pleased the public, however. The opera was repeated at Covent Garden in 1823, Blanchard replacing Farren as Dromio of Syracuse, and Miss Paton singing the part of Adriana in lieu of Miss Stephens; and it was produced at Drury Lane in the following year for the

benefit of Madame Vestris, who assumed the character of Luciana. Harley and Liston were now the two Dromios; the bass singer, Horn, appearing as Antipholus of Ephesus. Probably the next performance of *The Comedy of Errors* was at Sadler's Wells during Mr. Phelps's seventeen years' tenancy of that theatre, the text being now strictly respected and restored, and the additions of Reynolds absolutely discarded. The manager, however, found no part in the play suited to his own histrionic means, but he was careful to see that the representation was altogether skilful and complete, handsomely provided with scenic accessories and decorations.

At the Tercentenary Festival, held at Stratford-upon-Avon, in 1864, *The Comedy of Errors* was performed in the temporary theatre erected for the occasion, the actors concerned being the members of the company of the Princess's Theatre, then under the management of Mr. George Vining. The representatives of the two Dromios were the Messrs. Henry and Charles Webb, comic actors and brothers, whose strong personal resemblance was of signal advantage to the representation, and probably suggested, in the first instance, their assumption of the characters. They had previously appeared with success at the Princess's, and, allowing for some needless extravagance of manner and grotesqueness of costume, were much to be commended for the cleverness, spirit, and hearty drollery of their efforts. With their physical resemblance the spectators had every reason to be satisfied. The Antipholuses might differ, but here, at any rate, were Dromios so much alike that they might fairly claim to go "hand in hand, not one before the other." In 1866, the brothers repeated their performance at Drury Lane, and obtained for the play "a run" of many nights, appearing in a condensed version of the comedy, eschewing all interpolations, musical or otherwise.

OFF CROZON.

The spire of old St. Malo makes a beacon true and brave,
Where round the granite islets foams the angry Breton wave;
Fair over lovely Dinan, is St. Sauveur's shadow cast,
Where Du Guesclin's fiery heart is laid, in peaceful rest at last.

At Coutances, and at quiet Dôl, the great cathedral towers
Speak still, in solemn beauty, of a holier age than ours;
And wonder for all time and tide, the glory of the land,
St. Michel's shrine still crowns the rock, that reigns
Over sea and sand.

Yet where the huts of Crozon couch upon the rock-girt coast,
 A nobler temple than them all it is for her to boast.
 When with silenced rite, and darkened lamp, each threatened altar stood,
 And from Loire to Rance "the Terror" drowned all fair Bretagne in blood,
 Through whispering woods, by wild cliff paths, from town and chateau came,
 Proscribed, "suspect," and fugitive, priest, noble, peasant, dame;
 Silent on Crozon's rocks and beach, gazing where like a star,
 O'er the dim heaving leagues of sea, a light gleamed faint and far.
 With lowered sails and muffled oars, upon the rising tide,
 The boats went gliding from the shore, that light their steady guide;
 Where, driven from desecrated shrines, at midnight's solemn hour,
 For her true children holy Church could still put forth her power.
 Calm on the calm sea lay the barque; calm rose the altar there;
 For votive lamp the crescent moon; for music, through the air
 Thrilled ever ocean's ceaseless chime; while, rustling shroud and sheet,
 The soft winds to the chanted prayer made answer low and sweet.
 There came the babe for baptism; there knelt the bride to wed;
 There over the uncoffined corpse the funeral rite was said;
 And the soul of fearless faith arose in the imploring cry,
 As, 'neath the dome no man had built, the Host was raised on high.
 Lingering where up the glittering bay, sweeps the long creaming swell,
 The pious Breton, willingly, will stay this tale to tell.
 And grander Temple for the Cross on earth will never be,
 Than the ship that through "the Terror" lay, off Crozon, on the sea.

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

SOME FINGER-GLASSES.

THE title is not promising, I admit. One does not readily think of an article less likely than a finger-glass to have a good story attaching thereto. But mine were not originally made for the purpose to which I have turned them. In fact, they are not glass at all, but silver. The work which gives their interest and curious beauty is Circassian. Long ago the virtuosi of St. Petersburg admired this peculiar ornamentation, and they established a home for it at Tulla, whence the style takes its name. But European influence, a great demand, and exile, proved too strong for the virtue of Tchirkess artificers. Tulla work has steadily degenerated, crystallising to conventionality. At the present time, it bears just the same relation to the bold free model of true Circassian design, as modern

Dresden does to old, a regulation sabre to a Damascus blade, a barn-door fowl to a woodcock. Imitation also, Russ or French, has done mischief by lowering wages. I know that for a grand occasion Tulla can pull itself up, but at the best the spirit, if not the skill, has departed. This fact is understood in Russia, though ignored by haphazard collectors elsewhere.

If one of these latter saw the finger-glass which I love and pride myself upon beyond the others, I think he would deny that it had any bearing or connection with the Tulla work whereof he believes himself to own some great examples.

Before describing it, however, I must say for what use these things were originally intended. Everyone, nowadays, takes or has taken a Turkish bath, and remembers the shallow brass basin which they give him there when he asks for water. In the harems of great folk at Stamboul, such plain coarse articles as that would not be tolerated. Basins much more costly the odaliques demand, and as most of them are Circassian by race, they have a liking for the style of ornament familiar to their youthful days; though they saw it then only on the sword-hilt and scabbard ornaments of their fathers or their brothers. And thus it has become a fashion in the richer households of Stamboul to have vessels connected with the bath in Tchirkess work—silver, of course. My finger-glasses, in fact, are drinking bowls.

It took me several months to collect the number sufficient for my purpose, since these luxuries do not often find their way to the bazaars. I bought them all from a fat Armenian in the Bezestan, excepting the handsomest, of which I will attempt to give you some idea. It is seven inches across, two and a half high. Upon a gilt ground, roughened with innumerable dots and lines which give the effect we call "frosted," black designs are traced with singular freedom. Upon the bottom—I speak of the outside, for the inner surface is plain and polished—is a star of sixteen points, three inches across. The artificer had too much good taste to make it wholly black. In the very centre is a circle, occupied by a tiny star, between the radii of which the rough gold ground shows through. And the sixteen long arms are black only at the edges, shading off to a dusky hue down the middle. Starting from each alternate point, figures, shapeless but symmetrical, which I am powerless to describe in words, run with bold sweeps to the upper edge.

four of them, with a device between which very distantly suggests a group of banners. These also are not black through, but judiciously lightened in parts by rubbing off the inky material. The outlines are deeply cut, of a design broad and massive. The Tchirkess who drew, and the Tchirkess who executed the work, were masters. My other basins are almost equally beautiful. One of them is not gilt and the judgment of the artist makes itself perceived in the lighter tone of pigments which he has used for the decoration of a silver ground.

I had occasion to visit the Sublime Porte one bitter day, which marked the beginning of real winter. My route, of course, lay through the Galata tunnel and over the bridge. At that time every ship was bringing emigrants from Bosnia, Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and the Dobruzscha. Most of the European fugitives possessed some small means, or had relations at the capital; and so they lived, though at death's door, until something turned up.

To persons who had not beheld the awful misery of the Batoum emigrants, the plight of them would have seemed horrible. But reaction and satiety had begun. All Constantinople thrilled with pity when first the refugees displayed their livid faces in the street. Nothing else was spoken of. The least charitable made a sacrifice; the idlest bestirred himself. But the sight had grown familiar. Starving Lazis or Pomaks had become an institution, almost a public spectacle. What charity survived, in the shape of almsgiving, was nearly concentrated on the bridge. Curiously pitiful the sight at its either end. A certain copper coin was demanded as toll; but some time before, the government had called in the copper currency. Hence one had to buy the needful mite, and this small exchange business had been seized by the emigrant children. They swarmed in many hundreds about either exit, patrolled the streets of the vicinity, clinking a roll of paras in the face of every passer-by, and chanting a little ditty quite melodious. The burden thereof was: "Here you have money for the bridge! Money—money!"

Whilst summer and autumn lasted, though these waifs were thin and pale, their song came cheerfully. The greater number perhaps were girls under ten years of age, with plaits of flaxen hair escaping from the ragged old handkerchief that formed their head-dress. Attired in one skirt of Manchester cotton, barefoot and barelegged,

they could not be too warm in November, even though the sun was shining and the south wind blew; what their shelter at night was is a mystery of which the street dogs, could they speak, might give an inkling. But on that day we rose to find the streets ankle-deep in mud, a chill blast driving rain and snow before it. The poor little wretches had come to their posts as usual, to seek a profit so minute that I never could understand where it lay. But they could not keep the roadway. Sodden with wet, blue with cold, they huddled together beneath walls and entries. Crossing the bridge twice, I only heard one shivering parody of the familiar chant. But all this class of children were the favoured ones. They had clothes of a sort, and capital enough to buy sixpenny-worth of copper coins. Heaven knows their lot was terrible; on earth few knew or cared. But there were depths of misery among the emigrants far more profound, which no Christian probably had seen. A Moslem friend might sometimes hint unutterable horrors; but the foreigner was mercifully forbidden to behold them.

I think that most men who habitually crossed the bridge had a certain number of small clients to whom they gave a trifle. For myself, I had two special favourites, pretty fair-haired girls, full of life and fun whilst the sunshine lasted. They speedily asserted a right to the dole which I had innocently thought a free gift. If I offered less than they considered becoming, they would follow any distance, holding out a little open palm with the insufficient pittance displayed therein, and speechlessly appealing to my sense of justice and propriety. It was necessary to feel in all my pockets, and to engage, in pantomime, that the balance should be made up at the next opportunity, before they would leave me.

Upon this miserable day, neither of my young barbarians was seen. I transacted my business at the Porte, and strolled on to the bazaar. Hovering about the entrance, as usual, was a Greek boy who had once or twice executed commissions for me. He observed, in his very independent English: "Tchirkess man is here, what got basin and other traps as you like. You come and see." With wary steps I followed. The unpaved road was trodden into slime, as safe and as comfortable to walk upon as ice. We turned down a steep descent to the right, and found ourselves in the jewellers' bazaar, where a fetid torrent was hurrying

through the middle of the passage. A turn to the left brought us to the gold-lace makers' quarter, which always fascinated me. Beautiful are the combinations, delicate the tracery, glowing the colour of their manufactures. I have seen nothing like them elsewhere; Delhi jewel-work, and the famous embroidery made in imitation, have something of the effect, but are less bright and transparent of hue. It surprises me that when ladies search every country under heaven for gorgeous trimmings and startling accessories, none have discovered the very curious lace of foil and precious metal produced at Stamboul. Tearing myself from this glittering display, a narrow alley falling to the right brought us to the heavy antique portal of the Bezestan.

I am not going to describe that strangest sight, strangest even to those familiar with its type in many lands. Persons who have not visited Stamboul know all about it from innumerable books. I should like one day to gossip of some matters regarding Turkish life which are not obvious to the tourist; even in that article, however, I should not permit myself to sketch the Bezestan. Something must be said to give a background, but it shall be briefly put. My guide led me through the dusty passages, heaped on either hand with ancient furniture, carpets, arms, embroideries, antique china, horse-trappings, old plate, skins, trays, superb old braziers lately fashionable as jardinières; Indian and Turkish naguilley, Albanian girdles and belts, inlaid work of Tripoli, and gold-fretted silks of Aleppo—briefly, with all forms and sorts of article which we are used to term a "curio."

The merchants sat cross-legged among their goods upon a faded carpet, or a bald leopard skin—pushing Armenians; noisy Jews in European dress or something like it; slow Turks; sallow, slender, smiling Banniahs; wax-faced Persians, neat and trim. My little Greek exchanged a word here and there, and upon the information he received we changed our course several times. Amongst the oddities to be observed—by the observant—in this oddest maze is the system of "passing a word along." It is kept secret, that is, a stranger does not easily obtain a clue to its mysteries. But so much came to my knowledge, through watching, that I gained a general idea. My guide would ask somebody at the gates—perhaps an individual stationed for that purpose—"Where is the Tchirkess, in such and such costume, who has a basin

for sale?" And forthwith the enquiry is flashed from stall to stall, from corridor to corridor. One man saw him in such a spot, at such a time, and sends back word to that effect; another saw him later elsewhere. And so from point to point the initiated catch a hint, and, quickly as they may go, the verbal telegraph goes quicker; so that, in a few moments, the person wanted learns that he is asked for, and turns to meet his pursuer.

If such a system did not exist, hunting for a stranger there would be like seeking Mr. Smith in Cheapside. Thanks to it we found our Tchirkess speedily. An ill-looking man was he, with a red beard turning grey, a tall fur cap, and a long coat, which had been white, with ragged cartridge-cases along each breast. Many are the costumes beheld at Stamboul, amongst which, for artistic merit, perhaps, the Circassian is most commendable. It has a manliness and dignity rivalled only by the Ghegghe Albanian, which—but I speak with hesitation—may be thought too prone to brilliant hues. The Tchirkess has no pronounced colour at all. This statement may be received with surprise by people who have seen the Czar's Circassian body-guard, the lining of whose pendent sleeves flashes out as they spur to the gallop just as does the outstretched wings of a flock of parrots rising. I have seen no representative of the tribe from which Russian military tailors got this idea; it may very well be their own discovery. Wherever I have met the Tchirkess, he wore the long coat, white, grey, black, or dark-blue; with hanging sleeves truly, if of rank, but no rainbow lining; breeches to match the coat, and boots half up the leg. The rounded crown of his high fur cap may be scarlet or azure, with silver lace, but this is only seen from behind. The cartridge-cases stitched upon his chest are embroidered with silver, if that extravagance can be afforded; if not, with worsted or silk. They relieve in a charming manner the severity of a robe which has neither buttons nor cross-belt, but I never saw the gay devices of this sort which distinguish Circassian regiments of the Russian army. A belt of metal—silver, if possible—encircles the waist; from it depends, immediately in front, at an angle judiciously chosen and always the same, a broad straight dagger, of which hilt and sheath are ornamented with black arabesques on a silver ground; a pistol or two, and a guardless sabre, similarly orna-

mented, hang exactly where they would be thought fitting by a trusted master of decoration, with smaller objects, of utility dubious, but grace incontestable.

But the glory of my Tchirkess had long been discounted at the pawn-shop. A single dag, a mere instrument of murder, hung by a rude steel chain at his waist. Filthy and frowy was he, scowling like an envious beast of prey as he hustled the throng with ugly swagger. My Greek boy casually asked if he had anything to sell, and without reply he brought up against a stall, disclosing one of my small pensioners of the bridge. She recognised me with a saucy smile, and said something to the man, whilst untying a ragged parcel. His truculent manner changed, not greatly to its improvement. I should interpret the awkward, unctuous smile of his red face to signify that as robbery and murder were forbidden for the moment, he would gain his end by amiable means. Meantime, the child had produced this basin, my best-loved finger-glass, and a graceful priming flask of silver, leather, and bone, which hangs on the wall behind me as I write. The purity of the latter article was attested by that queer stamp, resembling a grass-hopper on a gridiron, which is the equivalent in Turkey of our hall-mark. I regret now—for the first time it occurs to me—that I never asked where, under what circumstances, by whom, this stamp is imprinted. I know only that the age of an object thus certified can be ascertained within certain limits, since every Sultan had his peculiar and distinguishing impression.

The flask I bought at once, but there was no proof that the basin also was pure. The Tchirkess insisted, however, that it should be taken at its weight in drachms, and I had to yield. He answered my objection scornfully: "Do you think a man would make a thing like that in any metal but pure silver?" The argument had its value, but I am not sure it was not unjust to the conscientious artist. He would have done his best in any material, under any circumstances. However, I paid a hundred francs, and carried the bowl away rejoicing. My conviction was that the gay mountaineer had stolen it.

The Tchirkess insisted on shaking hands, and we parted. Six weeks later, or thereabouts, I was asked to join some distinguished acquaintances on a visit to Dolma, Batche Palace, for which they had a special firman. None but a lunatic would yield to the inclination of

describing that mongrel palace. It is very big, and we saw every inch, saving the harem, of course. This is the upper floor, and the communicating staircase is so mean that one would not notice it. But there are lots of fine things at Dolma Batche. We had the privilege of inspecting His Majesty's bath and dressing rooms, an astonishing extravagance in silver and precious marbles. The great hall and the state apartments are shown without difficulty to any one who asks permission, and I shall only say, of the former, that it is quite beyond compare the finest and largest chamber I have ever beheld. The Escorial and the Kremlin may show something to rival it, but I have not yet visited their marvels. And the state chambers are not unworthy of that superb hall, which the Sultan's diminished and impoverished court would scarcely people. The furniture of them, if tasteless and uninteresting, represents an enormous value. There are tables and braziers there of solid silver, which, if melted down, would yield a sum not unworthy of imperial acceptance; jewelled knickknacks, costly odds and ends innumerable. But we were most struck by the pictures. One found in that unknown gallery great works familiar from childhood by engraving. I made no notes, and I forget. But every few paces we came to a stop in amaze, recognising a Cavalier, a Gerome, a Beaumont, a Corot, works which one would have declared to be in some famous European gallery. They might as well be buried as lie here. And amongst them hung the strangest caricatures of scenery and the human form divine, that ever child drew with its first box of colours. The Turk sees no difference between a Raffaele and a theatrical "poster." To guard these treasures, and show visitors round, are multitudinous servants, hungry, ragged, barefoot; by ragged I mean that their black cloth suits have been darned until they can no longer bear a stitch, and flutter helplessly in ribanda. They told us they had had but one month's wages in three years. Was there ever such a palace as this?

It was still early in the winter's afternoon when we departed, with much to talk of. Two or three resolved to stroll back to Pera by the longest route. We walked to Bechichtas, and on past the mouldy dwelling where exists in mysterious seclusion the late Sultan Murad, deposed as insane. Turning there, we climbed the

steep street running through that quarter which Abdul Aziz pulled down and rebuilt. He had a maniacal dread of fire, and this hill of wooden shanties, overhanging the palace, haunted him nightly. I am ashamed to forget how it is called, for a traveller's tales are nothing if not precise; but curious persons can easily learn the name, and it matters nothing to the casual reader. A very fine quarter Abdul Aziz built in place of that destroyed, tall stone houses, excellently constructed as it seems, street after street. The one objection to the suburb is, that nobody wants to live there apparently.

When the refugees began to swarm in thousands, the empty dwellings of this neighbourhood were granted them, or were seized. Most have a shop on the level of the street, which in their unfinished condition is merely a big shed, unglazed, unfloored, unceilinged. The Lazis, or Pomaks, or Tchirkess who took possession, built a wall of rubbish to fill the aperture, or stretched miserable cloths across it. With only such protection against the wild weather of the Bosphorus, they took up their dwelling on the bare earth, without food or cover. There they rotted by families—rotted and died, and were cleared away for others.

I glanced into one or two of those loathsome sheds, not without risk. In the haze and damp one saw heaps of rags, motionless, a hand or a foot projecting. Little children wailed unseen. In a single den I noticed smoke, and some shapeless creatures moving slowly round it. Nowhere a vessel of any kind, a tool, or implement, or household utensil; but reaks and stenches of human decay, of living putrefaction, which streamed in close volume through the frosty air. House after house, street after street, was full of these perishing wretches, and there were thousands in every quarter of the city! Not more persons died in the Great Plague of London by a swift stroke of agony than have rotted on the Bosphorus by a three years' doom, and are still rotting.

We walked up the hill, sad and sick. Very few emigrants were visible, for those who could stir a limb had sought happier neighbourhoods, there to beg or to seek such miserable work as they had strength to do. But as we passed along, my little Tchirkess girl came galloping round a corner. She turned at sight of me, and ran off, but presently overtook us, out of breath, holding a packet of embroideries.

We recognised the trimming of Bulgarian petticoats, coarse and rudely designed, but excellently stitched and bright of colour. I use them to loop my curtains. One could too easily suggest how they might have fallen into Tchirkess hands, but perhaps one would do injustice. Pomak and Christian women alike use this style of ornament.

Whilst bargaining with the small pedlar—two of our party spoke Turkish with ease—we heard female voices raised in anger, and presently a negress and a Lazi woman, hotly disputing, bustled into the street. So fierce ran the quarrel that an old Zaptieh, keeping pace behind, had to push away first one and then the other to keep them from clapperclawing. A little crowd, mostly Greek boys and loafers, scudded about them, interposing humorous remarks. The little girl in our midst volubly explained what the disturbance was about, and those who could understand displayed sudden curiosity. Opposite the spot where we were standing, the Zaptieh pushed the Lazi woman through a torn curtain into her home, and with the other hand sent the negress staggering. After a volley of abuse she went down the hill.

We interviewed that Zaptieh, introduced by baksheesh. He told us a queer story. The woman, Moslem of course, had borrowed thirty pounds Turkish—say twenty-seven pounds sterling—of the negress, Moslem also, upon the security of her child, some three years old. The pledge was delivered, and remained in the lender's hands, at Scutari, where she dwelt. I did not precisely gather the motive of this transaction upon her part, whether she loved the baby, or whether she took it merely in the way of business with an eye to its commercial value as a slave when somewhat older. For some twelve months things had quietly remained in this condition. But the Lazi woman meanwhile had learned something of human rights, sacred and civil, as they exist even in Turkey. A Moslem child cannot be pawned according to the former, nor any child at all, according to the latter. She demanded her infant back, without repayment of the loan, and was refused, of course. After several applications she lodged a claim of restitution with the Cadi of Scutari, who summoned the defendant to appear. In blazing passion she crossed the Bosphorus, sought out her debtor, whom she encountered in the street, and hence this little scene.

I begged a friend staying at Sutari to get me a report of the case if it ever came forward. Some days afterwards he told me that the negress, resolved to be beforehand, had made a claim for her money in the civil court. So the action found its way through the *Annales Judiciaires* to all the Press of Constantinople. It became a cause célèbre. The tribunal could not decide without hesitation, but eventually it resolved that the child, which was in court, must be given up to the mother. Thereupon, as proceeds the report of the Constantinople Messenger, late *Levant Herald*, "A scene not easily to be described ensued between the two women for possession of the pledge. The members of the tribunal who had done their best to come to a rational and natural decision in the matter, used all their influence with the enraged negress to endeavour to bring her to reason. All efforts were vain, however. The angry debtor would have her 'pound of flesh,' or her money. Nothing more and nothing less. Finally, after a scene of confusion and violence, the officers of the court were compelled to use force to tear the infant from the hands of the claimant and deliver it to its mother." I know nothing further of the case.

MUSICAL LEGENDS.

MUSIC is generally an ideal art; no outline can fix it, no words define it, no man can tell another how it affects him; it speaks with the same voice to twenty different hearers in twenty different languages. Some it touches superficially, others it penetrates to the uttermost depths of the soul. And so imagination has divinised the phenomena of music under all forms. A whole volume might be written on the wonders of musical mythology.

In the dawn of Greece the sirens appear and personify the voices, now caressing, now terrible, of the azure waves of the Mediterranean. The sirens were not always the female forms ending in fishes' tails, which figure in the arabesques of poetry and sculpture. They soared in the air before plunging in the waters. They were virgins with the wings and feet of birds, feathered vampires, more melodious than the nightingale. Homer depicts them perched on the bones of sailors who have fallen into their snares.

while Ulysses, bound fast to the mast of his ship, writhes in his hempen bonds as he listens to their songs. It is thus, too, that they figure in the bas-reliefs representing their quarrel with the Muses. Vanquished in the poetic challenge which they dared to offer to the daughters of Jupiter, they struggle in the marble hands of the victorious virgins, who calmly trample them under foot and tear the feathers from their quivering wings. Later the sirens became half fish-like in their forms, and it is thus that they figure in the songs of the poets, and in the popular legends, symbols of the mysteries and treachery of the sea.

After the fall of paganism, and the disappearance of its gods, the sirens reappeared in the northern seas as Nixes or Undines, delivered of their scales and entirely feminine in form. The Undine inherits, from her pagan ancestors, the seductions of music, and allures young fishers into her watery arms by singing. In Sweden the Nix, known by the name of the "Strom Mann," is a famous musician. On certain nights he executes a waltz with eleven variations, of which men can only dance ten. The eleventh is reserved for the spirits of the night, and if an imprudent musician attempts to play it, the tables and benches, jugs and cups, old men and grandmothers, blind men and paralytics, even children in the cradle, would begin to dance, so fascinating is the measure.

Each instrument has its pleasant or terrible legend, its story of good or evil omen. The Bible shows us the trumpets of Joshua whose terrible blast was more mighty against the walls of Jericho than the projectiles of balistæ and catapults. In the Book of Kings we read of the harp of David which calmed the madness of Saul. In the antique world, the lyre of Orpheus soothed tigers and civilised barbarians. The musician Amphion made the very stones move and place themselves in cadence, side by side, to form the walls of Thebes. The lyre of Timotheus aroused Alexander from the tent where he rested his head on the shoulder of Ephestion, and soothed with the sound

The king grew vain ;
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes,
..... and thrice he slew the slain.

These beautiful allegories of the power of music reappear, disfigured but still singularly expressive, in the mythologies and legends of the north. When Wainamonen.

the Finnish god, plays upon the harp Nature becomes all ears. The beasts of the forest approach, the birds perch on his shoulders, the fishes gathered in shoals along the brink listen with open gills, as the Christian legend represents them listening to the preaching of St. Francis. Then the god rejoices; tears of joy roll from his eyes, fall upon his breast, on his knees, and thence to his feet and moisten his eight robes and his five mantles.

The horn of Roland is heroic and superb when the preux chevalier, in distress in the ravines of Roncevaux, blows in it with such a furious blast that the blood spurts from his mouth and his temples split. His cry of despair pierces the rocks; it is like a death-rattle cleaving the air; at a distance of thirty leagues it strikes the ear of Charlemagne who feels the hero's soul passing in it. The horn of Oberon is mocking, comic, and fantastic, as it is fitting that the instrument of the King of the Elves should be; all who hear it are obliged to dance. In Wieland's ballad the chevalier Huon, surprised by the Calif at the feet of his daughter the beautiful Rezzia, is condemned to the stake together with his lady-love. But, at the moment when the faggots are lighted, Huon puts to his lips the magic horn that Oberon gave him. At the first blast the whole town is seized with vertigo; agas, imauns, muftis, pachas, and dervishes with their pointed bonnets, begin to turn furiously and form an immense farandole around the pyre.

In Norway, the genius Fossegrin teaches the violin, in the night of Holy Thursday, to any person who sacrifices to him a white goat and throws it into a cascade flowing northwards, taking care to turn away his head. The genius then seizes the right hand of his pupil and moves it over the strings of the fiddle until the blood comes out under the nails. The apprentice is thenceforward a master, and his enchanted violin will make trees dance and stay rivers in their course.

The reader will remember the magic power of the flute in the legend of the piper of Hamelin, so charmingly related by Robert Browning.

The drum too plays a great rôle in magical music. The drum of the Thessalian witches brought the moon down from the sky. The drum of the sorcerers of Lapland summons the soul out of the body, as out of a tent, and sends it promenading in strange lands on the winged feet of dreams.

According to the Christian tradition, bells exorcise evil geniuses, who cordially detest them. A quaint German legend relates that a Kobold, furious at seeing a spire rising in the village where he lived, gave a letter to a peasant and begged him to place it in the poor-box of the church. The peasant examined the letter curiously as he went along, and suddenly noticed some drops of water fall from it. The letter gradually opened, and from it there fell first heavy rain and then cascades and cataracts, so that the peasant could scarcely save his life by swimming. The evil spirit had enclosed a whole lake in his letter in order to submerge the church. This lake covered an immense tract of land and may still be seen near Kund. Sorcerers and demons also abominate bells, which they call barking dogs (*Bellende Hunde*). At their midnight meetings they use only little bells to parody the ceremony of man. Pierre de Lancre, in his *Tableau de l'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges et Démons*, says that he never saw any witness or sorcerer who testified to having seen large bells at the sabbat: "*Je n'ay veu aucun tesmoin n'y sorcière qui desposat avoir veu, au sabbat, de grandes cloches.*" When a Swedish witch, riding on a broomstick, passes a steeple, she stops and unhangs the bell, which she carries off, holding it by the clapper, and flings into the sea. The devil, when he is carrying a magician through the air is obliged to let him fall at the sound of the *Ave Maria*.

But the most wonderful instrument of the magical orchestra is described in a Hessian legend, recorded by the Brothers Grimm. A man kills his brother while they are out hunting, and buries the corpse under the arch of a bridge. Years pass. One day a shepherd, crossing the bridge with his flock, sees below a little white bone, shining like ivory. He goes down, picks it up and carves it into a mouth-piece for his bagpipes. When he began to play, the mouth-piece, to his horror, began to sing of its own accord: "Oh, my dear shepherd! you are playing on one of my bones; my brother assassinated me and buried me under the bridge." The shepherd, terrified, took his bagpipes to the king, who put the mouth-piece to his lips, when straightway the refrain began: "Oh, my dear king! you are playing on one of my bones; my brother assassinated me and buried me under the bridge." The king ordered all his subjects to try in turn the bagpipes. From mouth to mouth the

instrument passed to that of the fratricide, and then it sang: "Oh, my dear brother! you are playing on one of my bones; it was you who assassinated me!" and the king caused the murderer to be executed.

Another conception of striking originality is that of the Indian song, composed by the god Mahedo and his wife Parbutea, the fervour of which was such that it consumed those who sang it. One day the Emperor Akbar ordered one of his musicians, Naik Gopaul, to stand up to his chin in the waters of the Jumna and sing to him this melody. Hardly had the musician sung a few notes of the fervent song, when flames shot up from his body, and his ashes were seen floating on the surface of the water!

"OPEN SESAME."

CHAPTER III. AT HOME WITH THE MAIRE.

MEANTIME all went gaily at the maire's banquet. Even Madame Souchet was mollified by the courtesy of the maire and his wife. Charles, too, was assiduous in his attentions; he sat beside her at dinner, and amused her vastly by his talk. She knew very well what the youth would be at, he was making love to the key of her cash-box. He wanted Marie, perhaps, but he wanted still more the big dowry that it was rumoured Madame Souchet meant to give her. The young doctor, Cavalier, the other suitor, was on the other side of her. He did not say much, and devoted himself chiefly to his dinner and wine. But Madame Souchet's resolution was in no wise shaken. Charles was a mere butterfly, fickle and extravagant. The other was solid—too solid, perhaps—but at all events to be relied upon. And there was his uncle opposite, a rich proprietor, yellow and rather feeble. He could not have many years of life in him, and then the young people would be handsomely established in the world. True, the old fellow was very exacting; he demanded more than Madame Souchet felt inclined at one time to give. But now things were altered, she must accede to his terms, for the marriage must be pushed on at all hazards. Before the father had time to mature his plans, hers must be completed. Then she would be sure of Marie for the rest of her life.

The maire's house stood on the quay facing the river, and the windows of the salon opened on a roomy balcony. Here, when dinner was over, the men of the

party gathered to smoke and watch the preparations for the evening's fête. The coloured lamps were beginning to twinkle among the trees, the fiddler was trying his strings, while the cornet sounded a note or two at hazard. Blue blouses were crowding up and white mob caps, and at each trip the ferry-boat brought over more of them; blue and white did not mingle as yet, but were clustered apart in hostile camps, exchanging light missiles in the way of jests and taunts.

M. Cavalier, who did not smoke, had remained in the salon, and was engaged in deep and confidential talk with the post-mistress. Brunet, who was among the smokers outside, watched them through the window with jealous eyes. He drew Charles's attention to the pair.

"You see what that means," he whispered; "come out with me upon the quay, I have something particular to say."

Charles followed Brunet, and the two began to pace up and down along the margin of the river. It was nearly dark now, the lamps were lighted, and the fiddle and cornet in full swing. Brunet's first communication was about Charles's own private affairs.

A letter from Paris had come that morning addressed to M. Lalonde, and the banker had opened it. It proved to be a tailor's bill for a hundred and fifty francs. The banker was in a great rage about it. But in the end he would be mollified and pay it. Brunet would undertake to talk him over.

Charles thanked his friend, but not very warmly. There seemed to be something behind.

"You know, Charles," went on Brunet, "I think this would be a good opportunity to speak to your father about your marriage. You can express your contrition for extravagance and promise to lead an exemplary life, if he will permit you to marry Marie."

"Oh, don't talk to me of Marie," cried Charles, with a gesture of despairing trouble.

"Why, what is the matter now, Charles, I thought it was your most earnest wish?"

"There is an end of all that now," said Charles; "Marie is an angel, and I am one of the lost ones. My father is indignant because I owe a hundred and fifty francs. What will he say to a bill drawn upon him for ten thousand?"

Brunet listened in stupefied amazement as Charles recounted his difficulties. He had speculated on the Bourse and had lost

ten thousand francs. To meet his losses he had drawn a bill upon his father. It was now in the hands of the huissier, their neighbour, and would be presented on the morrow.

"You must have been mad, mad! My poor Charles!" cried Brunet, wringing his hands.

"Yes, I was mad, I know, but I thought to make my fortune, and, indeed, I should have cleared something handsome but for this terrible fall of a centime."

"It is terrible, certainly," said Brunet dryly; he had recovered his composure with marvellous speed, and it seemed even as if some satisfactory feature in the matter had presented itself to him; "still, there are a good many centimes in ten thousand francs. Do you owe much besides?"

"No, a mere trifle," cried Charles eagerly; "I assure you I have not been half as reckless and extravagant as most of my companions."

"True," said Brunet; "you seem to have been irreproachably prudent. But tell me, Charles, what do you mean to do?"

"I shall kill myself," said Charles gloomily; "I cannot survive dishonour."

"But how dishonour?" asked Brunet. "It is a debt. They will sue you for it, perhaps. But you will pay in the end."

"I have not told you the worst, Brunet," groaned forth Charles; "there was a difficulty in negotiating the bill and I—I—accepted it for my father."

"My poor, poor Charles!" cried Brunet, overcome with despair. "How could you do such a thing? Oh, Charles, if you had stolen ten thousand francs from your father's safe, it would have been better than this—the criminal code would not have touched you then. But to utter a false bill! No, that is fatal."

"You think then that I ought to put an end to myself?"

"Charles, if I were your father I think I should say yes."

"But, Lucien—oh, Lucien, my good friend!" cried Charles in an agony of supplication, "I don't want to die; I want to live and marry Marie. And perhaps, dear Lucien, if you broke it to my father—"

"What! I break to your father that you had falsified a bill for ten thousand francs. I would sooner kill myself with you."

"Then there is nothing else for it," cried Charles with a gesture of despair, breaking away from his friend.

"Stay, stay!" cried Lucien. "My boy,

my son! do you think I should have been so stern if I had not some good thing behind. Come, I may tell you that I command the sum of ten thousand francs. It is a sum set apart for Marie's dower. Now we will employ it in redeeming your bills."

Charles was incredulous at first, then convinced of his friend's sincerity, he wrung his hand warmly and called him his preserver, his benefactor. But Lucien had certain terms to impose. The money was set aside for a certain purpose, and that purpose must be fulfilled. Not only must Charles promise to obtain his father's consent to marry Marie, and accept the ten thousand francs as her dower, but certain securities must be exacted that he should keep his promise. First of all, the bill must be left in Brunet's hands, and Charles must also write an acknowledgment that the bill was a false one, and that the money had been advanced to him to save him from disgrace. In that way if he failed to keep his word, his character might be blasted before the world. Charles agreed to everything; he had no alternative, but he was inwardly angered that such terms should be imposed. He fully intended to marry Marie, but it was irksome to be bound over to do it, and to know that such a rod was held over him.

"Fizz, bang!" away went the first warning rocket into the air, descending presently in a shower of golden rain, while a myriad fiery points from the placid river seemed to rise and meet the golden shower. A blinding darkness followed, and indeed a huge black cloud had quietly stolen over the scene, enhancing the beauty of the first discharge, but promising ill for the conclusion of the fête.

And that reminded Brunet that he had promised to fetch his sister and Marie to see the fireworks. But when he made the promise he had not thought of certain important despatches which had to be made up. Perhaps Charles would take his place, and escort the ladies. Charles agreed to this and went off to the place, while Brunet made his way back to the bank.

The guests had all departed and Lalonde was seated in front of his desk, upon which a shaded lamp threw a powerful light.

The safe was open—a handsome safe, bronzed and gilt, but worn to bright steel at parts by years of handling. Cautious and mistrustful, although he would have known his clerk's footsteps among a thousand, Lalonde pushed to the heavy door of the

safe, and without rising from his seat turned the studs that were set in the middle of the door, five brass studs about each of which was engraved a complete alphabet. Then as Brunet entered he looked up with a knowing twinkle of the eye as much as to say, 'You are hardly likely to knock me on the head and take my keys, when you know that you haven't got the 'open sesame.'" Knowing people had often told the banker that this puzzle lock of which he thought so highly was a mere toy, and that an experienced lock-picker could get at his treasure all the more readily from such useless complications. But the banker stuck to his safeguard. Perhaps it was not a professional robber he feared, so much as the people about him—Brunet, for instance, who had been with him twenty-five years without earning his full confidence. Brunet greeted his master silently with a nod, and having changed his superfine dinner coat for his alpaca office blouse and hung his watch on a hook just on a level with his eye, applied himself busily to the letters of the day. The banker all the while, seemingly lulled in a kind of reverie, kept one twinkling eye fixed upon his clerk. When the letters were finished Brunet went to the door communicating with the house, opened it for a moment and gave a peculiar whistle, then resumed his seat. In a few moments the door opened again and there appeared the rubicund face of Père Douze.

"Jacques is busy with the dinner things," explained the banker in reply to a questioning glance from Brunet. "Our letters can't be in safer hands."

"I am proud to hear you say so, M. le Maire," said Père Douze, advancing with profound bows, the lamp gleaming upon his bald and polished crown, his greasy képi in one hand, the well-worn rattan, the terror of the gamins of Canville, in the other.

Père Douze—this was the pleasant, almost affectionate soubriquet bestowed by the public of Canville on their one permanent policeman—owed his title, it was thought, to his consummate skill in turning the double-six at dominoes. For a long time known as "Double Six," the name had been found to hang on the tongue, and had been naturally condensed to its present form. He was an affable approachable man in private life, and there was felt to be a certain advantage to the community in having a man thus accessible and, as it were, elastic, interposed between the rigid and unyielding framework of the law and

the ordinary stuff of humanity. As Jules could tell you, for instance—Jules the ostler at the Victoires, condemned to three days' prison the other day for brawling. How awkward for him to have one of these days fall upon a Saturday's market, when he made his profits for the whole week! But an amiable understanding with Père Douze obviated all this; and by going to prison late one evening, and coming out very early on the next morning but one, poor Jules, who, though he does not leave his own stable-yard once a month, looked forward to his term of imprisonment with unreasoning dread, found himself quit of the matter more easily than he expected. A good deal, too, could be done with Père Douze by addressing him as "Monsieur le Commissaire," or even as "Monsieur l'Adjoint." Certainly he had no right to either title; but there was a kind of vagueness about his official position which left room for the imagination. Report said that once upon a time he had been a real commissary of police, and that, broken for intemperance, he still haunted the scene of his short official career, while succeeding commissaries out of pity put little jobs in his way from time to time. Anyhow, Père Douze had succeeded in imposing himself upon the town of Canville as a permanent functionary. Commissaries came and went; but Père Douze was there always, the repository of official traditions, the man of local knowledge. The one glory of his latter days had been the capture of a Communard—a famous Communard, no other than Desmoulin himself, who had managed to slip through the hands of troops and policemen to be captured in the end by Père Douze. The fond foolish fellow had crept into the town to bid adieu to his little girl, almost without precautions, relying upon the obtuseness of the local police. But he had reckoned without his Père Douze. The reward earned on this occasion had dwelt pleasantly in the police-agent's mind, long after the material reward itself had melted away. And when Madame Desmoulin came to live in the town, and was placed, as you may say, under his tutelary care, Père Douze made up his mind that in this case police supervision should not be an empty form. And he had always the sweet expectation that, one day or other, he would find his account in the shape of some one who had broken his ban, some escaped convict; for birds of a feather, he argued, flocked together.

Even now, though the term of her sentence had expired, and the poor woman

was free; though the only link that bound her to the place was her poverty—hard, grinding poverty, worse than the convict's chain—even now the père had not given up all hope. And hearing of the escape of the prisoners from Nouméa, his hopes had been raised to the highest pitch. The one human being who longed, hoped, prayed for the return of the exiled Communard was Père Douze. But hope had grown faint at last by lapse of time.

Awaiting events, Père Douze was glad to do little commissions for the maire. He was not at all difficult about what he undertook, nor above taking round the bell to announce an arrival of fresh herrings. But the drum delighted him most and an official notification from the maire. His eyes would flash, his cheeks flush at the heart-stirring rataplan, and he would shout out the last decree about dogs and their collars, or the verifying of weights and measures, as if they were words of command. Perhaps he had been a soldier once and lost himself at that; who knows? For all his troubles, however, there was consolation at the maire's banquets. The police of the kitchen suited him best: the supervision of the roast, a perquisition into the pot au feu.

And now he was ready to take M. Lalonde's letters to the post, Jules being otherwise engaged. And after that he would take a turn round the town to ensure order and tranquility.

As soon as Père Douze had departed, Brunet arranged his scanty locks with a pocket-comb, put on his dress-coat, adjusted his white tie. Yes, he was a gentlemanly man, the banker admitted after a stolen glance at his clerk—not without a twinge of jealousy, feeling that his own claims in that way were slender. The clerk was, perhaps, a credit to the establishment. But how could he afford to dress in that way on his salary? Next he would take his hat and depart. But no, holding his hat in his hand, Brunet advanced towards the banker, and politely demanded the honour of a private interview. M. Lalonde turned purple with surprise, a surprise mixed with slight alarm. What could the man want? He was not long in explaining what he wanted. "I have come, monsieur, to propose an alliance between our families." And this with an air as if the condescension were on his side! And indeed, as Brunet looked searchingly at his master, flushed with wine and liqueurs and much eating, Brunet felt a thrill of misgiving. Was he

doing well by Marie in placing her in such a family? The father was Silenus, the son Apollo—he might not be mythologically correct, that mattered not; anyhow there was a strong family likeness. Was Lalonde a good husband to that pale little wife of his; had he any kind of character except that of a capitalist? Now, if Charles turned out eventually after the same mould? But no, Charles was educated, and then he was weaker, more easily led. A good wife would be the making of him.

All this time Lalonde sat scratching his ear in perplexity. He was too cautiously polite to express the contemptuous surprise he felt at such a proposal. "Go on, monsieur," he said as Brunet paused; "go on, pray."

"My niece and your son Charles," continued Brunet, "are sincerely attached to each other."

The banker said cautiously that this might possibly be, he knew nothing of it. Marie was certainly a charming girl, he could quite understand how his son might have become smitten. And for his own part nothing would give him greater pleasure. But, unfortunately, he and Madame Souchet were not likely to agree. In fact, he knew that she had quite other views, and without Madame Souchet there would be no dowry.

"Pardon me," said Brunet stiffly, "Madame Souchet has not the disposal of my niece's hand. And as for the dowry, our family will charge ourselves with that."

Lalonde grunted softly, waiting to hear more. Inwardly he derided the ridiculous pretensions of these Brunets. The mother a sempstress, earning a franc a day; the uncle, with his fifteen hundred francs all told. These were nice people to talk about contracts of marriage with the son of the banker of the district. And the girl's father a convict, a Communard! Lalonde himself, though mildly Imperialist, liked to be well with all parties. But the Commune was a little too strong.

"Yes, M. Lalonde," went on Brunet with decision, "I am prepared to endow my niece with ten thousand francs."

Lalonde started with a violence that made everything creak about him. Brunet thought that his emotion was caused by the smallness of the sum, and went on to expatiate on the respectability of the family—he meant his own family—and the charms of the young woman, as compensating for this. Lalonde looked at his clerk with a stupefied air.

"Hey!" he cried, "I don't think I quite understand. You have ten thousand francs to give away."

Brunet bowed in acquiescence. The banker's face became crimson, then tallow-coloured. If Brunet had ten thousand francs, where had he got them? Certainly he had never saved as much. Did not Brunet regularly every year demand an increase to his salary on the ground of its insufficiency for his needs, and had not the increase been always peremptorily refused? And now, if, after all, the man had been able to save ten thousand francs, why the thing was in itself a robbery. But ah! it was worse, much worse than that. Brunet must have found his way to the safe and have helped himself from the sacks of five-franc pieces. But the banker felt that he must not show his indignation, he must temporise.

"My dear Brunet," he said, caressingly laying his hand upon the other's shoulder, "this is all very pleasant, very pleasant indeed. We may discuss the matter at all events. These ten thousand francs now, are they well invested?"

Brunet hesitated for a moment, and his master duly noted his hesitation.

"Yes," he said at last; "the money is invested in a perfectly safe manner."

M. Lalonde's countenance fell. Ah, the rogue was out of his power then. If he had been able to invest the stolen money there was no chance of bringing the offence home to him. Now, if he had been found in possession of a quantity of specie, and unable to give a satisfactory account of it, there would have been a chance!

"That is a great pity," murmured Lalonde with a soft sigh. "An investment is all very well, but unless it is capable of being realised in a moment—but perhaps yours is of that description?" Lalonde turned upon his clerk suddenly with a searching look.

Brunet admitted that it was not quite like that. A certain notice would be required; "but the money would be quite safe and ready to time."

"Very unlucky, very unlucky indeed," said the banker. "In our business, you know, such a sum, small in itself, is often useful. In fact, it would be useful to me at this moment, and had it been ready money—well, who can say? But, as it is, with many thanks, shall we say that we decline the honour?"

In these last words, Lalonde suffered a certain suppressed sneer to be apparent—a sneer that cut Brunet to the quick.

"Very well, monsieur," he said coldly, "but, perhaps, you will have occasion to recall your decision, if Charles's happiness is at stake."

The banker chuckled, not without bitterness: "Ha, ha! Charles's happiness; I mock myself of Charles's happiness. Happiness, monsieur, is best secured by a good supply of écus. I congratulate you on having so well-lined your own strong-box." There was something almost pathetic in these last words, as if the banker felt he were taking a last adieu of his own lost crown-pieces.

Hardly had Brunet gone out when Père Douze appeared in the bank. Having executed his commission at the post-office, on his way back he had taken a look round the town. There was no open disorder, but traces of a very evil spirit abroad. Somebody had hummed a bar or two of the Marseillaise, and one young fellow had muttered to another, as he passed: "Bah, it is that imbecile of a Père Douze!" The maire shook his head in reprobation, but there was a half-smile on his face as he replied that the line must not be too tightly drawn on these occasions. After all, perhaps the père had given some ground for satire. He had done well in the maire's kitchen, and had evidently met with sympathising friends on his way who had treated him handsomely.

Lalonde scanned the police-agent critically. The man had certainly been drinking; but then the père was at his best in such a condition.

"Père," cried the maire, "I know that I can trust you. Well! I fear I am being robbed."

"Ha!" cried the père, bringing his bloodshot-eyes to the same level as the banker's. "Is it only now you suspect it?"

"What, you think it too?" cried the banker, in real alarm that his suspicions should find such an echo. "Do you know anything, then?"

The père pointed with his stick towards Brunet's empty chair, with an expression on his face of mysterious confidence. "Why, what can you expect?" he urged. "Such a family! convicts, Communards—bah! But, monsieur," continued the père hastily, with vinous enthusiasm, "suffer me only to make a perquisition in his house!"

Lalonde shook his head.

"No, no! I can't authorise anything; but if you did such a thing on your own responsibility, and it turned out well, you should have a handsome réward."

"Monsieur, you may rely upon me. If the miscreant is deceiving you——"

A quick footstep approached, and the door was tried from outside, but Lalonde had already turned the key. The père turned pale.

"Is it he; is it M. Brunet?" he asked in some trepidation.

"No, sir, it is only Charles." The house-door had been opened, and some one approached by the private passage. "Away with you, père."

Charles coming in next moment found his father in a somewhat sullen and arbitrary mood. The tailor's bill was on the desk before him, and he pointed angrily to it as he demanded what it meant. Charles replied coolly that it was a matter he would settle himself in good time.

"Charles," cried the banker, "I assure you that if you are incurring debts, looking to me to pay them, you deceive yourself. I will turn all my money into life annuities and leave you to go to the dogs as you please."

Charles trembled, for he thought his father quite capable of carrying out his threat. Anyhow this was not a favourable opportunity for speaking of his unalterable affection for Marie, and of his determination to marry her. And yet this was what Brunet expected at his hands!

Having relieved himself a little of his indignation, however, the banker seemed to relent a little. He went to his safe and counted out some money which he placed in his purse. "I shall send this fellow his account to-morrow, and beg him to give you no more credit; and never let it happen again, do you hear, Charles?" Charles would have demurred a little. The precedent was a bad one. He felt that, if his creditors came to think that they had only to send their bills to his father to be paid, there was likely to be a heavy shower of these documents. But his father silenced his objections by an angry frown.

Charles took up the newspaper and began to read. His father leaned back in his chair, drumming with his fingers on his desk, seemingly absorbed in thought. After a time the drumming ceased, and presently came the sound of heavy breathing, which every now and then culminated in a decided snore.

Yes, M. Lalonde was fast asleep in his chair; and—marvellous negligence on the

part of the astute banker!—had left his safe unlocked.

Charles gently moved his chair to where he could command a view of the inside of the safe. There were many bags of five-franc pieces, round and tight, like flour-sacks, and there, still more tempting, was a pile of cylinders, like cartridges, but holding a more deadly charge. One had been broken, and had fallen to pieces in a heap of glittering napoleons. Each of these rouleaux was worth a thousand francs.

Ten of these would put Charles out of danger, and that without handing himself over body and soul to his father's clerk. For Brunet's terms had been, doubtless, hard.

He resented, too, the way in which Marie was to be forced upon him, and recoiled from the ungrateful task of reconciling his father to the match. Through all this constantly sounded in his ears the refrain, "A son who steals from his father is not punishable under the code; to obtain money on false bills means imprisonment and hard labour."

The old man slept soundly.

To reach the door leading to the private apartments, Charles must pass the safe. What more easy, then, than to stretch out his hand and take ten of these rouleaux! There, the thing was done.

Charles looked guiltily about him. No, his father had not stirred. But now a sudden fear came upon him. When his father awoke and found the safe open he would be sure to count his money, and finding a deficit, he would guess that his son had caused it. But to lock the safe and place the keys in his desk! Then his father would conclude that he had himself locked the safe.

Another idea: the five little studs by which was formed the password. Well, to alter these to a password of his own. In that way his father would not be able to open the safe at all till after a good many trials. By the time the safe was opened Charles would be on his way to Paris, and if the loss were discovered, suspicion would hardly fall upon him.

The first word of five letters that came into his head was Marie, and to that word he adjusted the studs. Then he locked the safe and placed the keys by his father's elbow.

Now the secret was safe for awhile, and he held his freedom in his own hands.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER XIII. NO.

MR. NELSON—Miss Doyle!

Should I be to blame for throwing down a pen which refuses to put a seeming eternity of hopeless, speechless, chaotic amazement into a single word? It was absolutely impossible, even as an incident in a dream, that Miss Doyle, a guest at Cautleigh Hall, should be poor Phœbe Burden, who had been a sort of maid-of-all-work to a lawyer's clerk, and had run away with a fiddler. Nothing could be so impossible. And yet could there be two Phœbes in Phil Nelson's eyes? That would be to the impossible what the impossible itself is to common things.

Yet that Phœbe Burden should under any conceivable conditions, and in a period of time to be measured by months only, have developed into this fine Miss Doyle—Could it be wondered that even a lover should mistrust his own sight? That a healthy man should doubt if he were not a fever-patient in the heart of Russian steppes once more? "Phœbe!" had sprung to his lips, when his eyes met hers. She was flushed, and her eyes were bright; but they were also as silent as her tongue. The name died upon his lips, and he gave her his arm.

There was a chance for him to say in a low voice, on the way downstairs: "Phœbe, I have found you; I know you; whatever this means, fear nothing; I am your friend." But suppose his brain were really fevered by these last anxious days,

and that he were exaggerating a mere accidental resemblance into an incredible identity? He had learnt what delirium means, and what it could do; nor had his latest experiences been of a kind to keep it away. Surely the real Phœbe could not have treated her foster-brother as a stranger—would somehow have contrived to answer him, if only with her eyes. And if he were mad, if this Miss Doyle were in truth not Phœbe, he had at least the common presence of mind, of which not even madmen are devoid, not to pose as a madman before her and before them all. He did not look into her face, but he felt the light touch of her hand upon his arm. Could Phœbe's hand have lain there so quiet and so calm?

He certainly did not think or care, if some strange Miss Doyle might be thinking the roughly-dressed guest to whom it had been her misfortune to fall an exceeding stupid cavalier. If this girl were Phœbe, she was still everything to him; if not, then she was less than nothing. Presently he was seated at the table between her and a middle-aged lady whom he did not observe. He could not speak to Phœbe, if it were she. How could he, for the sake of testing her by her voice, say any common nothing to her, whom he had thought lost in one impossible way, and had found in another? And he had nothing to say to a Miss Doyle.

Sitting under new conditions at the table of a strange house, among strangers, and beside one whom he had till an instant ago believed lost worse than hopelessly, or else one who resembled her more closely than twin sisters in a comedy, it is no wonder that he lost certain belief in the trustworthiness of his very senses in

this dream-like maze. So absorbed was he in the presence of his neighbour that he ate and drank very much like the rest, simply because he had no observation to spare for heeding whether he ate and drank or no, or even whether anything was placed before him. Of the surrounding talk he did not catch a word. His ears were waiting for some word from his neighbour that might be drawn from her by other speech than his own.

"My father has been bringing a terrible accusation against you," at last said the young man of about Phil's own age, or younger, who sat on Miss Doyle's other side. No doubt he had been courteously waiting to give the stranger his chance, and, having thrown his courtesy away, felt called to save the girl herself from being wasted on so dismally stupid a companion. "He says you don't ride."

Phil waited anxiously for the sound of her answer, and—

"No," said she, in so low a tone that it might have been any girl's. Her accent was certainly not more distinctively Phœbe's than her eyes.

"I thought all ladies rode in India before sunrise, or in the middle of the night, or up the hills, or whatever the cool times and places are. I've been turning it over in my mind, I can assure you, most anxiously, and you must ride."

Phil waited in vain this time, for even so much as a no.

"There's only one reason that makes me doubt, or I should say that did make me doubt, whether riding would be altogether good for you, and I'm bound to say it's a selfish one. Can you guess?"

"No."

"I detest perfection. Nobody does like his own likeness, you know, and my father says, that all you want of absolute perfection is to be able to take a bullfinch flying. You can get somebody to help you to a habit, and I'll have out Mab to-morrow. She can't take a bullfinch, but she's warranted not to spill—as steady as one of your own elephants, Miss Doyle. You're just about the weight for Mab, and she's just the pace and style for a beginner. I'll see you through your paces myself."

"Do you hunt?" suddenly asked the elderly lady on Phil's right, turning upon him rather sharply, and preventing him hearing whether Miss Doyle's "Yes" might be more to the purpose than her "No."

"No," said he, in his turn, and rather

like a bear. But there were limits set by certain instincts of his, to even his worst manners. "No, I have never hunted," he said, if still something like a bear, yet more like one who has been tamed and trained. "I am no sportsman, and have no fellow-feeling with those who are."

"Then I would not advise you to speak quite so loud," said she. "Privately, I agree with you. We are not country people, you know. Mr. Urquhart does not hunt, nor do I. He is a very old friend of Sir Charles. Did you know poor Lady Bassett? She was a charming person. She was a very dear friend of mine. You have come for these theatricals, I suppose? I don't act myself, and so of course I'm no judge of such things. Mr. Ralph Bassett is a very good actor, they say; I've never seen him myself, so of course—"

"Don't make me blush, Mrs. Urquhart," said Miss Doyle's talking neighbour, catching at the chance of making the talk in that particular part of the table more general. "I don't know what you said, but I heard my name, so I know it was praise. I'm afraid I shouldn't be able to count on Urquhart himself so well. By Jove! when I think of the number of times I've not been in his chambers, I wonder whether he'd know me if he saw me. The last time I met myself there, I declare—Did you ever feel as if you were somebody else, Miss Doyle?"

"No."

And so the long dinner dragged out for Phil—a mere waste of barren chatter from which he could gather nothing, except that Miss Doyle was either singularly silent by nature or else intentionally dumb. But at last the ladies withdrew, and Phil found himself thrown next to the young man who had done all the talking for three.

"I must introduce myself, Mr. Nelson," said he pleasantly. "I am Sir Charles Bassett's son. I hear you've come down about reclaiming Cautleigh Holms. It's a big idea; I didn't know till you came that my father had carried it so far. I'm glad you've come down now, for my own sake, because I'm at home, and for yours, because we're a rather livelier house than we always are. I suppose you won't want to be up to your waist in the Holms all day long? Do you hunt? I can always give you a mount."

"Thank you," said Phil, with a touch of the pride which working bees fancy, in their conceit, that they have a right to assume towards the butterflies who may

really be their betters, if the whole truth were known; "but I expect that my work here will leave no time for play."

"I thought," said Ralph, too good-humouredly to be suspected of aiming at an amply deserved repartee, "that all work and no play was the business of the machines, not of the men who make them. No, your doctrine won't hold water; it's not a bit like Cautleigh Holms. Look at Urquhart, the husband of that lady who sat next you; he married money, and he's made money, and she half starves him to keep what they've got, and he grinds himself into Scotch snuff to make another bawbee. Which is the wisest, the man who puts off work till it's too late to work, or the man who puts off enjoying till it's too late to enjoy? It seems to me that the fool's-cap made for one will fit the other just as well."

That was not what Phil's gospel had become, whatever it might have been had he been born heir to Cautleigh, and had found no cause to vow the sacrifice of his soul upon the altar of heartless labour. But here, at least, a chance had been given him that was not to be thrown away. So he forced himself to ask, and thought he put the question as lightly as if it had sincerely meant nothing but natural curiosity:

"Which was Mrs. Urquhart? The lady on my right or on my left, I mean?"

"Well, I should rather say decidedly not the lady on your left. That was Miss Doyle."

"Miss Doyle?"

"Yes, and though she's been staying here some time now, I never found out till to-day that she was so good a talker. Till I sat next her just now, I had always fancied her a trifle slow, and heavy to lift. But I suppose to a girl who has been a close prisoner in India all her life, England must still seem rather strange."

"Miss Doyle—and she has lived in India? Who is Miss Doyle?" asked Phil, bewildered more than ever.

"You have been in India, then?" said Ralph, supposing that the name might easily be familiar to the ears of a presumably travelled engineer. "In that case you very likely know more about the Doyles than I. Old Doyle is in some sort of financial business in Calcutta, I believe, who knew my father before he went out, and has lately come back to England, bringing his daughter with him. They're rich people, I believe."

"And this Miss Doyle has lived in India, you say, always—ever since she was a child?"

"It isn't usual. But she has—for aught I know she was born there. Anyhow, she must have gone out too young to remember England, for she knows nobody, and has been nowhere except to London and here. But it certainly doesn't look as if India was so bad a nursery as they say. Do you know old Doyle?"

"No. Is he—Miss Doyle's father—here?"

"No, he didn't come down. I have a sort of notion that he's a bit of a bear—a sort of heavy comedy father, you know. After the way he used to keep her shut up in India, I was rather surprised at his letting her come down alone. But she's got a maid like an elderly marchioness, who looks quite capable of acting duenna to old Doyle's heavy father. You must excuse my stage slang; when the frost set in, somebody or other was prompted by some mischievous imp to put us upon getting up a play, and now that the weather has broken, we're too much bit to send the imp packing. Do you act? I'll make you a present of my part, and welcome, if you do."

"I don't act. Does Miss Doyle?"

This time Phil's indifference was a piece of affectation too obvious to pass unnoticed by the dullest and most masculine eyes. Ralph was much too good-natured to see the making of a possible butt in the ill-dressed and not too-well-mannered guest who was anything but one of themselves, and seemed unable to help talking about a girl to whom he had been unable to say a word. These things made up all the more reason for being especially civil to so exceptional a stranger.

"No," said he, "Miss Doyle is a girl in a thousand; she doesn't sing, she doesn't play harp, fiddle, or piano; she doesn't write, she doesn't read, she doesn't even ride, she doesn't flirt—much—and she's never even seen as many as two plays. I'm glad she doesn't act. It would take off the edge of her superiority to common girls, who all seem crazed to do something badly because professionals do it well. Miss Doyle shall ride, but she sha'n't play. That was our leading lady, opposite you—Lady Mildred Vincent; she into whose ear the imp whispered. I'm her lover—on the stage. If you stay to the first night and the last, you'll see something, though I say it that shouldn't,

nearly half as good as a rehearsal at the very worst theatre in London. But I see we're going to join the ladies. Will you do the same at once, or will you smoke first? No. Very well then, nor will I. But let me first introduce you to my friend Lawrence. Lawrence, let me introduce you to Mr. Nelson, who has come down, like St. Patrick, to drive the frogs out of Cautleigh Holms. And I say, Lawrence," he said when Phil, after just accepting the introduction, had followed his host from the dining-room, "you've got another duel on your hands. Our young friend Miss Phoebe is coming out in the light of the new Helen. First, you go down before her, at the first flutter of her fan. Then my father becomes her shadow, and only to-day confessed to me, in terms of passionate admiration, that he is not going to make her my stepmother—fortunate girl! And now a stray engineer can't sit by her side without being struck speechless in her presence, and unable to talk about anything else as soon as her light was gone. By Jove! it's the funniest thing going, better than fifty plays."

"And how about yourself? It strikes me that if talking about the fair Phoebe is a symptom, you've been in a baddish way yourself this last half-hour."

"Oh, me? I'm going to cut out the lot of you. I'm going to have out Mab, and teach her to ride. It's odd for a girl who's been brought up in India not to be able to ride."

"Yes, Bassett. Odd's the word. There's something odd altogether about that Indian life of hers. Everybody knew all about Jack Doyle, the archdeacon, but who ever heard of Jack Doyle's daughter? And she's as shy of talking about India as if it were—Whitechapel. I never mention it to her now. You know, though he's your father's acquaintance and all that, the archdeacon had not a good name out there, as I warned you at starting. Yes, old fellow, I've a shrewd sort of a guess that either the fair Phoebe's mother was some low caste native, for all her fair skin—nature plays queerer tricks than that—or else that for some other reason the gorgeous East and Miss Phoebe Doyle didn't agree. I tried to get her to let me tell her fortune by the lines in her hands, so that I might have a look at the roots of her nails. But she was up to me, and turned as close-fisted as—her father. She knows a trick or two, that girl."

"What infernal nonsense. She's as good

a girl as ever was born. Of course, she doesn't want to talk shop about howdahs, and tiffin, and brandy pawnee. She must be sick of India, considering the way she must have lived there. And as for her nails——"

"Holloa, Bassett, who's victim number four, if you please? Don't do that, my dear boy; don't, whatever you do."

"Don't do what?"

"Don't teach Phoebe Doyle to ride, that's all."

"Don't teach your great-grandmother, Lawrence, and that's all. Will you weed? Then so will I."

Meanwhile Philip Nelson had sought and found an obscure position in the drawing-room, whence he could observe her whom he had been insane enough to mistake for Phoebe, with the help of the knowledge that she was in reality a Miss Doyle from India. There could be no sort of reasonable doubt about that any more. He had been told by the son of his host that she was a Miss Doyle, the daughter of a rich Anglo-Indian, and that, in consequence, his discovery of the supposed daughter of a copying-clerk in the person of a rich baronet's honoured guest had been something more than absurd—as absurd, to say the least of it, as if he had mistaken the man who had handed him his soup for an earl in disguise.

And yet, as she sat there on a sofa near the fire, receiving the conversation of Sir Charles himself, every trick and turn of her face seemed to identify her more and more with Phoebe. It is true he had never seen Phoebe, the real Phoebe, dressed like a fine lady, but his recollection of her face was very far from being dependent on the accident of clothes. Had he been a painter, he could have made her portrait from memory, and it would have been the exact likeness of Miss Doyle. He was not versed enough in romantic precedent to leap to the conclusion that Miss Doyle must have had a twin-sister who had been stolen in infancy; and, even so, a sister lost in London would not have grown up to be the exact counterpart of one brought up in India. Had he been in a court of justice, Urquhart himself could not have confused his oath that this was Phoebe Burden. And yet, beyond question, she was not Phoebe Burden, and was Miss Doyle.

Music, talk, and a remote whist-table were occupying the rest of the party, but

it was all as unheeded by him as the dinner had been. Presently, however, Sir Charles left Miss Doyle's side, and joined the guest who appeared to be so awkwardly alone in a crowd. It was from his father that Ralph had learned his instincts of courtesy.

"You must give me a holiday to-morrow, Mr. Nelson," said his host. "I was not prepared for so early a visit, and I have engagements that can't possibly be postponed. The rule of this house is for everybody to do whatever he likes, and I hope you will follow the rule. Meanwhile—are you anything of a musician? Music seems to be the rule of the hour, and if you can do anything in that line, I can promise you any amount of public sympathy."

"I am no musician," said Phil, making an effort to bring his thoughts together. "I'm not sure that I'm not unfashionable enough to dislike music," he added, for the sake of saying something, but thinking of a certain serenade.

"Then, Mr. Nelson, you are a hero—not for disliking music, but for daring to say so. I know many a brave man who would sooner go to the stake than own, in these days, that he thinks music a bore, and yet, in their hearts, all but some twenty people in England do; and eleven of those, in their secret souls, wish that it were lawful to like barrel-organs. You and Miss Doyle must have found yourselves kindred spirits. Why, where has she vanished to? I was going to say——"

"Miss Doyle is from India?" asked Phil rather abruptly. Now that the girl was no longer before his eyes, there was no unreasonable doubt to prevent his returning to his question, and adding: "She has such an extraordinary likeness to somebody whom I know—and who she cannot be—that it was at first impossible for me to believe they were not the same."

"Indeed? Perhaps you have been in India, and may have come across my friend Doyle there?" asked Sir Charles, interested in any chance that might give him a scrap of knowledge. "India is a large place, I know, but then the whole world is small."

"No; I have never been in India, nor has the girl I mean."

"Well, likenesses are sometimes startling. Miss Doyle has never been out of India till a few months—I don't know exactly how many—ago. And she is an only child, so it can't be a sister whom you have met anywhere. It's certainly odd, though, that there should be anybody

exactly like Miss Doyle. She isn't of a common type, and her eyes are peculiarly her own. If you're not a musician, perhaps you're a whist-player? I see there is an opening for you to cut in."

Sir Charles, having done his duty, let himself drift into another group.

Phil did not join the card-table; he had ample occupation in realising at last that Miss Doyle from India, in spite of the evidence of his eyes themselves, fortified by minute and indelible memory, could not possibly be Phoebe.

His brain must have been so full of the latter as to be deluded. Phoebe was as lost as ever, and he must not expect to find her in such impossible places, with such impossible conditions, as Cautleigh Hall.

He alone knew of Phoebe, but everybody seemed to know everything about Miss Doyle. Either he had been, or the whole world was, insane; and it is not quite so impossible to decide such a dilemma against oneself as most people suppose.

IN THE PHRASE OF QUEEN ANNE.

WHEN Queen Anne was living there was an immensity going on besides the building of brick houses with small-paned windows; besides the piecing together of rarely-coloured woods for attenuated chairs and tables; besides the production of delicate bric-à-brac in tortoiseshell and ivory, the production of little oval looking-glasses, with bevelled, or "Vauxhall" edges, hung in bewitching and beaded ebony frames. Look at the poor queen herself. She was, as many as seventeen times, a mother. She was seventeen times radiant with hope that a little Stuart—properly subdued and straightened by its descent from Denmark—would be born to her, to fill her days with gladness, and settle the debated question of succession to the pleasure and the peace of all. She was seventeen times flung to the earth with mother's agony, as she stood by baby death-beds, seeing the life-smile die out from baby-lips, and breaking her heart as she closed pretty baby-eyes. Poor royal mourner! Such grief as hers is grief that, happily, is the grief of very few. Such incessantly-recurring bitterness is bitterness that might well have laid her in the grave, before ever gold and jewels were wrought into a crown for her, and the Proclamation was issued that she had become a queen.

It is remembered that one of these many children—and only one—grew to have governesses and tutors, and writing-lessons, and grammar-lessons, and masters in English, and Danish, and Latin, and Greek, and—what is especially to the present purpose—French? The little fellow was William, Duke of Gloucester, christened after his uncle of Orange, the king; his life only advanced so much out of babyhood that it reached to boyhood, for he died of malignant fever when he was eleven years old. It was not thought he was doomed to die; it was supposed he would live to be king of England; and one especial matter with the whole nation was that he should be guarded from Popery jealously. Above all was it essential that no tutor should approach him who could be suspected of being a Papist; and this was lucky for M. Abel Boyer, a capable Frenchman over here, with philological and scholarly attainments, anxiously looking for fit employment. He was an emigré, driven from France by the Grand Monarque's just-issued Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Rushing from Castres to Geneva, from Geneva to Germany, from Germany to London, he was one who could tell of the persecutions the Catholics had inflicted, of the martyrdoms, the pains and penalties the reformed religionists had endured; and his life thus proving him to be a Protestant in his heart as well as in his observances, he was decided to be a proper tutor for the little English prince, and the boy's French studies were confided to his care. He must write an instruction book at once, to be level with such an important post, he concluded; thus arming himself with weapons of his own composition; and he did, calling the work the Rudiments of the French Tongue, "calculated for the meanest capacities," meaning thereby, in all harmlessness, learners as untried and as unacquainted with the French as he found his youthful and royal pupil to be. Soon after, encouraged by the queen, "that great patroness of arts and sciences," as he gratefully and in proper prefatorial manner calls her, he compiled his excellent French and English Dictionary, a well-filled quarto which stood its ground for a century; that, for philological reasons, was "touched with a trembling hand," even when an editor of the twenty-third edition of it had to submit it to some overhauling. M. Boyer compiled, too, his Methodical French Grammar, in which there is a set

of familiar phrases, written for the "instruction of persons of quality" exclusively.

Schoolboys—royal, or only "of quality"—are, naturally, persons not forgotten by M. Boyer in his Familiar Phrases. He represents a quarrel among one set of them; and they cry, "Do not jog me," "You are a sluggard," "You deserve to be whipped," "Go out of my place," "Why do you thrust me so?" "I will complain to the master." When the master is really complained to, it is thus: "Sir, he will not let me alone," "He snatched away my book," "He laughs at me," "He spit on my cloaths," "He pulled me by the hair," "He lolled out his tongue at me," "He kicks me," "He gave me a box on the ear," "He scratched my face with his nails." "Are you out of your wits?" says the master gravely; and then the boys cry: "Why did you tell the master of me? I will pommel you." The order comes: "Take up this boy and beat him soundly," and the victim is admonished to "be better for the future."

A governess—as an appropriate follower after this leader—has to go to her pupil, a young gentlewoman, to bid her rise in the morning. "Wash your hands, mouth, and face," are the governess's limited, but still familiar, phrases; "lace yourself." "I do nothing but cough and spit," observes the young gentlewoman. "Dance a minuet," the governess says. "What do you mutter there?" "Play on the spinnet and harpsichord." "What will you have for your afternooning?" "Do not lick your fingers." "Do not put your fingers into your mouth."

The pupil, out of her governess's hands and become a grown-up lady, had a waiting-woman to rouse her from her sleep, and this was done, according to M. Boyer, at half-past ten. All in familiar phrases, her under-garments were warmed before she put them on; she asked for her dimity under-petticoat and her hoop, her black velvet petticoat and her yellow manteau. These were followed by her tippet, gloves, muff, fan, and mask; she ordered the waiting-woman to lace her tight, to give her the patch-box and the puff to powder her hair; she enquired if the milliner had brought home the stomacher of ribbons bespoken yesterday; she was afraid, after all, her head was dressed awry.

A person of quality—of the sterner sex—in his dressing-room, gives as many suggestive and familiar phrases again. "Boy," he cries, "light a candle," "Make a fire,"

"Bid the maid bring me a clean shirt," "Reach me my breeches," "Comb my perriwig," "Put some essence to it," "Sweeten my handkerchief," "Plait my neckcloth," "Did you buy me a cravat-string?" "Give me my new suit of clothes, because it is the Queen's birthday," "I will go open-breasted," "Give me my sword," "Where is my sword-knot?" A plain cravat he will wear, he says; steenkirks are no longer in fashion; and then he asks, "Where is my wash-ball?" and explains, in a familiar frenzy, "That cross wench has brought me no water."

The same subject is continued, nearly, when a familiar phraser is ordering a fresh suit. He will have it black, he decides, for he has a mind to go in mourning with the court. "Make the suit neat and modish," he says; "line the coat and waistcoat with Indian stuff, the breeches with skins, well dressed." For the hat, he likes a Carolina hat, he says, with a gold galoon hat-band and a diamond buckle. When the suit comes home, he has a suspicion that it is too long, that the breeches are very narrow, the rolls not big enough, the sleeves too wide, the stockings not a match for the cloth. But it is the fashion, he is told. "The suit is very beauish; it becomes him mighty well; he is very fine."

Stirrup-stockings, also shoe-buckles, jack-boots, are in the list of "Cloaths and things carried about one," given familiarly by M. Boyer. So are cover-sluts, or shams—fausses-manches is the French equivalent—jumps, commodes, pinner, engageants, a sham for the neck, point-lace, a fob, snuff-boxes, night-rails, tippetts, furbelows, towers, bobs (earrings), paint, bridles, top-knots, patins, distaffs, reels, spinning-wheels, and spindles.

A familiar phraser who has invited another familiar phraser to breakfast (both being persons of quality, it is to be borne in mind), furnishes the onlooker of to-day with further captivating scenes. The host declares bread and butter, water-gruel, and milk-porridge to be children's meat, and orders something else. When this is brought, it proves to be sausages, over which orange is to be squeezed, petty-pattees, fried eggs, bacon, and wine; whilst the meal called beaver, or the afternoon-ing, gets mention, and so does a kissing-crust, a manchet, a bisket, link, pap, canary, sack, perry, and mead. M. Boyer, wishing subsequently to make these familiar phrasers enjoy "diversions," they play tennis—with a racket, not with

battledores (no doubt a subtle difference); they give a bricol;* they call out to the marker to mark the chase; they put a ball into a hazard; they take a bisk.† Turning to the "diversion" of bowls, one phraser hits the jack, and lays he hits his adversary once in three throws. Then the other refuses to go a-fowling; he has a cast of hawks for all manner of game; he does not love nine-pins; if he plays, it is out of complaisance, and he lays he tips all the pins. His complaisance is not worth much, for it is declared that he does not stand fair, he is called a wrangler, he is told he makes a wrangling about nothing. Sulkily and ill-temperedly, he will not jump, he says, because it is not good to jump presently after dinner; if he leaps, his usuallest leaping is with his feet close together. Yielding a little, he says he is not above a hop with one leg, but he will not swim, for the reason that though he learns to swim with bulrushes, he had like yesterday to have been drowned; he is scarce come to himself yet, and he does not love to dabble.

M. Boyer, sending his phrasers, after this, out for a walk, makes them eat filberds and apricocks, makes them buy cherries at twopence a pound, get mighty tired, and beg one another to go a little softlier. One of them, travelling, determines to go along the great road, for there he need fear no highwaymen; he carries pistols; he takes the stirrup-cup; he arrives at his journey's end bruized all over. When he goes to bed at an inn, he tells his man to take his breeches and lay them under his pillow; he is asked if he fears spirits, for he is evidently trembling, to which he says, "No, only his bed is so cold." The familiar phraser's destination being France, he has to wait on the shore till the wind serves for him to get across to Calais; he has to consult the captain of the packet-boat (who tells braggingly he has the large number of ten or twelve passengers secured already); he has to carry victuals for his own consumption (packet-boating not including stewards then, and a well-spread cabin table); he has to obtain the captain's promise that he will send for him to his inn, it may be to-night, it may be to-morrow, that he will send for him, at any rate, when it is the right time.

* A rebound of a ball, says quaint Nathaniel Bailey, after a side-stroke at tennis play. Bailey's spelling being bricole and bricoil both.

† Odds, says Bailey, at the play at tennis; a stroke allowed to the weaker player. Spelt also bisque.

"Sir, will you be pleased to do me a favour?" M. Boyer puts down on one of his pages for his pupil's rudimentary mastering. "I would have you go along with me to hire a lodging," is the favour sought for; and "I will wait upon you wherever you please," is the familiar reply to it. Arrived in St. James's Street (quite consistently, the quarter where persons of quality, even under Queen Anne, would be sure to go), the friends knock at a door with a bill on it, which, as they remark, shows there are two rooms to let; only, instead of being admitted at once, they have to go through a kind of ceremony like sentry and pass-word. "Who is there?" they are asked; one of them answers, "A friend," and this gives every satisfaction. The mistress of the house having appeared, she is told, "I want a dining-room and a bed-chamber for myself, with a garret for my man, furnished." The good woman leaves the phrasers for a moment to get the keys of the apartments on the first storey; the gentlemen, at her bidding, give themselves the trouble to follow her upstairs, and they all step in. There is a very good bed, as may be observed; there are all things necessary in a furnished-room, such as a table, a hanging-shelf, a looking-glass, stands, chairs, easy-chairs, fine hangings; and the intended lodger puts the crucial question, "How much do you ask for it a week?" It is too familiar, and the St. James's Street lodging-lady draws herself up in dignity, crying, "I never let my lodgings but by the month or quarter; I never had less than four guineas a month for these two rooms. Consider that this is the finest part of the town. Consider that it is within a step of the Court." It is true, and the gentleman does consider. Being, quite commercially, very illogical and inconsistent, however, he says, "To show you I do not love haggling, I will give you three guineas; in one word," is his next haggling, when this has been refused, "in one word, as well as in a thousand, if you will, we will divide the difference." The landlady observes, "I am loth to turn you away, I shall lose by you," but in the end she undertakes boarding for twelve shillings a week, she will furnish chamber and board together for fifteen pounds a quarter; and as M. Boyer himself lived so near to Court, and to his little royal scholar, as Chandos Street, quite close at hand, his testimony as to price may have fair acceptance.

Another matter on which the French

philologist and lexicographer was well-informed was the theatre. He translated Racine's *Iphigénie*, calling it *The Victim*; he translated it into such acceptable English (there must be no forgetfulness of the era in which it was accepted), it was performed at Drury Lane with excellent success; and when one set of the familiar phrases is headed *The Play*, there is good satisfaction in being one of the company. "Shall we go and see the new play?" is a gentleman's invitation; "the day is an important day. It is the time called the poet's day." "It is the third time of playing Mr. Congreve's *Mourning Bride*.* The play was acted the first and second time with universal applause. "Mr. Congreve has gained by it the reputation of a great tragic poet. The pit and galleries are sure to be crowded. The boxes will be as full of ladies as they can hold." "We must have a coach so as to be in good time," says the host, when the guest tells him he will go with all his heart; they take the coach, they are driven away, they alight at the theatre-door. Shall they go into a box? Shall they go into the pit? is debated then. The guest deciding for the pit, if he may have his choice, and being asked, argumentatively and monosyllabically, *Why?* "Because," is his reply, "we may pass away the time in talking with the masks before the curtain is drawn up," and the argument is at an end. We are in the pit. There are the masks; take notice of the symphony. It is played by a hautboy and trumpet, among harpsichords and violins. Enjoy the prospect we have of those fine ladies who grace the boxes. It is to be expected that M. Boyer has much to say of these fine ladies. He was young (about thirty at this time, when his star was luckiest); he was clever; he was successful; he had the patronage of queen, of prince, of duke, and many "quality;" women would be sure to smile upon him; and the smallest return in his power to give was—praise. So the ladies join the beauties and charms of the body to the richness of their attire and the brightness of their jewels. That particular one sitting in the king's box is to be observed pre-eminently, she is as handsome as an angel, she is a perfect beauty, she has a great deal of wit, a fine easy shape, the finest complexion in the world, teeth as white as snow; wherever she casts her eyes they are

* In the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The year was 1697.

the centre of the amorous ogles of all the beaux. It is interesting to M. Boyer—i.e., to the gentleman of M. Boyer—for he has the honour of knowing this abridgment of all perfections, as he styles her; but his guest, who has no Mistress Masham, it may be presumed, to pay court to by this new kind of epistle dedicatory, becomes quite rude and snappish. "The curtain is drawing, let us hear," he cries; then, "The curtain is let down, let us return home." It comes with much the same effect as the extinguishing of the lamps, the threading of dingy passages, the thrust out into the dark chill road.

But there is a gentleman in these familiar phrases who obtains as much eulogy as this desirable lady. "I will make you acquainted with an Englishman," says one friend to another, "who has a happy memory, who has been a great traveller, who has seen all the courts of Europe, who has been two years at Paris, six months at Madrid, a year and a half in Italy, a year in Germany, and who speaks so well French, Italian, Spanish, and German, that he speaks Italian as the Italians themselves, that among the French they believe him to be a Frenchman, they take him for a Spaniard among the Spaniards, and he passes, or goes, for a German among the Germans." The listener is impressed, as he is intended to be. You draw his picture to so much advantage, he declares that you make him have a mind to know him. Where does he live? Covering a column or two in brief sentences, it is stated the gentleman lives in Suffolk Street. He does not keep house, he lodges at Mr. Such-a-one's, at the sign of ——. He is twenty-five years old, he is a bachelor, with a sister, pitted with the small-pox, married to the Earl of —, on a portion of fifteen thousand pounds; he is of fine proper size, he is of shape easy and free, he has a fine presence and a noble gait, he goes always very neat, he is very genteel, he dances neatly, he fences, he rides the great horse very well, he plays on the lute, the flute, and the guitar, he is very sprightly in conversation, civil, courteous, and complaisant to everybody. He is, very likely, a great deal more, but that the listener, who has said, "I will see this paragon to-morrow morning," turns the whole thing aside suddenly by crying, "At your leisure, when it is convenient for you, when you can spare time," and by barking out, "Farewell, sir, I am your servant, I wish you a good-night."

"Sir, I want a wig," is a phrase that arrests the eye, as M. Boyer's slender columns are run down; "I want it the colour of my eyebrows. It is to be long; it is to be made of live hair." The perruquier's replies share the interest equally. "Shall it be a full-bottom wig?" he asks; "a campaign wig? a Spanish wig? or a bob?" "The foretop of this one," says the customer, "is a little too low, the hind-lock of this other is a little too long; it is too dear, also; it is four pounds sterling, and will it not be enough to give three pounds ten?" The perruquier declares that this smaller sum would not be enough; not if the purchaser were his own brother; for the wig's hair is a round hair; it is as strong as horse-hair; it combs out easily; it has a buckle at the bottom; it becomes the gentleman, too, if he will but see himself in the glass. So the gentleman says: "I give the four pounds. Here are four guineas, hand me the change. Thank you; here is my old wig; it is to be mended; it is to have drops put to it and a twist; it is no matter that twisted wigs are out of fashion; my wig is only a campaign wig; I only use it when I ride on horseback;" for "campaign" meant the country, when M. Boyer set down his familiar phrases; and when a gentleman had been some hours in the saddle, in Queen Anne's time, his wig and all his clothes showed the journey had been done, and hence it was such a mark of hurry and disrespect to appear in company "travel-stained."

"Will you truck your watch for my sword?" cannot easily be passed by. It is such a surprise to find persons of quality not altogether indisposed to the curious negotiation; to see, "You must give me six crowns to boot, then;" "You must promise me that the handle of your sword is right silver and the hilt gilt copper;" to see, further, that this kind of truck is not the kind of truck that will do, for that the first gentleman answers: "I will only truck even hand, if I truck at all;" to get for rejoinder: "Ah, you tell me fine stories; look for bubbles elsewhere, I am not so easily bubbled as you think." But what takes place by a sick-bed, when a physician stands there, is familiar phrasing more unfamiliar, perhaps, than any specimens that have yet been drawn from their obscurity, and shall be the last that shall get any citing. "Your pulse is very quick," pronounces the M.D.; "you must be let blood, you must have a vein opened; bid somebody

give me ink and paper; there is my prescription, send it to the apothecary. You must keep a-bed," he goes on; "you must take new-laid eggs and chicken-broth; you must send for a nurse; you must let somebody go for a surgeon; you must give the surgeon your right arm; he must take a good lancet, make a great orifice, put on the fillet and bolster, make a good ligature, and not bind your arm too hard." "Where is your blood?" is his demand, butcherously, on the next day, when all the forerunning is supposed to be done and over. The patient gives faint answer. It is in three porringers upon the window. No comfort comes to the poor wretch when the porringers are brought close up, and are peered into. "You want to be let blood again," he is told; "your blood is very hot and corrupted." He shivers with despair. "Oh, sir," he wails, "you little know how ill I am. I am almost spent, I pine away, I have one foot already in the grave. I decay very sensibly, I grow weaker every day, I am consumptive, my disease is past recovery, my disease is too inveterate, I must die!" The effect of which is to make the physician break into familiar "chaff." "Cheer up," he cries; "be not cast down for so small a matter; you make your disease worse than it is; believe me, it will be nothing; I dare promise that you will recover; your fever is gone; you may drink some small beer with a toast; you may take wine, either white or red; in two or three days you may go abroad." It is quite a fascinating picture.

M. Abel Boyer, it shall be set down in conclusion, died at Chelsea, in 1729. He was so proficient in the English language that he managed a newspaper called *The Post-Boy* for many years; he published a monthly work on the Political State of Great Britain; he wrote the *Annals of Queen Anne*, in eleven volumes; he wrote the *History of William the Third*—curiously, the French Biographical Dictionaries record that he wrote the *Life of William the Conqueror*, whether out of raillery of the English family exiled at St. Germain's, or out of sheer mistake, cannot be said; he wrote *Memoirs of Sir William Temple*, all in English, and several French educational works, not forgetting his quarto dictionary. That he had caught the English literary manner of the day—omitting the essayists, who are of all days—and had caught it excellently, is certain.

He dedicated his *Anne's Annals*, year by year, to somebody, dedicating the first volume to the Duke of Ormond. "To do this," he wrote, "to any other but your Grace would certainly be a kind of Moral Sacrilege, and a Fault Unpardonable in a Just and Impartial Historian. The Chief Merit of this History lies in the Paramount and shining Figure your Grace makes in it. If any Ill step was made, it was only because your Grace's advice was not followed; if any Irregularities were committed, it was through Disobedience to your strict Commands;" in which there is not a form of expression other than might have fallen from any of the eighteenth-century adulatory pens that were English, bred and born. Also, he is able to distinguish so critically between English modes of speech and French modes; he even defends Sir William Temple's writings from the objections made against them, that "he affects the use of French words, as well as some Turns of Expression peculiar to that language." Sir William, he says, only used, perhaps, "sufficient, for self-conceited; and sufficiency, for self-conceit; rapport for relation; to respire, for to breathe; to arrive, for to happen; untreatable, for untractable; proned, for cry'd up; to roll upon, for to turn upon; banded, for combin'd." "Bating a few such expressions," is M. Boyer's verdict, "Sir William Temple deserves to be rank'd among the first Refiners and Great Masters of the English Tongue." And certainly when all this is considered, and when M. Boyer himself is laid aside, it must be allowed that his mastery of Queen Anne English, familiar phrases and all, was very remarkable.

LAD'S LOVE.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

No fairer scene could be shown to appreciative eyes, this hot summer day, than that presented by a red-roofed many-gabled house standing well back from the river; to whose banks runs a long old-fashioned garden full of all old-fashioned flowers—marigolds, and London pride, and dainty sweetbriar with its pale miniature roses, a garden wherein bees find delicious pasturage, and where, just now, big burly moths are beginning to whirr about among the geraniums, which, with the lobelias and delicate yellow roses and their homelier neighbours, look like fine ladies among a gathering of country folk.

Near the water's edge grow great alder-trees, with gnarled stems, and here and there a branch dropping low, seemed to touch the ripples of the river as it flowed, for very love of their bright beauty. The old house itself watched the river and the flowers through deep mullioned windows, framed in sweet tangles of jasmine, clematis, and ivy; and about one of its gables a Banksia rose had spread a net woven of green leaves, and starred with golden buttons.

Let us enter the room which looks out upon the garden and the river, and whose curtains are drawn fully aside to let in the welcome coolness that evening is bringing to refresh a world which has panted through this real hot summer day in the month of July.

It is low-roofed, or would seem so now to our more modern ideas, and would be square but for certain charming recesses branching out in unexpected places, one of which is large enough to have a tall narrow window all to itself, a couple of chairs with spindle legs, and some carved oak shelves rich in bits of rare old china.

The window that stands open is so wide it seems almost to fill the entire end of the room, and all round it runs a window-seat luxuriously cushioned. It just now looks like a frame made of tendrils and blossom-laden branches, and framing daintily a river-landscape in exquisite olive-green and grey, where the shimmer of gently stirring water is seen as it steals through rustling flags, and bathes the feet of a meadow-sweet or two, whose sunny plumes mingle with the green of the sedges and the russet of the bullrushes.

How fair the world looks thus sleeping in the welcome eventide! The red sail of a tiny pleasure-boat passing across the disc of the picture seems the sail of a fairy barge, for the after-glow of a gorgeous sunset catches it and turns it to gold. There are two people in this room, whence such fair sights are seen. A man and a woman.

The woman, seated in the angle of the low wide window-seat, holds a square of muslin, fine as a spider's web, in her hand; an open basket full of tiny bobbins stands beside her, and on the dainty canvas is a spray of wheat-ears and poppies, embroidered all in white.

The little bobbins are of sandal-wood, and their faint pungent perfume mingles with the scent of the flowers that twine about the window.

She has all her tools at hand. but the

square of muslin as often rests upon her lap as not, while with dreamy eyes she watches the framed picture of the river, or turns with quiet steadfast gaze to her companion.

This woman was not young; that her female friends and acquaintances felt small difficulty in deciding. How old, seemed a question involving much uncertainty of opinion.

At all events, hitherto, time had but given new depth and earnestness of expression to the beauty of her face, new grace to the lines of her pliant form, as the finger of early autumn lends to the Virginian creeper delicious tints, and tender shades of crimson and gold.

Still, some people said, in a sort of confidential way, that Millicent Warner was "getting on," whatever that might mean, and—when the speakers were of the gentler sex—said it with cunning inflections of voice which sought to claim the pity of the listener for the progress in question.

But in the eyes of her old uncle, Sir Geoffrey Warner, "Milly" was still a child. As an orphan she had been left early to his care; and that care had been such as to merit full well her devotion through the years of maidenhood and womanhood; a devotion that had grown to him as the very air he breathed, and as the atmosphere in which he lived and moved and had his being.

They were very happy, those two, in the many-gabled, red-roofed house down by the river, for each understood the other, each mind was cultured and companionable, and each year's routine was varied by long autumn wanderings in foreign lands.

In Milly's life, years back now, there had been once a dream—a happy blissful dream while it lasted, and after the dream had come the waking. In the first impulsive freshness of her girlhood she had loved, trusted, believed—and found love and trust, and credence things given but to the semblance of what she had rested her hopes upon ungrudgingly. She had suffered, yet been brave in her suffering, and so the shadow passed from the fair surface of her life as the shadow of a storm-cloud from a summer sea.

Yet the suffering left its mark, in quickened possibilities of sympathy for others, in added tenderness to every sorrowful creature who came across her path. Hers was one of those clear-cut, high featured faces that even in extreme old age will retain a certain beauty; the eyes

dark grey, black lashed ; the hair black as a raven's wing, with a crimple ruffling it here and there ; the nose slightly aquiline, with sensitive, almost transparent nostrils ; the mouth a little sad, but most ineffably sweet at times, also at times a little stern ; the chin firm and finely moulded.

Such was Millicent Warner to look at. To listen to she was delightful, so sympathetic was every inflection of her soft low voice ; but she was a woman who was often silent, and often spoke by look or smile as much to the purpose as another by many words.

"My dear, she's thirty-five if she's a day," said the wife of the village rector, first to this person, then to that.

And maybe the lady was as near right as ill-nature was likely to be, adding a year or two, to make up for the many who were ready to rate Miss Warner at several years less than her actual age.

That she was over thirty may be allowed. You seldom see such perfect repose and grace of manner as Sir Geoffrey Warner's niece possessed in any woman under it. That the touch of light on the edge of those pretty ripples in her hair meant the glisten of a silver thread or two might also be taken as proven.

That she was an influence, pure and true, in the lives of those with whom she came in contact, might also be taken for granted.

No one could look into her eyes and doubt that fact.

"It makes me very glad and happy to hear all these things."

She looked across at her companion as she spoke, a sweet content shining in her eyes.

"I knew it would," he answered blithely.

"All the way here I was thinking what welcome news I carried."

This was the way with Millicent Warner. No one ever doubted her truth and reality. If she showed a person that she liked them, that person knew that her liking was a thing to be relied upon—solid ground on which their feet might rest securely—not the shaky bog-land of passing caprice or affected sympathy.

And she was very glad to hear the news just told to her by Ruthven Dyott, for it concerned his own welfare, and what can well be dearer to any of us than the welfare of the friend we love ?

He deserved to have friends, too—this young fellow with the clear-cut face and

dark candid eyes. He was none of the drones of earth, but one who scorned no honest drudgery that might lead to name and fame. Indeed, he belonged to a profession in which no man who scorns real hard drudgery can hope to get on, for Ruthven Dyott was a civil engineer.

Already he seemed marked out for a successful career, for, though hardly three-and-twenty years had passed over his head, his name was associated with a clever discovery in electrical engineering, and among his earthly possessions he reckoned letters-patent for this discovery.

So much for the moil and toil of life, as Ruthven Dyott had met and wrestled with it. As for all life's poetry, that had consisted in the friendship borne to him by Millicent Warner.

For the last year or so his week's work was brightened, any disappointment that met him in those six days of toil and thought was softened, by the reflection that on the seventh he could, if he chose, make his way to the red-roofed, many-gabled house down by the river, enter the pretty room that looked into the garden full of sweet old-fashioned flowers, and there meet a gentle kindly greeting—the clasp of a cordial hand, the light of welcome in a woman's soft grave eyes.

Not only so, but he could talk of his plans, his work, his hopes, his fears, to a listener whose sympathy was so assured a thing that he almost ceased to be grateful for it. Later on, Millicent would sing or play—songs that old Sir Geoffrey knew by heart, and to whose melody he loved to let the hand on his armchair rise and fall—compositions by those old masters of music whose gentle sprightliness is pervaded by a haunting under-current of pathos.

Truly these Sunday evenings at the Hermitage were pleasant things to look forward to in the midst of the hurry, and bustle, and smoke of London town, and week by week, and month by month, they grew dearer and sweeter—sweeter than Ruthven could say, dearer to his boyish heart than he himself knew.

Millicent Warner had grown to be the music of his life, and it was grand and holy music too—music which lifted his bright young nature into a clearer, purer atmosphere than that of mere earth ; music that kept his life clean and his hands honest, and fed the lamp of ambition in his soul as oil feeds the flame that burns before a shrine.

And now, on this glowing summer's day,

Ruthven had come out from the busy hive of the town to this peaceful country home, with a heart full of pride and joy, and yet with an aching pain deep down in it, for he had only told Millicent Warner the half of his news yet.

He had said that the government of a far-off land was willing to utilise his discovery. What he had not said was that the terms upon which they would agree to do so were that the inventor should accept office under them, and superintend the working of his own scheme.

He was conscious, indeed, of a strange reluctance to communicate this last piece of intelligence just yet.

He was a bit of a mental epicure, and wanted to enjoy the full flavour of this sweet woman's pride in his success without alloy.

It had seemed a terrible thing to him all along—the idea of a parting between himself and Millicent Warner. He had said to himself that the loss of her would make him feel the same sense of a sudden empty silence, as had more than once come over him when her cunning fingers dropped from the ivory keys, and the melody they had been weaving in an exquisite web of sound, ceased. It had seemed to him like this, thinking of it.

Now, watching her by the soft shimmering light, listening to the tones of her soft low voice—a voice that was capable of conveying an intensity of gladness, though never raised into outward show of passion, to Ruthven Dyott the thought of this possible severance from all part or lot in her life brought with it an overpowering sense of pain—a shuddering foreboding of lonely days, and months, and years to come.

When they had talked over the good fortune that had befallen him, when they had, as it were, set it in their midst and looked at it from every possible point of view, it suddenly struck Miss Warner, that for a man who had had "greatness thrust upon him" by the hand of fate, her companion was somewhat distraught, not to say moody.

"You are not half as glad as I thought you would be, not half as glad as you ought to be!" she said, shaking her head, chiding, yet smiling too.

"Glad!" he echoed, passing his hand across his eyes, as if the sunshine from the burning world without had suddenly streamed in and dazzled him. "How can I be glad, Millicent, of what must take me away from you?"

"Take you away!" she said, and then stopped.

She did not choose to question him. She was conscious of a certain slight irritation of mind. He had been keeping something back. It was strange; it was not like Ruthven Dyott; at all events, not like him in his dealings with her.

"Yes," he said, rising from his seat, and taking his stand close by her side, "take me away from you. How, then, can I be glad?"

"Do they want you to go out there and set the thing going? and, if they do, are you likely to forget the friends you leave behind, or do you fancy we shall forget you, that you put on such a tragic air, Ruthven?"

"It is not a case of going away, it is a case of staying away."

If he had not been standing somewhat behind her, she might have noticed how pale he grew, as he uttered the last two words—words that meant so much. As it was, she only noted a thrill of pain in his voice. She bent closely over an ear of barley to which her needle was adding delicate finishing touches.

"They want you then to settle down there—to take the management of the affair entirely into your own hands?"

"Yes."

The ear of barley was now daintily completed, fringed with a feathery beard; she looked at it with complacency, her head a little on one side in the prettiest pose imaginable.

"I think the idea an excellent one," she said, speaking slowly, and as if full of intent thought; "most excellent in every way."

"Even to leaving you?"

"There is always some little drawback to everything, isn't there?" she answered lightly.

"Do you call it a little drawback to lose all that is sweetest in life, to lack all that has grown most dear?" he said passionately, his young face pale and wistful, his dark eyes full of pain.

She turned slowly round in her chair, and looked up at him.

"Ruthven," she said, "have you been devoting yourself of late to the reading of romances, you foolish boy?"

"No," he answered, and she felt the trembling of the hand that rested on the back of her chair. "I have been living one."

There was a moment's silence, and Millicent once more bent over her work.

That her eyes saw what they rested on may be doubted; that they were dim and misty, as though she had stood in the glare of the sun where no shadow was, is more likely.

This headstrong boy seemed determined to rush upon his own destruction. She had striven to curb the impulse of passion that was drifting him into dangerous waters; but her will felt feeble, her hand nerveless—what should she do?

How blind she had been, how besottedly foolish not to have foreseen towards what bitter end things were hurrying!

She had given all her sympathy, all her friendship, to Ruthven Dyott, since that day in a spring that seemed a life-time away, that day when every bough on every tree was bright with thick-set blossoms—white or red—when the air was sweet with the faint perfume of the lilac flowers, and Millicent Warner, wandering homewards by the river, met her uncle and a stranger, a slight, dark-eyed boy, with a smile as bright as the spring sunshine, and a manner at once candid and gentle.

Sir Geoffrey introduced this companion of his to his niece as the son of an old friend, come to London to work hard at an arduous profession; he spoke of him and to him as one who was henceforth to be looked upon as an intimate friend, to be welcomed warmly whenever business would allow of an expedition up river, and, more especially, to be looked for on a Sunday, "to get a breath or two of fresh air to help you through a week of smoke, my lad," he said, when that night Ruthven Dyott took his leave.

It seemed a long, long while ago, all this, and now, the end was drawing nigh.

How often had these two, the woman who had given her friendship and her high ennobling influence so ungrudgingly, and the man whose life had been brightened and sustained by the calm steady radiance of her sympathy, listened to the rustling of the water as it whispered in and out among the sedges, to the robin singing sadly on the big thorn tree by the window, to the clear piping of the yellow-billed blackbird riotously jubilant over the coming of spring! And now they would listen to these sounds never again together.

What is so sweet to any man as to garner up in the sanctuary of his innermost heart, in the midst of the hurry and bustle of life in a busy city, the thought of a shadowy room, perfumed with flowers, and made sacred by the presence of a true,

pure woman, a friend who cannot fail him, a room where, enter when he may, a kindly greeting waits him, a kindly hand meets and clasps his?

All these things had Ruthven Dyott found at the red house by the river.

What wonder that his heart was heavy within him as he said:

"This means not only going away, but staying away."

Realising all that Millicent Warner had been in his life hitherto, he felt the very thought of life without her to be unbearable. And yet there was something in her quiet self-contained manner, in her matter-of-fact comments upon the views of his prospects, that galled him inexpressibly, and made him bite back the hot passionate words that rose to his boyish lips.

"She is gentle, and true, and kind," he thought to himself bitterly, "but she is cold, passionless, more statue than woman after all."

But after one long look at the sweet face bending over the embroidery, his heart got the better of his brain; wise reflection, calm resolution fled, and with all a lover's imperiousness he had taken her work from her hands, imprisoned those soft white hands in his, and was lifting to hers a troubled wistful face, dark eyes full of pleading, lips that trembled like a girl's.

Truly no lack of words was his.

All the story of what the past had been, of what the future might be—in his opinion—was poured forth with love-given eloquence. Kisses fell thick upon the hands he held so closely.

And Millicent listened in unbroken calmness for a while, then to his passionate protest of, "I love you, and I cannot live without you, Millicent—Millicent," she made answer, "At all events you think so, Ruthven, and at your age it comes to the same thing."

The words were gently spoken, softened too by the touch of her hand upon his thick dark locks, but they pierced like darts.

He sprang to his feet, and found he had to strangle something very like a sob before he could speak again.

She gave him no time to recover his eloquence.

"See," she said, "you have upset my bobbin basket, careless boy."

At that moment the door of the room slowly opened, and in came Sir Geoffrey, happily unconscious of having a bandana

handkerchief across his shoulders, and the bow of his black satin tie under his left ear. The old gentleman had been having a doze in the library chair, and these disorders were the results.

"Why, Ruthven, my boy," he said with the most cordial of welcomes shining out of his eyeglasses, "who expected to see you here?"

Then, without waiting for a reply, those same glasses glanced from one to the other of the two people whose tête-à-tête he had interrupted.

"Eh day, eh day! have you two been quarrelling?"

"Ruthven has upset my bobbin-basket," said Milly, rising and wheeling a low chair round to the window for her uncle.

So there was nothing for it but for Ruthven to go down on his knees and hunt those refractory sandal-wood bobbins into the various corners and recesses into which they had seen fit to roll; and it is to be feared he inwardly anathematised the whole tribe, basket and all, during the process. When the last straggler was captured, and Milly declared their number complete, Ruthven's two items of news—the accepted patent, and the offered appointment—were duly imparted to Sir Geoffrey, who made merry, and mentally killed a whole herd of fatted calves over his young friend's good fortune.

Later on they all strolled down to the river, for Ruthven's road lay that way, and he might as well go by the garden and through the field-path as not.

How lovely, how calm, how still it was! Scarcely a sound broke the quiet save the cricket singing in the grass, and the low measured splash of oars, somewhere far up the river. Silence seemed to suit the time and the hour better than words, and Ruthven's eyes, darkly sad, full of repressed longing, of bitter regret, ever sought those of the woman by his side.

Sought, yet seldom met, for Milly seemed absorbed by the beauty of the scene around them.

Idly plucking this leaf or that, at last Ruthven culled a tiny spray of green which gave out a faint and pungent scent, as he ruffled it in his hand.

"What do you call this?" he said. "It is a very old-fashioned plant I am sure, for it recalls to my mind going to afternoon service with my nurse when I was so small that I had to be hoisted on to the seat of our family pew, and was always on the point of slipping off again. My nurse carried a

clean handkerchief, folded and laid upon her prayer-book, and in its folds one or two sprays of this sweet-smelling green thing, whatever it may be."

"You're right, boy," said Sir Geoffrey, "it is an old-fashioned kind of plant, and country folk call it 'Lad's Love.'"

Ruthven, with one quick flashing glance at Milly, the while a hot flush rose to his cheeks, dropped the little spray of blue-green leaves as if it had suddenly grown red-hot.

"Lad's Love," he thought bitterly, walking in silence by her side. "Yes, that is what she deems the love I offer her. She takes me for a mere boy who does not know his own mind, whose vanity is flattered by a clever woman's notice."

But Milly did not let him go without a word. Just at the last, when Sir Geoffrey had said good-night and turned homewards, she lingered.

"Do not think me ungrateful, Ruthven," she said, "for all you have told me to-night. You would wrong me cruelly if you did. I will write to you and tell you all I could not say before. Be sure that I can never forget—no woman can forget—a man who has once loved her."

For a moment he thought a strange stir and quiver passed across her face; but when he looked again it was gone, and Milly, calm as any St. Cecilia listening to the strains of her own evoking and looking heavenward the while, stood before him with a smile upon her lips and grave sweet eyes meeting his unflatteringly.

Then she left him. And he, standing there bare-headed in the shadowy light, watched her go, noting the grace of her gait and the sweeping flow of her gown.

All at once she turned, and waved her hand a moment in adieu. Then the turn of the path hid her from his sight.

"She is gentle, pure, and true; the most womanly woman I have ever known," pondered Ruthven as he went on his way; "but she is cold and passionless. She does not know, perhaps has never known, what love is."

Meanwhile, Milly too went on her way.

Half-way up the garden she stooped an instant to raise something from the ground, thrust it into her bosom, and went into the house, where for the rest of the evening she read aloud to old Sir Geoffrey or chatted to him of such things as he loved best to hear.

Just as the moon was rising and spanning the river with a pathway of silver

beams, Millicent Warner retired to her chamber, locked the door behind her, and found herself face to face with her own heart.

Oh, poor little drooping spray of greenery! If tears and kisses could have given you back your freshness, then had you never faded!

When the first faint grey touches of morning woke the river from its sleep beneath the kisses of the moon that shone no more, the woman who was "cold and passionless," who "did not know what love was," still sat by the open window.

She seemed to have grown old in a night. Her face looked grey in the grey light; there were dark shadows beneath her eyes, sad lines about her mouth.

As Jacob wrestled with the angel, so had Milly wrestled with that hot rebellious heart of hers, that now, crushed and bleeding, seemed to her dim eyes to take the semblance of a vanquished foe.

She had won a hard-fought victory. She would stretch forth her hand to reap no harvest of sweet content, no dear and passionate delight, whose aftermath should be to herself bitterness and self-reproach; and to Ruthven Dyott—

Ah, she dared not think of that! This was no sorrow to be dwelt upon, but one in which the only hope of strength lay in avoidance.

Wan, worn, pallid, Millicent was nevertheless a victor.

Yet the birds beneath her window, piping sweet greeting to the new day, seemed singing the coronach of a life's buried joy.

CHURCH-GOING ANIMALS.

SAYS Adam, the coppersmith, in Lodge and Green's Looking Glass for London and England (1594), to one boasting that he was a gentleman: "A gentleman! good sir; I remember you well, and all your progenitors. Your father bore office in our town. An honest man he was, and in great discredit in the parish, for they bestowed two squire's livings on him; the one on working days, and then he kept the town stage; and on holidays they made him the sexton's man, for he whipped the dogs out of the church. Methinks I see the gentleman still; a proper youth he was, faith, aged some forty and ten; his beard rat's colour, half black, half white; his nose was in the highest degree of noses, it was nose autem

glorificans, so set with rubies, that after his death it should have been nailed up in Coppersmith's Hall for a monument."

As a rule, no doubt, the duty of expelling canine intruders from the precincts of the church devolved upon the sexton himself.

The portrait of old Robert Scarlett, of Peterborough Cathedral, who plied his spade for Katharine of Aragon and Mary of Scotland, and buried the "towne's householders in his life's space, twice over," portrays that sturdy veteran carrying a formidable whip, the terror of more than one generation of unruly urchins and sacrilegious curs; and when John Marshall was chosen sexton of St. Mary's, Reading, in 1571, he undertook to see the church seats swept, the mats beaten, the windows cleaned, the dogs driven out, and all things done necessary to the good and cleanly keeping of the church, and the quiet of divine service, for the sum of thirteen-and-fourpence, paid annually. At St. Paul's the dogwhippership seems to have been distinct from the sextonship, and to have been a sinecure for five out of the seven days a week, since Pierce Penniless entertains the holder of the office, when making his unsavoury visitation every Saturday, to look after the scurvy peddling poets, who plucked men by the sleeve, at every third step in Paul's Churchyard.

That such a functionary was required we have proof in Culmer's story of Canterbury Cathedral. He gleefully relates that one Sunday in 1644, a canon, "in the very act of his low congying towards the altar, was re-saluted by a huge mastiff dog," who leaped upon him again and again, and pawed him in his ducking, saluting, posturing progress to the altar, till he was fain to cry aloud: "Take away the dog! take away the dog!"

The emoluments of the "dog-wiper," as he is written down in some parochial records, were not great. Fivepence was all Henry Collinges of Cheddar, Somersetshire, got for his trouble in 1612. Forty years later William Richards, of Great Staughton, Hunts, was paid one shilling for performing the like office from Michaelmas to Christmas, and he was a fortunate man, seeing a shilling a year sufficed his fellows in other places. In 1736, George Grimshaw received thirteen shillings per annum, and a new coat every other year, for his trouble in waking sleepers in Preatwick Church, whipping out dogs, keeping the children quiet, and the pulpit and

church walks clean. He would not have cared to have been paid entirely in kind like Thomas Thornton, to whom the parishioners of Shrewsbury, Maryland, gave a hundred pounds of tobacco on condition that he whipped the cattle out of the churchyard, and the dogs out of the church, every Sunday from the first of May to the Easter Monday following.

Were the dog-nopers, to use the Yorkshire name for them, impartial in their ministrations, or did they confine their attentions to masterless animals coming to church of their own accord? It is hardly likely that the Hall-dog pew in Northorpe Church, set apart for the use of the canine residents at Northorpe Hall, was the only one in the land; and if dog-whippers did their duty without fear or favour, the author of *A Choice Drop of Seraphic Lore* would have had no occasion to give minors this admonition: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, and carefully attend the worship of God; but bring no dogs with you to church; those Christians surely do not consider where they are going when they bring dogs with them to the assembly of divine worship, disturbing the congregation with their noise and clamour. Be thou careful, I say, of this scandalous thing, which all ought to be advised against as indecent." Decent or indecent as the practice might be, dog-owners persisted in taking their pets to church with them. "We may often see," complains the connoisseur, "a footman following his lady to church with a large common-prayer-book under one arm, and a snarling cur under the other. I have known a grave divine forced to stop short in the middle of a prayer, while the whole congregation has been raised from their knees to attend to the howls of a non-conforming pug."

Two hundred years have gone by since Richard Dovey, of Farmcote, Shropshire, charged certain cottages with the payment of eight shillings a year to some poor man of Claverley parish, who would awaken drowsy members of the congregation and turn out dogs from the church, and the bequest is still, or was fifteen years ago, applied to that purpose. The tenants of the Dogwhippers' Marsh, at Chislet, in Kent, still pay, we believe, ten shillings to that functionary, and, for all we know to the contrary, Mr. Jonathan Pockard, who, in 1856, succeeded Mr. Charles Reynolds as dog-whipper at Exeter Cathedral, yet enjoys his sinecure appointment. Baslow,

in Derbyshire, may no longer employ a "fellow that whips the dogs," but it preserves its old dog-whip, a formidable instrument, having a thong some three feet long attached to a short ash-stick, banded with twisted leather; while in Clynnog-Fawr Church may be seen a yet more curious implement in the shape of a long pair of "lazy-tongs," with sharp spikes at the ends, once used to drag obstinate dogs out by the nose.

One of Milton's biographers, asserting the non-existence of dissent in Scotland in the poet's time, says: "Not a man, not a woman, not a child, not a dog, not a rabbit in all Scotland, but belonged to the kirk, or had to pretend to that relationship." Certain it is that if not formally admitted to kirk membership, Scottish dogs have ever enjoyed privileges not accorded to their southern cousins. An angler asking a shepherd if a building within sight was a kirk, and remarking that if so it was a very small one, was answered, "No sae sma', there's aboon thirty collies there ilka Sabbath." This recognition of canine rights of fellowship has its inconveniences. An Edinburgh minister, officiating at a country kirk, could not understand the congregation keeping their seats when he rose to pronounce the benediction. He waited, but no one stirred. Then, seeing his embarrassment, and guessing its cause, the old clerk bawled out: "Say awa', sir, say awa'; it's jooost to cheat the dowgs!" Experience had shown that the dogs took the rising of the people as the signal for departure, and acting upon that idea, disturbed the solemnity of the occasion. They had, therefore, to be checkmated by the people keeping their seats until the blessing had been given. Only the other day a Wesleyan minister, much scandalised at the appearance of a dog at a watch-night service in Perth, observed that the house of God was not for dogs to worship in, and insisted upon the animal being turned out; finding no response to the appeal, he was fain to leave the pulpit and do his own behest. Dr. Guthrie would have sympathised with the dog-abettors. His companion, Bob, lying at the head of the pulpit-stairs on Sundays, occupied a place nearly as conspicuous as his master's. The doctor may have been the minister, and Bob the minister's dog, of whom the following story went the rounds. The first time the Queen went to Crathie Church, a fine dog followed the clergyman up the pulpit-steps, to remain reclining against the door whilst

his master preached. In consequence of the remonstrance of the minister in attendance at Balmoral, next Sunday the parson came to church unaccompanied. Dining at Balmoral a day or two afterwards, he was surprised by his royal hostess demanding the reason of the dog's absence from church. He explained that he had been told the dog's presence annoyed Her Majesty. "Not at all," said the Queen. "Pray let him come as usual; I wish everybody behaved as well at church as your noble dog."

Such an encomium could not have been bestowed upon the Newfoundland belonging to the pastor of a village in Ohio. Stepping into the church in the middle of a prayer-meeting, he made straight for his master, then on his knees, and leaped upon his back. The good man jumped up, took the offender by the neck, led him to the door and carefully closed it upon him, and then returning to his place, resumed his devotions, as though nothing had occurred to disturb his own equanimity or the gravity of his flock. An Episcopalian clergyman in Connecticut was not so easily rid of a similar intruder, but in his case the animal was nobody's dog, and, therefore, not amenable to discipline. As he was reading the Lesson for the Day, the minister espied a saucy-looking cur frisking along the aisle, evidently bent upon mischief. Presently he seized a hat outside one of the pews, and shook it with a will, thereby rousing the owner to poke him with a cane in the vain hope of inducing him to drop the head-gear he was putting to anything but its proper use. Then the sexton came tiptoeing towards the scene of action, and, finding the position untenable, the dog, executing a strategic movement, took his prize with him into a side aisle. Some of the congregation hurrying to the sexton's aid, a quiet but hot chase ensued; the quarry cleverly dodging his pursuers, reached the door some lengths ahead, and disappeared with what was left of the hat. Peace restored, the minister proceeded with his reading, boldly skipping "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs," out of consideration for his hearers' seriousness.

That dear lover of dogs, Dr. John Brown, tells us that the first dog he ever owned was a tyke his brother rescued from drowning, an extraordinarily ordinary cur, "without one good feature, except his teeth and eyes, and his bark." Toby, however, proved a rough diamond, his powers

of intellect making amends for the defects in his personal appearance. His proprietor's father was a minister, and Toby especially desired to hear him preach, a compliment the minister by no means appreciated, and did his best to thwart the dog's desire, but the latter was the cleverer of the two. "Toby," says his biographer, "was usually nowhere to be seen on my father leaving; he, however, saw him, and up Leith Walk he kept him in view from the opposite side, like a detective; and then, when he knew it was hopeless to hound him home, he crossed unblushingly over, and joined company. One Sunday he had gone with him to church, and left him at the vestry-door. The second psalm was given out, and my father was sitting back in the pulpit, when the door at its back, up which he came from the vestry, was seen to move, and gently open; then, after a long pause, a black shining snout pushed its way steadily into the congregation, and was followed by Toby's entire body. He looked somewhat abashed, but snuffing his friend, he advanced as if on thin ice, and not seeing him, put his forelegs on the pulpit, and behold! there he was, his own familiar chum. I watched all this, and anything more beautiful than his look of happiness, of comfort, of entire ease, when he beheld his friend, the smoothing down of the anxious ears, the swing of gladness of that mighty tail, I don't expect soon to see. My father quietly opened the door, and Toby was at his feet and invisible to all but himself. Had he sent old George, the minister's man, to put him out, Toby would probably have shown his teeth, and astonished George." Mr. Broderip tells of another Toby, a turnspit, who, defying all preventive devices, always made his way to church on Sundays, and ensconced himself in a corner of the reading-desk; until, convinced "he's a good dog that goes to church," the parishioners gave the parson to understand they had no objection to the persistent creature's company, and thenceforth Toby was left to follow his inclining, and attend church as long as he lived. A Toronto citizen owns a dog that encourages no company, and indulges in no pastimes on Sunday, but makes his way to church. Not, strange to say, with the family to which he is attached; they are Presbyterians, while Carlo has embraced Methodism, and has a favourite corner in the gallery of the Methodist church, which he invariably occupies, if he can manage to elude the vigilance of the ushers.

Dogs are not the only animals that have found their way into church. The vicar of Morwenstow, Mr. Baring-Gould assures us, "was usually followed to church by nine or ten cats, which entered the chancel with him, and careered about it during service. Whilst saying prayers Mr. Hawker would pat his cats or scratch them under their chins. Originally ten cats accompanied him to church, but one having caught, killed, and eaten a mouse on a Sunday, was excommunicated, and from this day not allowed within the sanctuary." A pig once put in an appearance at a Methodist prayer-meeting in Mobile, and resisted all the sexton's endeavours to eject him. As the man dashed down one aisle the porker ran up another, the pastor watching the chase with commendable gravity; but when piggy rushed into the pulpit and took his position at his side, it was too much for the minister, and he retired with precipitation, leaving the pig master of the situation. Another worthy man, whose chapel-doors stood wide open one summer Sunday afternoon, suddenly became aware of an unusual noise just below him. Looking over the pulpit he beheld a drover struggling with a sheep, and somewhat unnecessarily asked him what he was doing there. "N-n-nothing," was the reply, "I'm o-o-only s-s-separating the sh-sheep from the g-goats!"

In 1756, a writer complained that in many of the old country parish churches the noise of owls, magpies, and bats made the principal part of the church music. Things are not so bad as that nowadays, but birds will sometimes attend divine service uninvited. One dreary November Sunday, a robin took refuge in the church of Pott-Shrigley, near Macclesfield. It was Sacrament Sunday, and the hungry intruder hopped upon the table, and after a song, would have helped himself to some of the consecrated bread, but for the curate covering it with his surplice. When he had dismissed the congregation, Mr. Sumner repaired to the vestry, cut off a piece from a loaf there, and crumbling it on the chancel floor, left Robin to enjoy the feast. On returning for the afternoon service he found his little visitor quite at his ease, ready to pay for his meal by singing most heartily to the delight and distraction of the school children. At night he was fed again, and when he had eaten his fill, Mr. Sumner let Bob out of the chancel door. "And if ever there was thanksgiving, that tuneful creature poured forth his grateful

acknowledgments in one of the sweetest lays ever sung by bird, from the branches of the lime-trees round the dear old church."

A kindly-hearted miller became on such good terms with his geese that the whole flock would follow him about in his walks. One Sunday they espied him on his way to church, and to his dismay fell in procession behind him. On reaching the church door he tried to make his faithful followers understand that their company was not wanted inside, but failed ignominiously. Finding talking no use, and disinclined to employ more forcible argument, the miller turned round and went home again with his feathered friends. Had his pastor been of Mr. Hawker's way of thinking, perhaps he need not have foregone church, for when a stranger to the Vicar of Morwenstow's peculiarities, asked him why he did not turn a dog away from the altar-steps, the Cornish Churchman exclaimed: "Turn the dog out of the ark! All animals, clean or unclean, should there find a refuge!"

"OPEN SESAME."

CHAPTER IV. MY UNCLE.

THE sound of the knocking at Madame Desmoulins's door struck consternation into those within. Delisle ran to the window. Just below appeared the rigid figure of a gendarme on the watch. Marie opened the door of the bed-chamber and pointed. He hesitated, but Madame Desmoulins, with an imperious gesture, waved him in. Marie locked the door, and put the key in her pocket.

"Ah, monsieur, how you frightened us!" cried Madame Desmoulins, opening, and seeing the tall figure of M. Huron in the doorway.

The quartermaster laughed.

"Pardon me, madame, my little joke—the joke of a gendarme. Still, if your conscience were quite clear—— But hey! why are we not all at the fête? I heard voices, and concluded that you were entertaining your friends, and ventured to offer myself to promise you a good place to see the fireworks. Ah, there is the preliminary rocket. We must make haste."

"I have only my daughter, monsieur, who is taking supper with me."

The gendarme glanced round the room, and took in all the details at a glance—the three plates, the well-polished chicken-bones, the general clearance of the eatables. But all the while he seemed to be

simply listening to Madame Desmoulin's with respectful attention.

"I am too tired to go out to-night, monsieur," she continued, "and Marie——"

"Yes, I shall stay and take care of you, mamma," said Marie, who remained at the further end of the room.

"Ah, it is a pity, for they will be very fine, indeed—magnificent."

Inwardly M. Huron was saying to himself:

"All this is not natural. A young girl of seventeen prefers to stay with her mother when there is a fête going on, and fireworks."

Too much credit must not be given to his perspicacity, for at this moment reposed in the breast-pocket of his uniform coat an anonymous letter warning him that Madame Desmoulin's would shortly receive a visit from her husband, the escaped Communist. He had made a pretty good guess as to the source of this information, for he knew that Madame Souchet kept her eyes open, and had no great love for Madame Desmoulin's or her husband. And, indeed, he had purposely made a somewhat noisy entrance into Madame Desmoulin's house, in order to give any outlawed guest an opportunity to hide himself.

He had a soft place in his heart where Madame Desmoulin's was concerned, and, again, he was not too sure whether the capture of an escaped Communist would be a grateful act to the administration. He was bound to take some precautions, but, for his own part, he hoped the man would take himself off without more ado.

Whatever might have been Madame Desmoulin's feelings about Huron, she knew well enough that his respect for her was great. He would make no inconvenient search in her rooms, she felt sure, and so far she was right, for, after many apologies for having disturbed her, he took his leave.

Shortly after came another visitor—Charles Lalonde. He, too, hoped to take the ladies to see the fireworks. Uncle Lucien had especially charged him, and as Madame Desmoulin's refused, he made his way to Marie, and began to talk to her persuasively.

"Mamma will not go, and I can't go without her," said Marie, shrugging her pretty shoulders.

"But if you said you wished it she would go. Come, Marie, it would be such happiness for me, and I go away to-morrow, and shall not see you for ever so long."

Marie still refused, and Charles, who seemed nervous and dispirited, had to take his leave.

Just as he left, a heavy shower of rain came on, and Marie, going to the window to watch it, saw that a gendarme still remained, as she suspected, to mount guard over the house. The rain would be a crucial test. Would he go away, or stop to be drenched? The man adopted a medium course. He took refuge under the roof of the Pluchôt. There he could still keep a watch upon the house, but anyone passing out quickly would have the start of him by half-a-dozen paces at least.

Meantime Madame Desmoulin's had released M. Delisle.

Marie left the window, and told in a whisper that the house was watched. M. Delisle was evidently suspected, and his movements followed. It was very unlucky. He could not stay there, and how could he be got away? If he could leave the house undetected, Madame Desmoulin's whispered that he could find shelter for the night in her brother's cottage. Delisle replied that this was just what M. Desmoulin's had told him to do. But how to get away? There was only one entrance to the house, and on that evidently a watch had been set.

Then Marie suggested a way out of the difficulty. Her uncle Lucien had left a cloak and hat there not long ago. If M. Delisle would wear them, his sailor's clothes would not be seen, and he might pass muster for Uncle Lucien.

"And especially, mamma," pursued Marie eagerly, "if he were to escort me home—at least, to the post-office."

Madame Desmoulin's pondered for a moment. She was really anxious to get rid of her guest, and Marie's plan seemed feasible. As soon as her mother signified assent, Marie ran for the hat and cloak, and helped Delisle to put them on. In spite of the seriousness of the situation she was brimming over with enjoyment.

"You must walk a little stiffly with one leg like this," she cried, imitating her uncle's gait, "and every now and then shake your head and look about—so."

"Those niceties of deportment will be lost in the darkness," said Madame Desmoulin's severely. "Hasten, lose no time while the shower lasts."

As they passed out under the same large umbrella, Marie turned to her companion and addressed him as "mon uncle" so naturally that the gendarme did not think

it worth while to move out of his shelter, and the pair gained the quay unmolested.

Marie urged her companion along, almost running by his side with her quick elastic step, delighted with the adventure, but anxious on his account.

The rain had ceased, the moon showed herself every now and then, and lights were flitting about where the fireworks were set out.

"You sha'n't miss the fireworks, petite," said Delisle, giving the little hand that lay on his arm a gentle squeeze. "I may well pose as your uncle, for your father and I have been like brothers."

"But there is the danger," argued Marie.

"Pooh!" said the sailor, "there is the river down there, and up there"—pointing towards the hills—"is the forest; the cocked-hats won't follow me either way."

"And there is the Père Douze," whispered Marie, squeezing his arm in her fright, as they came right upon the père, who had just left the banker's house.

The père rubbed his eyes and looked after them, surprised evidently, and doubtful in his mind as to their identity.

"I have heard of Père Douze," cried Delisle; "the rascal who captured your father—the falcon captured by a mousing hawk. But he is five years older now. Now for the fireworks."

The crowd that had dispersed during the shower to find shelter under the trees or in the cafés now formed rapidly again in the moonlight. But the rain had produced a melancholy effect upon the fireworks. Wheels would not turn, gerbs would not go off. The elaborate piece that should have shown Ceres with her golden sheaves presiding over the welfare of Canville was altogether a failure. One of the sheaves, indeed, was to be made out producing more smoke than fire, but of the name of the town that should have shone in rubies and brilliants, only the three letters "vil" could be made out. And the crowd, pitiless to failure, caught up the word. "Yes, it is exactly that, vile enough," cried some country wag, and with a contemptuous roar of laughter the assembly turned to other things.

The coloured oil lamps had mostly spluttered out, but the moon gave light enough, and the fiddler was there, and the cornet-à-piston; and then dancing began all along the line.

"If one could only have a turn," cried Delisle. "Marie, will you?"

"But no," said Marie ruefully, "I dare not, indeed; we of the bourgeois never dance out here."

"Ah!" cried Delisle, "you are prudish, you people of the north. With us one dances always, and everywhere."

"Oh, monsieur, come along," cried Marie, pulling at his arm. "See what your rashness brings upon us!"

In fact, M. Huron and Charles, who were now talking together, had caught sight of them, and were coming towards them. Marie waved her hand to them, and pushed Delisle before her. Huron looked after them with a puzzled air. The figure was certainly Brunet's or something like his, but the gendarme had just met him in another part of the town.

It was not physically impossible indeed that Brunet should have darted off to his sister's, and brought away his niece, but it was hardly likely. Still, if, as he suspected, it should be the father thus disguised—well, let him pass.

But next moment Huron saw the Père Douze hurrying eagerly along at an unusual pace for him, and evidently following the couple who had just passed.

Once upon the steps of the post-office Marie breathed freely. She put her hand appealingly on the sailor's arm. "You will not run any more risks, monsieur; you will make your way to Uncle Lucien's? By the back streets, please. Then you go straight along, through the market-place."

"I know my way," cried Delisle; "I have had it all mapped out for me. Do not fear, Marie."

"Adieu, monsieur, shall we ever meet again?" said Marie sadly.

"Surely yes. Am I not to take you to your father?"

"Not me," said Marie mournfully; "the mother will not take me. I am to be married!"

"Ah!" said Delisle, "the father will have something to say to that perhaps. Tell me, Marie—I speak on his behalf—would it hurt you deeply if this were broken off?"

"No, monsieur," said Marie, lifting her eyes shyly to his face, "my heart is not engaged in the matter."

"But the other young man, the youth who came just now—Charles, is it not? Is he equally indifferent to you?"

Marie blushed and looked down, playing with the sleeve of her jacket, and not knowing what to say.

"Ah, I see," rejoined the sailor with a

slightly disconcerted air, "that is another matter. Well, adieu, and sleep well, petite."

Marie watched him till his form was swallowed up in the darkness, and then making her way upstairs threw herself into a fauteuil and gave herself up to a soft delicious reverie. How different from the stolid apathy of the doctor, or, indeed, from the evident self-esteem of the handsome Charles, was the frank vivid manner of this charming sailor, who had seen and done so much and yet had retained the gaiety and abandon of a boy! And the soft caressing way in which he had spoken of her, *la petite*! Yes, she liked to be called that.

Madame Souchet did not come home for some time after, and then she was in a very sober and preoccupied mood, feeling the touch of something like remorse. The *bonne* was later still; she had been dancing under the trees, and could not tear herself away. She came in at last full of a startling incident that had just occurred. The *gendarmes* it seemed had caught some man, a returned forçat, so it was said. There had been a pretty tussle on the quay, but they had him now hard and fast.

Madame Souchet scolded her maid for bringing home such tales, for Marie had turned quite white and faint. The post-mistress helped the girl to bed, and fussed about to get her tisane and other mixtures. She talked of sending for young Cavalier, the doctor, but Marie begged so earnestly that this should not be done, and seemed to get so much better all at once, that Madame Souchet gave up the idea. But she was very assiduous about Marie, and got up every half-hour to ask her how she felt. This involved a corresponding wakefulness on Marie's part, and gave a lugubrious impression that she was expected to be very ill indeed. Marie was not to speak or move, only to nod her head in answer to questions. But she need not trouble her head about the *bonne's* ridiculous stories. It was natural she should think, Had it been my father! Unhappy, misguided man! But the poor wretch who had been taken that night, if indeed anyone had been taken, which was by no means certain, was nothing to her or her father. Marie had only strength to ask one question:

"What do they do to escaped convicts when they catch them?"

"Send them back loaded with chains,

and take my word for it, they don't get a chance to escape again."

Marie covered her eyes and cried silently and bitterly. She would never, never see him again.

CHAPTER V. THE DEPOSIT.

THANKS to the precise directions he had received, Delisle found Uncle Lucien's cottage without difficulty. It was in the outskirts of the town looking over the river; just two rooms in the middle of a large garden. The garden itself was let off to some market-gardener; rows of cabbages, leeks, and lettuces stretched to the very walls of the cottage.

There was no light to be seen, and after knocking softly once or twice Delisle came to the conclusion that there was nobody within. Indeed, the key was in the lock, and turning it, the door opened, and Delisle found himself in possession of the house.

It was bright moonlight now, the river full and placid, throwing dancing refracted lights on the wall and ceiling of the little room. A clean cold little room with an uninhabited look about it; all the furniture, a few cane chairs and an elaborate clock. But the parquet was bright and polished, showing here and there touches of light from the brilliance outside. The bareness of the room suggested poverty, while the neatness and polish of everything indicated self-respect and a scrupulous regard for appearances. The clock struck nine as he sat there, and he reflected that he might perhaps have some time to wait. Possibly Brunet when he did come might be unpleasantly startled at finding a stranger unceremoniously in possession of his rooms.

As it happened, however, the surprise was the other way. For Delisle, who was wearied with travelling, fell fast asleep in his chair, and was awoke by somebody shaking him roughly by the shoulders.

"Gently, gently," cried Delisle, at once in full possession of all his faculties. "If you are M. Brunet, I have a message for you from your brother-in-law."

Brunet seemed astonished at this, put down the lamp he held, and looked searchingly at the stranger.

"I don't believe you," he said at last. "Desmoulin is dead."

"Perhaps you recognise this handwriting," rejoined Delisle, handing Brunet a letter.

Brunet took the letter, held it close to the light, and read:

"DEAR BROTHER-IN-LAW,—The deposit you hold for me, please hand to my friend, to whom it really belongs, and take his receipt.

A. DESMOULINS."

"Why, it is dated only a few days ago!" exclaimed Brunet. "What does this mean?"

"Simply that he and I, and some others, have escaped. He is now in London, where he awaits his wife and daughter. This little sum will establish them in comfort."

Brunet sat down and wiped his forehead, on which the perspiration stood in great beads.

"I don't pretend to rejoice," he said at last. "This M. Desmoulin had not brought happiness and good fortune to our family. But I admit that I hold this money, and as he demands it, I must give it up."

Brunet carefully closed the shutters, went to the door and looked out to satisfy himself no one was lurking about the place. Then taking a chisel from a drawer in his bedchamber he carefully raised a board of the wainscot of the little salon, and after groping for a little while, drew out a canvas bag.

"There is the money, monsieur; nine thousand in gold, and a thousand in five-franc pieces. Count it, monsieur."

"It is unnecessary," said Delisle. "I have only to thank you for the care you have taken."

"Hush!" said Brunet, "the money is there, it is yours. Now learn what it costs me to have to restore it. As I said before, this M. Desmoulin has not brought happiness to our family. But when he came to me a fugitive from Paris, in danger of his life, I could not refuse him hospitality. Well, he entrusted me with this money. He bound me to secrecy. The money must be kept intact, for it was not his to dispose of. But I was only to give it up on an order from him. Well, years have passed, and for a long time we have believed him dead. How could I dispose of this money in the way that he would have judged best?"

"Well, there was la petite," suggested Delisle.

"Exactly. That was my thought. And in what way could I benefit Marie more than by finding her a good husband?"

"True," said Delisle, but not with the same conviction as before.

"Well, her aunt, Madame Souchet, had arranged a marriage for her—a marriage from which the girl shrank, but it must go on, because from that side alone could a

dowry be expected. On the other hand there was a young man, to whom she already felt an attachment, of excellent family, rich in prospects, a future notary, a banker, destined to be the chief man of the district."

"And does his name happen to be Charles?" asked Delisle, looking gloomily into vacancy.

"Yes," cried Brunet. "You seem to be well informed. Well, I ventured to pledge my word. Marie could not enter into such a family empty-handed."

"I see," interrupted Delisle, "you have engaged yourself for the dowry; and if you fail?"

"If I fail, M. Charles——"

"Never mind about him. What about la petite?"

"I think it would break her heart," said Brunet with emotion.

"Well, we will not break her heart," whispered Delisle huskily. "Come, M. Brunet, you have acted rightly, and there is nothing more to be said. Let her be happy, la petite, with her lover. For us men, we must shift for ourselves."

"Oh, monsieur, you have a noble heart!" cried Brunet, holding up his hands to Heaven, while tears rolled down his cheeks. "And for me, what a load you have taken from my breast!"

"Well, we exiles must expect to be forgotten," said Delisle sadly. "It will be hard for him when he finds that neither wife nor daughter will come to him."

"But consider, monsieur," urged Brunet, "the life of an exile, and in gloomy England! Is it one you would wish any you loved should share?"

"Perhaps you are right," cried Delisle, springing to his feet. "But anyhow, my task here is finished. I may make my way back as I came. Ah! but there is one thing—I am without a sou. Please to buy this watch from me for twenty francs?"

"My friend," cried Brunet, "after this noble renunciation, you propose to deal with me on such a footing! Monsieur, my purse is at your service. Unhappily it is not too well filled. Alas! it contains only a bare twenty francs."

"Thanks," cried Delisle. "Then I will be your debtor for thus much. But you will accept this watch as a souvenir of the day?"

"How can I decline it?" cried Brunet. "Monsieur, I shall treasure it as 'a gift from the best——'"

"From the best climber of the day," interposed Delisle, laughing.

Delisle had made up his mind to start at once on foot for the nearest station, where he would catch the night-train for the seaport town.

Brunet insisted upon accompanying him out of the town, and pressed upon him a paletot and a hat. Delisle accepted the offer, but unwillingly.

"With a hat and paletot," urged Brunet, "a man may travel from end to end of France unquestioned. In any other garb he may reckon upon being overhauled continually."

"Happy republic of the paletot!" cried Delisle. "And now, en route."

They passed along the quay, where the fête had not yet danced itself out. An interminable quadrille was still going on. The cornet had almost given out, but threw in a note now and then. The fiddler went on as fast as ever, his elbow wagging and his foot beating time energetically, but hardly a sound escaped from the instrument, all the resin scraped off, or the strings given out. The people danced on; gallant young peasants sang to their partners as they twirled them about, others whistled, and one young workman joined in occasionally with an accordion. Withal, the result was not inharmonious. Indeed, in all this merriment under the moonlit sky, with the rustling of the wind among the leaves, and the soft ripple of the river, there was a pathetic afterthought. It seemed the last gasp of pleasure, of the old hearty unreflecting Gallic pleasure, dying hard, but still dying, with stubborn pagan indifference to things beyond. Haply the dance might have gone on till now, but a rude, shrill, discordant whistle from the steam ferry announced the last chance of passing over for the night. And that put an end to everything, for the musicians lived on the other side of the water.

Delisle and his companion had stood watching the dying embers of the fête, and were moving away, but in an opposite direction to the rest, when a hand was placed upon the shoulder of the former.

"Pardon me, monsieur," said the voice of M. Huron, "but will you object to accompany me to the gendarmerie?"

"And if I object?" cried Delisle with a rapid glance around.

There were two or three more gendarmes close by, and Père Douze was visible in the background.

"In that case, monsieur, I may, perhaps, arrest you."

"Then I had better go with you in a peaceable manner."

A little crowd had gathered about them, but it was only moved by curiosity. If anything its indifference leaned to the side of authority. The gendarmes closed up.

"I answer for the gentleman," cried Brunet in despair. "He is a friend of mine."

"Tut," said Huron in his ear; "you will only compromise him the more."

But Brunet followed the party to the gendarmerie, where the gate was shut in his face, and he was refused admittance. He returned disconsolately to the town, not knowing what to do next. He would ask M. Lalonde to interfere as maire. He was probably in bed, and would be indignant at being disturbed. Well, he might be indignant. As Brunet passed the bank door, he noticed a light shining through the crevices. Somebody was still about in the house at all events. He rang the house bell. Jules the servant appeared yawning dolefully. No, his master was not in bed, unhappily; everybody else was, and he was dead with sleep, but dared not disturb the master. Brunet opened the door and went in. Lalonde was fast asleep in his chair, and moaning loudly. He awoke when his clerk touched him, and looked about vacantly. When he comprehended what was wanted of him he shook his head decidedly. He would not stir out that night for the Marshal himself, and to interfere between the gendarmes and anybody they had trapped—no, thank you. There was nothing more to be done, and Brunet went sadly home to his cottage.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 1882.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER XIV. BEHIND THE SCENES.

It is not the easiest thing in the world, even in Liberty Hall itself, for a young lady guest and the son and heir's man-of-all-work to obtain confidential speech together. But a trained conspirator like Count Stanislas Adrianski is, or ought to be, equal to any occasion. It moreover belongs to his craft and calling—so, at least, we are told by people who say they know—to be profoundly versed in all the ins and outs of human nature, and to be able to tell by a straw which way the wind blows. So he could not fail to think that Phoebe would think it odd that a patriot hero, whose head, heart, hand, and sword were due in Poland, should all of a sudden turn up at a country house in the capacity of a young gentleman's valet. There are lands, it is true, where long-descended nobles—so long-descended as to have reached the very bottom—are to be found in such bewildering profusion as to make it even betting that it is a count who blacks one's boots or cuts one's hair; and there are lands, too, where titled coal-merchants, stock-brokers, grocers, poulterers, and publicans are less uncommon than they were in the dark ages. But an Adrianski could not forsake the romantic fiddle for the servile clothes-brush without some better reason than need of monthly wages; an Adrianski could not desert his country at her need in order that Ralph Bassett should be properly groomed. Honour, and a hundred other things, forbade that Mademoiselle Doyle should be left, for one

needless moment, to run to such base conclusions as these would be. Of course no conspirator who is worth his salt thinks of betraying to a woman the true mainsprings of his actions—the secret history of the mysteries in which he is involved. The cause might doubtless require, for the present, to be served in a menial capacity. Causes are very often served in yet more illogical ways. The whole how and why were not for a woman's tell-tale ears; but—yes; in a general way she had a right to know that even this apparent degradation was ennobled by being all for the cause.

So Phoebe had not been five minutes at Cautleigh Hall before she found, upon her toilette-table, an envelope addressed to her in the now too familiar flourishes of a certain style of Continental handwriting. How it had found its way there so quickly, conspirators, who know how to stick threats to the walls of royal bedchambers with daggers, alone can tell. But Phoebe was no more surprised at finding it than, after the first start of recognition, she had been surprised to find her melodramatic lover himself at the door of Cautleigh Hall. Such things were the merest matters-of-course in her world, where wonderful events and startling coincidences are always happening to everybody four-and-twenty times a day. And she had read:

"You have surprise. But never mind. Only tell not, which I am. It is my life I trust to you. You shall know, all at the hour, whom I do here. Before I speak, you shall seem as if I am strange. S. A."

Truly, at last, the romance of life had come to Phoebe as it comes to few.

She was in a great country mansion,

large and remote enough to pass, without much help from fancy, for a feudal castle or baronial hall. Hither she had been sent by a stern and tyrannical father to be parted from the most romantic of lovers. Nothing had been forgotten, even down to the duenna, and to the brilliant company in the midst of which she was to feel herself alone.

But all these precautions had been in vain. Her lover had actually done what, ages ago, had occurred to her during some waking fancy. For her sake, and to rescue her, he had entered the castle disguised as a serving-man. How had he obtained his knowledge of where she was to be found? The question was absurd. Was heroine ever yet carried off, and not discovered by the hero, by some extraordinary coincidence, in the very nick of time? And then, "It is my life I trust to you." It would indeed be at the risk of his life that a hounded Polish exile should trust himself within the walls of the lords of the soil. For of course Sir Charles Bassett would be a trusted favourite of the Czar, and would be only too glad to find such an enemy as Stanislas Adrianski in his power. Nor am I at all sure that, if her notions of history and of international politics were hazy, they were very much more vague than those entertained by the majority of the lady guests at Cautleigh Hall. Hers, at any rate, meant something real to her mind, which was more than could be said for theirs.

The time was evidently drawing near when she would be called upon, in some unforeseen manner, to prove herself a heroine indeed. For that matter she was compelled to take the part of a heroine even now. Had it not been for the presence, beneath the same roof with herself, of her heroic lover, she felt disgracefully capable of forgetting that she was at Cautleigh Hall against her will, and of feeling well content that Count Stanislas Adrianski should be in the thick of a very far-off battle. But such contemptible behaviour had not been allowed to be hers. She was a heroine for whose sake a hero had dared death and dungeons under her very eyes—that hero who seemed now to be her irresistible doom. What would happen next? Perhaps—but the possibilities of such a perhaps are too long to reckon. They implied all the plots of all the plays and novels that Phœbe knew. Anything might happen next, now.

Meanwhile, though she, with all due

diligence, cultivated her consciousness of his presence, things were made easier for her by the very little which Stanislas—no doubt for the most heroic reasons—allowed her to see of him. At times, days together would pass without putting her self-possession to task by giving her a sight of the man who for love of her was putting his life in jeopardy; and, when she did see him, it was always in his capacity as Ralph Bassett's valet and before company. At such times she could not but admire this haughty noble's power of adapting himself to all the needs of the occasion. Nothing, indeed, could injure the effect of his sombre and melancholy dignity. But had he been a born valet, he could not have acted the part more perfectly. No doubt he had kept a dozen valets in his time, but only a genius for conspiracy could account for the manner in which he knew how to disarm every sort of suspicion. He never blundered, never forgot, he was never distraught; he had even the self-command to refrain from a glance in her direction that might possibly tell tales. It was upon Phœbe at last that the strained excitement of so barrenly brilliant a situation began to tell. She, too, set herself to play the part of being a mere common lady-guest of the house, just as the others were, and did not find it so very hard, doing what the others did as far as she could, and taking things as they came. But to live two lives at once is always hard, especially when the secret and unseen life is the more exciting of the two. No wonder Sir Charles, with his readiness at seeing through the backs of other people's cards, thought her a peculiar girl who was hiding something, and was not altogether what she seemed.

But at last a crisis came.

One morning she found two letters on her plate—one from her father, the other in an unknown hand. She knew what her father's would be: a cumbrously light chronicle of little things which could not possibly concern the inner life of a heroine, and that were, considering that they came from a tyrant to a prisoner, uncomfortably inappropriate and out of character. But from whom could the other be? So she opened the second first, and could not help her heart beating, or feeling that something in her look was treason to the secret of life and death which she was bound to guard. For thus it ran:

"I write with my left hand for fear of the spies. I am to myself this afternoon,

at four o'clock; and I will walk on the path to the little gate, and you will come. If you will not come, you do not know what will come, but when you come, then you will know. A."

Phœbe glanced round, half in fear lest her sudden confusion should have been observed. And her eyes met those of the count himself, who had come to speak to his master. And the count's dark deep-set eyes seemed to say: "Be silent—but come."

Possibly he had known, as servants will, that no house or out-door engagement would hamper Phœbe's movements on that short winter afternoon. As to that, she was herself of two minds. Romance bade her meet this hero of masks and mysteries, another feeling made her wish that the meeting might be rendered impossible for at least another day. The consciousness that he had put his life in peril for her sake was something to be proud of, and was nearly as delightful as it ought to be; but a sudden summons to complicate this simple relation by a stolen interview, perhaps to act, was a very different thing. Yet she never dreamed of doubting whether, if nothing happened to hinder her, she should go. On the contrary, the old shame at the very thought of doing anything cowardly, or ignoble, or in the least unworthy of an ideal heroine, inspired her to thrust away and trample down every other sort of shame. From her point of conscience, the clandestine meeting of an imprisoned girl with a disguised lover was the very crown and pinnacle of duty—an end that justified every means. And danger only doubled duty; danger to herself meant duty ten times told.

"Will four o'clock never come?" she asked her watch a hundred times, resolutely mistaking an instinctive dread of that fateful hour for impatient longing. But at last she heard the great house-clock itself strike four. "It must be fast," thought she, for her own watch still wanted ten minutes of the time, and she had been treating those very ten minutes as a reprieve. So she waited for fifteen minutes to make sure before hastening towards the little gate on love's wings. And then, at last, she cloaked herself and escaped from the house at a snail's pace, without having the good fortune to be met by Mrs. Hassock and her enquiries on the way. In spite of love, a straw would have turned her. But she was unopposed by so much as a blade of hay. She had

given destiny every chance, and destiny had refused to interfere.

There, already waiting for her, was the count, smoking a cigarette, with a successful air of waiting for nobody. He raised his hat as she appeared, and Phœbe could not help thinking that his original shabbiness suited his style far better than the brand-new clothes he wore at Cantleigh. Once more her heart beat a little, and she was glad of it, for she wanted to be glad to meet him very much indeed. He held out both his hands, but she had her hands in her muff, and, as the afternoon was cold, she kept them there. Of course she would die for him, but her hands had a will of their own.

"You are an angel!" exclaimed Stanislas. "You have not said one word, and you are come! and now——"

"Yes," said she. "But tell me—tell me at once—what all this mystery means; of course I know why you are here, but are you in such terrible danger? Is it true?"

"If I were not in danger, should I wear this disguise? It is true, mademoiselle. I have told you I was going to my country. Alas! once more, it was not to be. We were betrayed. We are always betrayed. And so I have to hide—to fly."

"And you are not safe—even here?"

"Nowhere is the head of Adrianski safe, my dear. It would not be safe under the very guillotine."

"Ah, then," said Phœbe, disappointed to feel relieved, "you did not know I was here at all?"

"That you was here?" asked Stanislas with an instant's hesitation on the words, and another instant's pause. "Ah! I was going to say, but you are so quick; I was going to say, but he will give her his head, and it shall be safe there."

Phœbe was vexed at feeling disappointed once more, and she sighed. The part of heroine must needs be delightful, but it seemed likely to prove a little hard. Still, if only for honour's sake, it must be played, and all the more since love needed so much spurring.

"Yes," said he, "I knew that you was here. If they have their spies, we have ours. Mademoiselle, my dear, there is nothing you can do I cannot know. You go to the theatre with an ancient man—who knows it? Adrianski, he is there. You go to live at a château—who knows? Adrianski, he is here again. You shall go to the top of the moon, and you shall find

Adrianski. Perhaps you shall see him prince, perhaps rambour, perhaps musician, perhaps valet, perhaps chiffonier, but Adrianski always the same. One day he shall sit at the table, yesterday he shall wait behind the chair. But always Adrianski, always me."

There was a time, before she knew that her name was Doyle, long before she had heard the name of Bassett, when these heroics would have seemed to her becoming in a gentleman. And she still accepted them as becoming in a hero; nothing more than their bloom had gone.

"Before we say another word more, tell me," said she, "what your danger is; tell me how I can help you. I am to be trusted as much as if I were a man, with a sword in my hand."

So she spoke and so she believed. But of how far her father would think her trustworthy, could he see her now in some magic mirror, she did not think at all.

"I know it," said Stanislas with a bow, and a rather meaningless wave of the arm. "And for because I know it, I said come. I am here because I love you, and because you love me. You have not always treat me well; but I never think you not true. You are not like that woman for whom I have killed a man. Mon Dieu, mademoiselle, for you I would not kill one—I would kill ten. Because you love me, I say come; because I say come, I tell you what to do. Attend then, my dear——"

"I like best the name you always used to call me by," said Phoebe.

"What name?"

"Mademoiselle."

"Pardon—I remember—I am valet now," said he, with a sadness of homage which made Phoebe feel remorseful for misplaced coldness and pride towards a hero in jeopardy. "But—never mind. All right—mademoiselle. I am in danger, mademoiselle, because I am patriot, and because I love you. I love my land, but more I love you. I fly because I am betrayed; because I love you, I fly here; because I love you I brush clothes, to see your eye who is a star. And if you are in trouble, or in a bother, for you to call, 'Stanislas à moi!' and for me to answer, 'Me voici—mademoiselle.' And what you can do for me? Nothing, mademoiselle, except but to say not who I am; and to trust me—with five pounds."

"You want—money?" asked Phoebe, at last surprised.

"Alas! mademoiselle, it is true. Every penny of the salary I receive I scorn to touch. It is degradation; I devote it to the gunpowder of the cannons of my unhappy patrie. The estate of the Adrianski, more than forty Cautleigh, is robbed to him by the Czar; every sou he had is given to the cause. Adrianski is a beggar to the woman what loves him. It is true. But no, not a beggar, mademoiselle. Adrianski gives himself; he is yours."

Phoebe searched for a precedent in vain. In all her large experience, no question of money had ever risen between a pair of lovers. Heroes and heroines were often poor, but to help one another with downright hard cash they were never known. Still there remained the facts that she was rich, and that the man who was daring death and Siberia for her sake was as penniless as he was proud.

"Is that all I can do for you?" asked she.

"That is all. At least—it is quite all. With five pounds I can act, for you—for me. You shall see what you shall see. But never mind. I ask no money for any common things. It is Poland who thanks you; it is the country whom you serve."

She removed one hand from her muff at last, and, after a battle with her cloak, found her purse with two five-pound notes in it, and gave one of these to the cause of Poland. Stanislas took it in what is held to be the most gentlemanly fashion—that is to say with an absent air, as if he did not know that he was taking it at all.

"When it is need to meet," said he, "I shall not write, nor shall you. If I want you, I shall wear my pin of my cravat who is like what you call a knock—like so," he said, closing one fist. "And you shall wear those earrings which is in you now when you want me; and if the answer is to touch the shoulder, so, then we shall meet here to this hour at that day. The knocks, the rings, the shoulder—so. We must be secret; we must conspire. We are together, we two."

They parted, but not like lovers. Phoebe felt angry with herself at feeling coldly when her part demanded all her fervour. Stanislas was evidently too high-minded a gentleman not to respect a woman's moods. But though he had displayed so many admirable traits of character, considering the shortness of the interview, she was, by no means satisfied. There were hundreds of things he might have said, even in that short while, that he

did not say. Only one thing was clear—the hero of her romance was in pressing need and in utmost danger, and that his safety depended upon her silence and might depend upon her courage before things were at an end.

The plot was thickening. If only she could work herself up to care enough whether Count Stanislas Adrianski were sent to Siberia or no! But in any case, his going there must be no fault of hers. And if only the danger, and therefore the heroism of her hero could seem to her deepest heart quite so real as she resolutely believed them to be—but then, if she kept on trying very hard, no doubt the care and the deeper seeming would come. She must not fail in the duties of a heroine merely because she was weak and they were hard. How she would scorn herself in a book, if she failed!

These were her thoughts when there happened to her the very last thing of which she was thinking.

She found herself face to face with the wicked and desperate lover—the mortal enemy who knew Stanislas, and with whom her true lover's life would not be safe for an hour. She had, at a moment's notice, to find courage and action indeed. And she was so bewildered that she knew not what to do or what to say.

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

A SAPPHIRE.

In the wanderings of which a reader of these "Tales" has had so many hints, one picks up many precious stones, literally and metaphorically. I should not value the companionship of a man who did not like to see, and handle, and own jewels. He must needs be a creature without fancy, excellent may be in all prosaic capacities, of thorough business habits, a zealous churchwarden, an efficient chairman of the local board. But if gems have no fascination for him, I should not care to travel in his company, or even to sit beside him at dinner. Observe that I do not speak of wearing jewellery, but of owning and admiring jewels. That attraction is strong on myself and on all persons for whose brain and heart combined I have respect. He who loved the Arabian Nights when young, and all the dainty records of fairyland, imbibed the glamour which never wears away.

At different times of my life, returning from one country or another, I have owned

—not for long—a pretty little heap of pearls, emeralds, and diamonds. At present, I think, my only treasure of this sort is a small handful of turquoises, brought from Candahar, of trifling value.

I own a sapphire, however, a very handsome stone, to which I have clung like an Englishman, "in spite of all temptation," for eighteen years. I bought it in Cairo, at Shepherd's Hotel—the old, historic, uncomfortable caravanserai, which was burnt down. The vendor was a young fellow-countryman, just returned from the Nile voyage. At that time it was roughly smoothed and polished in the native manner, which exposed not a quarter of its beauties. I recollect very well that I gave him nine pounds for it, but, since the gem has been twice re-cut, it is worth several times that figure, I believe. This young traveller gave me a story with it, which has almost slipped my memory. In those happy times I did not own a notebook, and it would be impossible to say how much of the following narrative is his, and how much my own imagination has unconsciously added. I have put the legend into the first person for convenience sake; you may suppose it a story told by one boy to another in the verandah of Shepherd's Hotel, when the golden sunset is fading duskily over the Ezbekieh, and the tinsel lights of the cafés are beginning to gleam under the acacias.

We lay one evening off a town which was either Manfaloot or Osioot, I am not sure. There were white walls about it, which descended almost to the river-bank, with domes above them rosy in the declining sun, and dark-green palm-trees, fretted with gold along the edges of their leaves. Francisco, our dragoman, did his best to dissuade me from landing, as was the habit of that worthy man. He insisted on the danger, real enough, you know—this was in 1863—of being belated in the narrow unlit streets, where nothing stirred after sunset but dogs and robbers and outcasts. But I longed to stretch my legs on shore, and the mosques seemed handsome. So a guide was sought, and presently appeared an ugly, dirty old Copt, arrayed in a night-gown and a blue and scarlet turban. Of all beards that ever grew on human chin, this fellow had the longest and filthiest; a mat it was, an unnatural growth. And he had only one eye.

Led by the guide, who spoke a few words of English, I strolled through the

empty bazaars; fought some lively skirmishes with flogs; saw the outside of a mosque or two; and visited a coffee-shop, where the faithful eyed me silently askance. Whilst drinking the blessed preparation which I thought mud, though I pretended to like it for "form's" sake, night settled down, and the Copt became uneasy. He led me back by another route, an alley dark as a coal-mine, under a lofty wall; preferring that way, he said, "because dogs bite," a reason vague, but intelligible on reflection. I learned that the high wall on our left was that of the pasha's grounds. The one-eyed Calender informed me that he could get permission to visit them next day, for a baksheesh of two liras. Thirty-six shillings seemed too much to pay for a stroll through a burnt-up garden, but my crafty Copt assured me that the ladies of the pasha's harem were occasionally espied therein. Of course he told a falsehood, and I knew it, but who would not catch at the off-chance, when twenty-one years old?

Suddenly, as we stumbled on, for we carried no lantern, my way was blocked by a human form, which met me breast to breast. I cried humorously, like the donkey-boys: "Riglak, Effendi! Shumalek, oh, Sheikh!" and tried to pass. But a sharp word of command, the thud and rattle of arms grounded, brought me to halt. Half-a-dozen lanterns flashed out suddenly, and I saw the narrow passage full of troops. It was the patrol, and I stood face to face with the officer, a fair-haired man, very soldierly in his blue tunic and silver lace. By the lantern his orderly displayed, he looked me over, smiled, and glanced beyond. The Copt shrank back, whilst the officer passed me with an unfinished salute, and spoke with him a moment. One seemed eager, the other embarrassed. After a few low words, the young Turk seized my follower by his most venerable beard, drew that ancient countenance to his, and—how shall I put it? He treated my Copt as Antonio treated the Jew.

The action was so insolently droll that I laughed out. Without apology, I snatched the lantern, lighted a cigar thereat, and turned. At a word from the officer his men fell back, saluted, and we passed through. The Copt offered no explanation of this incident. In answer to my questions he muttered that Turks are very cruel and hard upon his nation. Next morning the wind was fair.

Several weeks afterwards, halting at the same town, I remembered the pasha's garden, and the marvels to be seen therein. My former guide arrived, but he did not show so much confidence about obtaining a permit. Some scandals had been discovered, he hinted, at the Konak. "What scandals?" I asked, but the Copt did not know. He was a poor man, and with the effendi's permission he would now retire, to see what could be arranged. At night time, whilst I supped upon the poop, a small procession of lantern-bearers issued from the narrow street and halted. My dragoman presently informed me that the Kialar Aga, or some such personage, desired a few moments' converse. I had no objection, but it presently appeared that the Kialar Aga expected me to attend on him. Taking a bottle by the neck, I peered over the rail, and distinguished the creature amidst his slaves below.

"If the Kialar Aga does not come on board within three minutes," I cried, "I will throw this bottle at his head."

Heaven knows what message Francisco delivered, but within the time I saw before me a tall, lean, wrinkled being, with the face of a peevish old woman who gives herself airs. His flowing dress was handsome, he wore jewels on every finger, and conspicuous in his turban was the peculiar sign of office. I took his offered hand with repugnance. Francisco translated.

"His lordship the pasha sends compliments. If you wish to see the harem gardens, you must be at the gate by sunrise."

And forthwith the Kialar Aga departed.

"What did he come for?" I asked of Francisco.

"To see if all was square, sir. There's been something wrong in the harem. I have agreed to pay one lira for baksheesh."

The Copt had asked two.

Next morning I was punctual. A guard of Nubian soldiers stood at the Konak gate, and presented arms. We traversed a dingy courtyard, full of ragged suitors, passed through a small door at the corner, and entered the gardens under charge of two or three eunuchs. There was little to see, of course. Flowers grew in a tangle where shallow ditches moistened the earth. The space was mostly occupied by shrubberies and thickets, intersected by winding walks. Here and there stood a statue of surprising deformity. The art of child-

hood, displayed upon a turnip with a dinner-knife, comes nearest to the style of thing set out here for the ladies' delectation. Through the midst of the grounds ran a turbid canal, shaded by fine trees and clumps of bamboo. It widened at the centre to a pool, embanked with marble, chipped and stained. Steps led down to the water. In the middle of the tank rose a wooden kiosk, gaily painted; but its shutters were closed, and the bridge leading to it had locked gates. Some windows on the ground floor of the palace stood open. I saw rooms sparsely but handsomely furnished, in satin and gold embroidery. Glass chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and the walls were lined with mirrors. Those windows had been opened to impress me with a glimpse of the magnificence within, but I knew very well that this luxury was atoned by sordid wretchedness in the apartments not displayed. The ladies were invisible, of course.

Not disappointed, for I had expected little, I returned, after leaving a card and a courteous acknowledgment for the pasha. Reaching the dabeah, I found upon my table a small iron box, and summoned Francisco to explain. But a slender handsome man in Turkish uniform appeared from the inner cabin, and said earnestly, in perfect French:

"I put myself under your protection, sir! If you dare venture to help a man in desperate straits, I implore you to hoist sail."

In astonishment and boyish delight I gave the order, and my men, fortunately, were all aboard. A few minutes after we were scudding briskly down the river, and I returned to the saloon.

"The pasha has a steamboat," I said, "and the telegraph."

"There is a chance that he may not pursue me, and life is worth a struggle. What have I not gone through in these last hours! Your crimson flag to me was like a thread of sunshine in a black sky."

"But at Cairo," I observed, "you will certainly be taken."

"No! My papers are all in order. Besides, once we reach Cairo, if I demanded the pasha's head, it would be served me. You have asked no questions before extending your kindness to a poor soldier, but I will tell you the story as soon as I have swallowed my heart, which sticks in my throat at present."

All day and all that night my guest sat on the poop, watching the rapid river and

the mud-built villages. Instead of anchoring at dusk, we kept on, urging the crew with a promise of bakshesh. When the forenoon following passed without alarm, my protégé recovered heart. He broke into snatches of song, slapped the one-eyed reis upon the back—all reises, and most other Egyptians, are one-eyed—and convulsed my valet with unintelligible jests. A being less Turkish in his ways could not be imagined, and I asked his nation.

"I am a Genoese," he said, laughing and colouring; "but call me Yusoof Agha."

"Have we not met before?"

"I thought you would not recognise me. Yes, I have to apologise for my treatment of your guide, but you do not know what a villain he is. After dinner, if you like, I will tell you why I am escaping."

He did so, with many reservations, doubtless. I never learnt how Yusoof came to embrace Islam, nor anything about him, excepting this adventure. It may be confessed that his manner of telling it did not lead me to take an absorbing interest in his history; but I should like now to hear the beginning and the end of this renegade.

"You cannot fancy," he began, "the monotonous misery of life in these Nile towns. There is nothing for the virtuous man to do save pray and smoke and pray again, and foretell the re-conquest of the world by Islam. I am a good Mussulman"—here he winked and laughed—"but I had not the fortune to be bred to these delights, and they pall. Before I had been a week in yonder garrison I wanted to die—oh, seriously! But one nail drives out another, and before I was quite bored to death I found amusement.

"Two or three days running, wherever I went in the afternoon, I met a certain negress. One knows that sort of thing, and as soon I was sure, I gave her an opportunity to speak.

"'Effendi,' she said, 'a beautiful lady has seen you, and her soul is melting like wax,' etc.—you know.

"I expressed polite regrets to hear of this disaster, and asked if the lady was married. No; her young charms were like those of the plane-tree. And so on. I recalled as much poetry suited to the occasion as my studies could supply at a moment's notice, and hoped to hear again when convenient. But before retiring my black Hebe produced a little *rage d'amour*.

which would have warmed a chillier temperament.

"'Allah!' I exclaimed, 'it is no kefaji's daughter who sends a present like that! Who is your mistress?'

"The slave drew herself away saucily.

"'She will tell you when she thinks proper, I suppose.'

"I might have waited; but it is always well to know beforehand with whom one sits down to a game. Very few unmarried girls in a place like that could spare such jewels. But it is dangerous, as you know, to ask questions bearing in the most remote degree upon the womankind of a family. At length I remembered your Copt, who, let me tell you, is as vile a wretch as could be found in Egypt. He pretends to live by acting as guide, but his real pursuits are vastly more lucrative. The most honest of them is to sell antique gems, which he imports from Paris, and not the most abominable is to trade in secrets. The poorest fallahéen all stand in his debt, and he crushes them betwixt the upper and the nether millstone. But I did not know him then.

"This rascal was delighted to give me details about every family in the town. There was more than a chance that something in his way would come of it. The knowledge that my *bonne fortune* was unmarried simplified the enquiry. I found that she could only be a daughter of the pasha's. He had two of marriageable years, the elder affianced to my colonel, the other, Nuzleh, still unattached. The Copt knew all about them, their appearance, character, and tastes. Both, he said, were very handsome, but the elder was bold and self-reliant, whilst Nuzleh had a timid disposition, very rare amongst Moslem women.

"A day or two afterwards the slave carried me another message. Her mistress would visit a stall in the bazaar at a certain time, and she begged me to be about the spot. I obeyed. The lady was punctual, of course, and I had no trouble in recognising her amongst the others. If this poor head of mine were capable of forming a prudent resolution and sticking to it, I should have broken off the adventure there and then. For she never took her eyes from me until I fled in alarm. But they were such beautiful eyes! Next day, as I stood thinking of them under the palace walls, a flower dropped upon me from above. No one was by. I let my gauntlet fall and picked it up.

But I prayed Allah to grant my beauty some slight gift of caution, since my own share is limited. And meantime I did not lounge beneath the palace wall again.

"Some hours after, the negress handed me a note. I could not read one half of it, and she could not help me. I swore the Copt to secrecy by all the gods who ever ruled in Egypt, and he deciphered it. The letter contained only verses and girlish nonsense. I got a poetry-book and wrote the answer; but when the messenger came for it she brought another, just a second edition, but in clearer writing. So things went on for several weeks. I was not so impatient as you would suppose, for with every other letter came a jewel.

But things could not remain at this point. Making love by correspondence, at the risk of your neck, is a fashion out of date. The negress saw matters with my eyes, for she ran almost as great danger in carrying these harmless notes as in introducing me into the Konak. But Nuzleh did not even think of a pleasure greater than writing verses. She was rather compelled than persuaded to let the slave tell her name. To my suggestions for an interview the silly child made no reply at all, but transmitted me her evening dreams and morning raptures, her impressions at noon and her visions at midnight, with an obstinate volubility which would have been droll had it not been so dangerous. I began to be bored. The volumes of poetry which I could borrow were nearly all used up in our correspondence. So I wrote in plain prose that a man gets tired of making love to an abstraction; that I would receive no more letters until I had seen her. For a whole week there was silence, and I kept on my guard, for female pique runs naturally to daggers and poisons. Then came the answer. Amidst reams of poetry I learned that if I was so cruel she would obey, but how the meeting could be brought about her innocent mind was incapable of devising."

The autobiographical form is wearisome; having shown my guest's cynical manner of telling his story, I will drop it.

The maid proved to be as uningenious as the mistress. It is generally supposed that for cases of this sort women have more wit and courage than their lovers, but it was not so here. If they tried, they did not succeed in devising a plan for the interview, and Yuscoof, of course, was absolutely unacquainted with the premises and

the habits of the harem. For the pasha, so liberal to foreigners—who would gratefully report of him at Cairo—suffered no native to enter his gardens. Once more Yusoof resolved to let the matter drop, but those compromising letters still arrived, and he had no lover-like pretext for stopping them. The pasha's daughter could be terribly mischievous if she liked, without resort to violence. At his wit's end, Yusoof applied to the Copt, keeping back only the lady's name. That useful being saw no difficulty at all.

"Can you swim?" said he.

"Like a fish."

"Under water?"

"Like a moor-hen!"

Thereupon the Copt revealed that no sentries guarded the canal, that the patrol was a mere ceremony. If the lady did her part with discretion, the lover risked nothing besides a midnight bath. Suspicious of everyone at Cairo, the pasha thought himself in safety here. Yusoof did not by any means regret the absence of danger. He told his plan and received the lady's trembling assent. Only, the meeting could not take place in her apartment, where a nurse but too faithful attended day and night. Consulted once more, the Copt was ready. He named the kiosk in the tank, which always stood unlocked, saving on those rare occasions when the garden was visited by foreigners.

On the first moonless night, Yusoof gained the bank of the canal, dived noiselessly beneath the arch, and swam under water as far as he was able. Rising to breathe where the shadows lay blackest, in two or three long stretches he reached the pool. Here, to gain the most sheltered place for landing, it was necessary to pass half round the island, a fatiguing effort. He landed at the further steps, and looked round cautiously. No light glimmered through the shutters of the kiosk, no one moved within. But the windows of the palace were all illuminated, throwing a perilous glare between the trees. Perplexed, angry, and alarmed, Yusoof made up his mind to return, when a figure suddenly appearing on the bridge struck him motionless with fear. It stopped a few paces from him, and whispered, in tones quivering with fright:

"Are you there?"

Yusoof recognised the negress, and approached her cautiously. She opened a door. It was pitch dark inside.

"Where is the Lady Nuzleh?" asked Yusoof, halting.

"There, there, for goodness sake go in!"

Thus encouraged, the lover poured forth to his invisible divinity the rapturous salutation which he had composed for this event. For European critics the effect would have been most seriously injured by a sneeze, but they hold other opinions on this score in the East. The lady revealed her presence by a sweetly murmured

"Allah make it good to you!" but her politeness ended in a sob.

The meeting seems to have been vastly droll in Yusoof's opinion. Shivering in wet clothes, he played the castanet between his tender protestations. The fair one's answers were unintelligible, and her stalwart negress, holding the lover by his hand, forbade him to approach. Not ten minutes the interview lasted, and Yusoof vowed betwixt oaths and laughter, as he noiselessly slipped into the pool, that such a stupid entertainment was not worth a cold in the head, much more a life.

For several weeks, the memory of this ridiculous adventure made him deaf to all advances. Fools and children, he told the slave, ought not to play at intrigue, which is an amusement for grown persons. Then it was rumoured through the town that there was sickness in the Konak, and presently an old woman visited the captain's quarters. She brought a message of such blind, self-sacrificing love as touched me when I heard even Yusoof's careless rendering. Nuzleh had taken her old nurse into confidence, and she, poor creature, fearing lest the child should die, consented to everything. Yusoof's resolution failed, and his visits were many.

You think that the tragedy is coming now, but it was still deferred. The weeks passed by, and Nuzleh's elder sister was to be married to the colonel. His officers prepared the customary presents. Yusoof, deeply in debt to the money-lenders of Cairo, and to anyone who would accommodate him, could only raise the needful cash by selling some jewel which Nuzleh had given him. Upon the day when I arrived he took it to the Copt, who, in the afternoon, left at the barracks an amount representing one-twentieth of its value, or thereabouts. You will remember that we met beneath the Konak wall. Yusoof charged the Copt with his trickery, and

was told that if he did not like the price the colonel would give more, no doubt, to recover his bride's ring; for he supposed her the guilty sister. The incident that followed, I have told. The Copt sought no vengeance at this time.

The colonel was married, and gossips began to whisper of a match far more grand for Nuzleh. Messengers passed to and from Cairo, until, at length, it was officially made known that a prince of the blood had asked for the pasha's youngest daughter. Women have no small voice in their own affairs out yonder, and in a common case, Nuzleh's objections would have been seriously entertained. But this alliance was too honourable to be delayed for a young girl's fancy. Her vehement protest caused suspicion, but the preparations went on.

During the night before my second visit, an inevitable discovery was made. The ladies of the harem opened Nuzleh's jewel-box, to see what parures she needed for her grand trousseau; and they found it empty. What followed nobody can tell. Before sunrise, a letter with a stone attached fell on Yusoof's bed, and told him in one word to fly. He rose instantly, packed his valuables in a box which he hid beneath his cloak, and escaped to my dabeah, by the least frequented ways. On his road he met the Copt, also avoiding observation. He was robed in his best, and his face was set towards the Konak. Yusoof guessed his errand. Something had reached the usurer's ears, and he was hastening to sell his knowledge. Had Yusoof doubted, the old man's conduct would have betrayed him. He fell upon his knees, and my protégé, with great presence of mind, as he expressed it, slung the heavy box, and crashed it on his skull. Leaving the body there, he gained my boat without encountering anyone.

We reached Cairo safely, and I bade adieu to my passenger without reluctance. Two days afterwards he called, no longer Yusoof Agha, but Yusoof Bey. Whatever the offence which caused his banishment, it was forgiven. He gave me this sapphire; I suppose it had belonged to that poor girl.

A few days after, the newspapers announced her arrival. She came with her father and a big retinue, to be married to the prince. The ceremonies in such a case are long, but they came to a sad termination. Nuzleh died, how, under what circumstances, no one can tell.

WHAT IS LEFT OF MERRIE ENGLAND.

No one can look through the columns of an old calendar without noting how many of our old feasts and fasts have fallen into desuetude, and no one can read records of old English life without remarking how utterly most of our old habits and customs have either been altered or have disappeared. And, it may be noticed, this abolitionary movement has not been in gradual operation, but has been the active growth of the last half century. A very much greater gulf divides us from our grandfathers at the beginning of the present century, than existed between them and their ancestors a couple of centuries previously.

With the astounding changes brought about in our social constitution during the past fifty years, the national character seems to have undergone a complete transformation. The typical Englishman was a stern, solid being, yet in his nature there was a strange love of trivialities, a fondness for old habits and institutions which in our eyes appears almost childish in its simplicity. But the revolutions brought about in the sciences of locomotion and communication have altered him, and the typical Englishman of to-day affords by no means so strong a contrast to typical men of other races as he did. He has sentiment, and plenty of it, but he accords it a proper time and place, and does not allow it to interweave itself with the routine of everyday life. The business of life is his great occupation, the pleasure of life is a conditional consequence, and if he relapses into anything like old fashioned enjoyment, the act is one of condescension, and by no means to be invested with any importance.

Fifty years ago England was yet Merrie England, although the hands of the innovator and the destroyer were beginning to be felt. Customs hallowed by the observance of many hundred years still obtained in most of the country towns and villages, and it would have been deemed sacrilege and vandalism to have even hinted at their abolition. With the dawning of the present era of invention, however, the state of matters underwent a sudden and thorough change, and although, as we shall endeavour to show, some old remnants yet exist, they exist solely upon sufferance, are regarded simply as curiosities, and are not attended in their performance by an atom of the old spirit.

Strange to say, it is in our mighty, practical, commonplace London that we find the most rigid adherence to old customs. And next to London, come the north and the west of England. That they should still exist amongst the big manufacturing towns and the grimy mining districts of the north causes us but little less surprise than that they should still flourish in London, but that they should still be found in the west is not so astonishing, inasmuch as the west has always been the most primitive part of our isle. Elsewhere almost every vestige of the old days in the shape of festivals and customs has disappeared. In fact it may be said without making too sweeping an assertion that of all the innumerable anniversaries religiously observed by our ancestors, Christmas Day alone preserves its ancient position. Twelfth Night is little more than a name; Valentine's Day has sadly degenerated; Easter is simply marked by a holiday; May Day is but the first of May; whilst Candlemas Day, Palm Sunday, St. George, St. Agnes' Eve, Collop Monday, Hock Day, St. Mark's Eve, Midsummer Day, Lammas Day, Michaelmas Day, Martinmas, and St. Thomas's Day—all, in the old times, very notable feasts—have completely sunk into oblivion. New Year's Eve, the Fifth of November, and Hallowe'en are yet marked days, but are sadly shorn of their old attributes.

In the City of London, however, many of them still live, and, strange to say, without showing any signs of debility. This may be accounted for by the fact that although the population of the City after nightfall is very far short of many of our third-rate provincial towns, the relics of its ancient grandeur in the shape of guilds and companies, with their traditions and their wealth, still exist. For instance, on Plough Monday the Lord Mayor and sheriffs still go in procession to the Court of Exchequer, there to witness the cutting of a faggot of sticks, and the counting of six horseshoes and sixty-one hob-nails, as tenants of certain estates. On Maunday Thursday the poor of the City still receive the royal bounty in the shape of specially coined money. On Easter Monday and Tuesday the Spital sermons are still preached in Christ Church, Newgate, in the presence of the civic dignitaries and the blue-coat boys, who afterwards proceed to the Mansion House to receive their guineas and shillings, buns and wine. On Ascension Day the boys still beat the bounds of the parishes; the pancake is still tossed at Westminster School

on Shrove Tuesday; the vaults of the Parliament House are still searched on the Fifth of November; and, greatest of all, the Lord Mayor's procession still obstructs the traffic of the streets on the ninth of the same month.

Besides these, there are innumerable observances still adhered to by the City Guilds, such as the annual dining together of the Skinners and Merchant Taylors in commemoration of an ancient feud for precedence; the procession of the Salters' Company to the church of St. Magnus; the trial of the Pyx at the Hall of the Goldsmiths; and the boat race for Doggett's coat and badge on Lammas Day.

But, when we get well out of the reach of the metropolis, when we penetrate obscure, sequestered regions where most we should expect to see some reflection of the old life, we are disappointed. It is a hopeless task to seek for information upon the subject of old manners and customs amongst the rustica. And indeed it may be noted, that where such customs do exist—except in the parts of England before alluded to—their existence is owing, not to the enthusiasm and inherited reverence of the rustic folk for them, but to the efforts of some local grandee or ardent antiquary. In Kent and the eastern counties, formerly happy hunting-grounds for lovers of old-world customs, manners, and habits, the very names of the old festivals are almost forgotten—the reason given being the proximity of the metropolis. Jack in the Green and Guy Fawkes are becoming rarer every year; farmers do not wassail their apple-trees on New Year's Eve; lads and lasses no longer keep watch at the church porch on St. Mark's Eve; pleasure fairs have been swept away; and in some districts the belfries do not even welcome the New Year. And with the old feasts and holidays have disappeared many pleasing little domestic customs, many harmless bits of superstition, and much that made country life seem Arcadian even if it were really not so.

But when we go north, especially into the counties of Northumberland, Lancashire, and Durham, and into the west, especially into Devon and Cornwall, we are as agreeably surprised as we have been disappointed elsewhere.

No Devonshire farmer could hope for a prosperous New Year unless on Christmas Eve he wassailed his apple-trees. In Herefordshire, farmers still light fires in the wheat fields on Twelfth Night.

Candlemas Day is religiously observed in the north. Shrove Tuesday is more or less marked all over England, but especially in the west. Carling Sunday—the fourth in Lent—is as universally celebrated by feasts of peas and butter in the north as is Christmas Day by the consumption of plum-pudding in the south. In Durham no nail is ever driven in on Good Friday, and in Yorkshire the earth is never stirred upon that day, although in Devonshire good luck is secured by so doing, whilst both in the north and the west it is considered auspicious to see the sun rise on Good Friday. Easter, celebrated in the south simply by making holiday and sending complimentary cards, is a “high time” in the north. Easter eggs are exchanged between all classes, and “Tansy Pudding” is a feature at all tables. “Lifting” men, by the women, is invariably performed, and every one who can afford to do so, appears in brand-new clothing. April fooling is perhaps universal, although confined in the south to juveniles; but in the north the “most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors” do not deem it beneath their dignity to send folk “April gowking.” May Day in the north and west is still a great festival, and even in one or two Kentish villages the writer has seen the old-fashioned May-pole. In Gloucestershire cheeses are still decorated and carried in procession, and in Cornwall children go their rounds with May dolls. Here and there upon St. John’s Day fires are still kindled in the fields for good luck, and love-sick maidens in the north still test the qualities of hemp-seed. Michaelmas goose is still generally eaten, and harvest suppers are amongst the most universally preserved relics of old days. Hallowe’en in the north is observed by the old rites of dipping for apples and watching burning nuts, and Christmas observances are too well known to require detailed mention.

Thus briefly we have endeavoured to recapitulate the principal festivals which have escaped the obliterating tendency of the age. Each year sees, if not the disappearance, at least the waning of one or more, and the proportion of those which exist to those which gained for our land the epithet of “Merrie” is infinitesimal, but it is pleasant to cherish them, few though they be.

Domestic usages of old-time origin, and superstitions peculiar to certain places, seem to fight harder for existence than the fixed feasts. A very striking instance of loss,

however, is to be noted in the almost complete disappearance of the old English ballad. In Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, old songs and old rhymes are sung and recited on every hillside and in every chimney corner. The ballad-singer is still a common visitor, and children, long before they can read, learn to lisp verses which were familiar to their forefathers hundreds of years ago. In England we search in vain for the genuine ballad. Antiquaries and bibliophiles have happily preserved many in the printed shape, but to hear them sung, to the old tunes and in the old manner, is as rare as it is to hear the curfew. Even among sailors, as a rule the most ardent conservatives of old manners and superstitions, the popular taste for maudlin sentiment and idiotic buffoonery, has supplanted the fine old sea song. The modern tar, fine fellow as he is, prefers the latest music-hall atrocity, or the newest whining love song, to *The Death of Nelson*, or *The Saucy Arethusa*, or *Tom Bowling*, with his pipe at grog time.

But the loss is yet more apparent in the country. One might expect occasionally to hear during the long winter evenings in the parlours of the village inns an old song of the country side; one might expect to come across old crones and aged labourers with some remembrance, however imperfect, of the minstrelsy of their youth, but, with the exception of a few harvest-songs, and one or two west-country ballads, the result is disappointment. How many Lincolnshire peasants know a verse of *The Poacher*? How many clowns throughout the broad lands of Yorkshire can join in *The Farmer’s Son*? How many Sussex men have ever heard their famous county *Whistling Song*? Where in Worcestershire would be heard *The Hunter of Bromsgrove*? Where in Gloucestershire *George Riddler’s Oven*? Even from the north the old ballad seems to have departed, although *Earl Brand* and *Old Adam* may sometimes be heard in very out-of-the-way districts. In the west old ballads linger together with old habits and old customs, and the fact may be sometimes even regretted, when the tired traveller finds himself condemned to sit and listen to the twenty or thirty verses of a local song, droned forth without the omission of a single word, and aware that the smallest interruption would be deemed, both by singer and audience, an insult. Notable amongst these west-country ditties are *The Three Knights*, *The Jolly*

Waggoner, and the ever popular Richard of Taunton Dean, and these may often yet be heard, especially in the wild country around Dartmoor and on the Somersetshire border, sung as they have always been sung since the olden time, with a deep chorus of bass voices, and followed by the invariable clatter of the cider-mugs upon the table.

Occasionally, amongst gipsies and tramps, one may pick up an old song or fragment of a song, but the individuals from whom one expects to learn most—the village philosophers, the “wise men,” the oldest inhabitants, the intelligent peasants—know nothing, and what is more disappointing, care nothing about them. The parson of a Kentish rural district informed the writer not very long ago that he had endeavoured to cultivate good old English music amongst his humble parishioners by forming a singing-class, whereat the songs of Bishop, Arne, Purcell, and the sixteenth-century catches and ballads were practised. In less than a month his class had dwindled from thirty to five members, and on asking the reason was told in the purest Kent dialect—just the dialect of the old songs and romances—that the villagers wanted the new songs; they cared not for old-fashioned, out of date affairs, but were athirst for “something civilised.”

Amongst other characteristic features of old English rural life, the loss of which must go so much to the hearts of all true lovers of the Merrie England of bygone days, are the sports and games. Less than half a century back, almost every part of England was famous for some particular sport. Thus, Northumbrians were great quoit and bowl players, Cumberland and Westmoreland men were mighty wrestlers—a supremacy they divided with Devonshire and Cornwall. Berkshire and Wiltshire men were proud of their stick-play, Yorkshire men of their horse-racing and their sword-dancing, the Fen-country men of their skating and pole-leaping, Essex men of their running, Nottingham men of archery, Surrey and Sussex men of their bar and weight throwing, and Kentish men of their cricket. In some parts the old county partiality still lingers, for we know that Cumberland, Westmoreland, Devonshire, and Cornwall men to this day would rather lose a half week's work than miss a “wrestle;” that at one or two old Wiltshire fairs stick-play in the style of two centuries back may yet be seen; that the Fen men can still hold their own with all comers

at skating, but the universality of these pastimes has disappeared. Probably, taken as individuals, Englishmen of the upper classes are far more athletic than they ever were in the days of Merrie England. Cricket, football, rackets, and rowing are now cultivated in a hundred places where they were cultivated then in one, but it would be difficult to find a more anti-athletically inclined rural population than is ours at the present day.

Many reasons are adduced for this, two or three alone of which are worthy of notice. It is said that with the spread of railway communication, the inhabitants of secluded country districts, being less dependent upon their own resources, find it more agreeable to seek diversion at the nearest town; that time needs less killing than it did owing to the cheap rate at which amusement and diversion are afforded by professionals. It is said that the present strict observance of the Sunday has much to do with the disappearance of old English sports and pastimes; that what was fifty years ago accounted legitimate diversion, is now set down as a crime. And it is said that the enormous increase in the number of country horse race meetings has allured the simple rustic away from his primitive sports with the temptation of winning money without personal exertion.

Branches of sport which were patronised from the sheer love of the thing, have now become professions. We have before us a “Programme of Diversions to be held in the Common Field of the Parish of Bromley in Kent,” for the year 1770. Many—indeed most—of these “Diversions” scarcely live nowadays even in the name. Where, in the length and breadth of this England of to-day, should we find prizes offered for “Dancing in couples and in singles,” “Grinning through the collar,” “Back-sword fighting for single men,” “Throwing the iron bar,” “Jingling,” “Tilting, at the Quintain on horseback,” and “Footracing for maidens!” And, be it noted, these “Diversions” were advertised to take place “on the first Sunday in May.” Imagine the face of the worthy pastor of Bromley in this year of grace 1882, were such an advertisement to be handed round amongst his parishioners! Many of the “good old sports,” such as bear-baiting, cock-fighting, dog-fighting, prize-fighting, ratting, and hen-pelting, we can of course well spare, but a great deal of Sunday soaking at public houses would be avoided, if the popular conscience could be made a

little more elastic, and the popular veneration for Mrs. Grundy a little tempered.

Coming to old customs and habits of a more domestic nature, we find that they still exist to a great extent in the northern and western portions of England. In the north, especially amidst the great Black Country, they are almost universal, whilst in the Midlands and the south they seem to have disappeared. Many of these customs come within the category of superstitions, but they are none the less interesting, as tending to disprove the assertion that "the further north one goes, the less sentiment one finds." A few instances will suffice.

In the north, no child's nails are ever cut on a Sunday; no infant's nails are cut until it has attained the age of one year, but are bitten; the inside of a child's hands are never washed until three weeks after birth; infants before they are carried downstairs are always taken upstairs, in order to ensure their course in the world upwards; no child is shown itself in the glass, or its teething process will be painful; cake is always given to the first person met on the road to the christening; marriage should never be performed on a Saturday, but always, if possible, on a Wednesday; the person who sleeps first on the wedding night will die first, as will the person who kneels first at the marriage ceremony. In Cornwall no miner whistles underground; a Cornish child born after midnight will see more of the world than ordinary folk, and Sunday is considered an especially lucky day for birth.

We might swell this list to very formidable proportions, but the subject has been so well handled by recent writers on folk-lore, that we should be open to the accusation of trespass and plagiarism. The hours, the days, the months, the movements of the heavenly bodies, the actions of animals and birds, the various aspects of Nature, are laid under contribution by popular rural superstition, and it is a most astonishing fact that notwithstanding the wholesale disappearance of old feasts and festivals, so much real ignorant belief should still sway the bucolic mind. Pixies in Devonshire and Brownies in the north are still revered and dreaded as actual beings. Refinement and civilisation have put a stop to the burning of witches, but the newspaper columns of the past twenty years contain many accounts of the duckings and persecutions they have been subjected to in secluded villages. There are few country places of any extent without a wise woman or seer. Quack doctors

yet drive a roaring trade at the few existing country fairs.

As for the belief in ghosts and spirits, it is almost universal, and by no means confined to rural districts, as those who have had a lengthened experience of the British domestic servant full well know.

Bacon remarked that "men fear death as children fear to go in the dark," but amongst our rustic population there are stalwart labourers, who have the Queen's Medal in their cottages, and who would brave a hundred deaths on the field of battle rather than pass a certain stile or a certain dark bit of wood after sundown.

And so our world goes on. The noble savage is a being of the past, as capable of appreciating a whisky-cocktail, and a suit of dress clothes, as the best of his civilised brethren; the last romantic corners of the globe are being hunted up and spoiled. Old London is disappearing every day, and when the last Lord Mayor's Show has defiled, and the last harvest-song has been sung, and the last belfry has rung forth its welcome to the New Year, our posterity will look upon Merrie England much in the same way that we look upon the golden age, or the glorious days of King Arthur's Court.

SONG.

STAY, sweet Day, for thou art fair,
Fair, and full, and calm;
Crowned, through all thy golden hours,
With Love's brightest, richest flowers,
Strong in Faith's unshaken powers,
Blest in Hope's pure balm.

Stay, what chance and change may wait,
As you glide away;
Now is all so glad and bright;
Now we breathe in sure delight;
Now we laugh in fate's despite;
Stay with us, sweet Day.

Ah, she cannot, may not stop;
All things must decay;
Then with heart, and head, and will,
Take the joy that lingers still,
Prize the pause in wrong and ill,
Prize the passing day.

LAD'S LOVE.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

Five-and-twenty years is a long gap in a man's lifetime. The path he is destined to travel along has plenty of time, in such a lapse, to run through valleys of humiliation, and up hills of difficulty; the sun has plenty of time to shine upon him; and the stinging biting rain, driven against him by the bitter wind of adversity, to blind him and make him stagger as he goes. Flowers of life are culled, thorns pierce, in such a breadth of

years. The character, thoughts, and feelings are so changed, so carved by the chisel of time, that the man of five-and-forty would scarce recognise himself in the lad of twenty who used to look at him from his mirror every morning, and whistle for very lightheartedness as he brushed the thick curly locks which are now so sparse and streaked with silver lines.

All these varieties of experience, all these changes had come upon Ruthven Dyott, since that summer's night, five-and-twenty long years ago, when we saw him stand bare-headed in the mellow light to watch a woman moving swiftly through the meadow-grass, which rustled under the touch of her trailing robe as she passed.

Passed—where?

Out of his ken—out of his life—though he knew it not.

For two days later he received Millicent's promised letter—the letter for which his very soul within him had seemed to wait—and when the thing so longed-for came, its kindly friendliness and calm sisterly interest half maddened him.

Quite maddened him, he came to think in a time to come, as he looked back upon the hasty impulsive actions that followed. No answer was sent to Milly, and Ruthven Dyott hurried up north to spend a month or six weeks with his own relatives, without attempting to visit the red house by the river—determined, in fact, to try and banish from his memory the very existence of its inmates.

“Send me one line to say that you forgive me for any pain I may have caused you; and believe me, dear Ruthven, the time will come when you will look back upon all this as a passing fancy that it was well indeed should pass, and leave your young life still free.”

Thus had run that fateful letter. But the “one line” was never sent.

“I have loved a statue, not a woman. I have been a fool, but now I am wise. I have been blind, but now I see.”

Thus ran Ruthven's thoughts during that long journey north. But with time, and the near approach of his departure from England, came softer feelings.

Yes, he would go and say farewell to the woman who had been to him so good and true a friend; he would once more watch the river stealing along beneath the alder-trees; once more wander in the garden where all old-fashioned flowers grew and flourished exceedingly.

Autumn's hand had changed the aspect of

the garden and river since last he had seen them. The leaves of the Virginian creeper, red, and gold, and russet-brown, were strewn upon the grass, a carpet daintily tinted; the roses were all dead; the alder-trees had shed their best leaves.

Strangest change of all, not a window was uncurtained, and when Ruthven rang at the porch-door, the first sound that greeted him was the grating of locks and bolts.

“Are Sir Geoffrey and Miss Warner from home?” he asked of a withered old crone who blinked at him from under shaggy white tufted brows, and evidently bore him bitter grudge for having disturbed her from her lair, wherever that might be.

“Sir Geoffrey's dead and buried. I don't know where the lady's gone.”

That was all.

Then came the grating of keys and bolts once more, and Ruthven was left out there in the dark autumn day, with the fallen leaves under his feet, and dead and dying blossoms all around him. So that kindly genial old man was gone! Death must have come suddenly, too; and Milly—how she must have suffered! To hurry home, to write, not the “one line” she had asked for, but many lines, urgent, sympathetic, tender, was Ruthven's next proceeding. He knew of no address whither he might send, except the old home now so desolate. He could but trust to the faint hope that “To be forwarded,” strongly underlined, might appeal to any conscience the crone with the bushy brows possessed; he could but wait and watch for some word of greeting during the few days that remained to him before he must start on his long journey.

He watched and waited in vain. The silence remained unbroken; and he bore that silence with him to the new land and new life in which his lot now lay—a burden heavy to be borne.

Yet time did its inevitable work of healing. New scenes, new stirring aspects of work and life, drifted thought into new channels. Ruthven never forgot Millicent Warner, nor yet the red house by the river, and the pleasant hours passed in the room with the wide low window that looked across the grass and flowers to where the alder branches bent to kiss the ripples as they passed. He did not forget; but the picture grew dimmer; and in time—what changes may not be wrought by that silent resistless influence men call time!—Ruthven Dyott, recalling the words of Milly's letter. “This is but a fancy that

will pass," looked wise, and owned to his own heart that those words were true. They had seemed cruel in a day that was past; but then he saw "as in a glass darkly;" now he stood face to face with the certainty that Millicent had been cruel only to be kind.

"It was no rare thing," he thought to himself, smiling at the folly of a day that was dead, "for the object of a lad's first love to be a woman some years his elder." The romance died away and no harm was done. A good and pure influence, this woman whose experience of life had chastened and refined her character, had kept his life free from all evil; there was much reverence mingled with the tenderness that he in his youthful ignorance had taken for a passion.

Yes; the story was neither rare nor new; and now, two years after that parting in the gloaming by the river, the real romance of a passionate love came to Ruthven Dyott.

Millicent had swayed him, now he learned the sweetness of swaying another. Millicent had been his guide, now was he the guide of one who found all her sunshine in his smile.

Millicent's dark grave eyes had been wont to watch him with helpful interest, but not always approvingly. Alice, his girlish blue-eyed wife, would not know how to begin to chide him, much less to go on.

She studied his comfort as the one thing worth striving for; counted herself blessed among women in that he had chosen her from all the world to be for ever by his side; read the books he loved, so that she might be able to speak of them with him; made, in a word, a perfect wife. But by her very perfection and the utter unselfishness of her devotion, she cherished, rather than helped him to fight against, a certain wilful headstrong impulsiveness, that Milly, poor faithful Milly whose honest tongue would smooth over no truth however disagreeable, had oftentimes called his "rock ahead."

Never were happier people than Ruthven Dyott and his wife—for a time.

But at last sore and bitter trouble came to them; and in this wise.

A year after their marriage a child had been born to them; a boy with Ruthven's dark eyes, clear-cut features, and sunny smile. When the lad could stagger three steps across the floor and then fall into his mother's outstretched arms, Alice thought her cup of joy could brim no higher; when

his baby-lips began to try and lisp her name, she thought that there was yet another note added to the exquisite music of life.

And so the years passed on.

The child became the boy, the boy the youth; and then to Ruthven Dyott and his wife Alice, it was given to learn by bitter experience the truth of poor old Lear's exceeding bitter cry that "sharper than a serpent's tooth it is, to have a thankless child."

Cuthbert, this only son of theirs, was worse than thankless. Is there such a thing as too much love, as well as too much harshness in the rearing and tending of a child?

The mother of this young fellow would never have allowed such to be the case. In her eyes all the wrong her boy did, all the shame and sorrow he brought upon his father and herself, was the fault of somebody else—first of this false friend, then of that bad companion; never of himself. He was "too easily led," she said, "and wicked people took advantage of his gentle disposition."

Her husband said little or nothing, and, for her dear sake, was generous and forgiving to the young sinner. But he grew to look older than his years; his upright form began to stoop. He would walk along silent and preoccupied, his eyes on the ground, the brows above them puckered in thought. More than once, when Cuthbert, flushed of face, disorderly in dress, unsteady of gait, loud-voiced, defiant, or desponding, according to the stage of drunkenness at which he had arrived, found himself in his father's presence, that father did but turn upon his heel, lock himself in his private room where none—not even Alice—dare follow, and there "dree his weird," in solitary, brooding misery.

He had been wilful, impulsive, oftentimes lacking in patience and self-control, but he had kept his life clean and clear; he had never degraded the manhood within him; he had toiled hard at his profession; name, fame, wealth, success were his; and now, of what value did they seem in his haggard eyes? What was to become of this ghastly "fetch" of his, this lad so like in outward seeming to the boy who had gone to London nearly thirty years ago to try to push his fortunes, the boy to whom Millicent Warner had been so good and true a friend? Yes; strangely enough in these the days of his bitter sorrow, Ruthven Dyott bethought him of the past, remem-

bered the woman who had brightened and sweetened his life and then passed out of it like a shadow that is gone—remembered her with a new spring of gratitude rising in his arid heart towards her memory like a sparkling rill of water in a desert.

He set himself to wonder what had become of her.

Was she married long ago, or had her chastened spirit fled from earth to heaven, and left only her memory to shine in the hearts of those who had known and loved her?

How he should like to have one of the old long chats with her, tell her all about this unhappy boy of his, and of Alice, his darling, his wife who had been so tender and loving a companion to him all these years! Alice weighed upon his mind almost as heavily as Cuthbert. For a strange change had come upon Mrs. Dyott. She, so guileless, so confiding, had grown silent and reserved. No one ever saw her weep, but her eyes were always weary, misty, and with a weird far-off look in their blue depths, as if they were for ever looking for something they had lost—always wistful, pleading, pathetic. Were they seeking for the boy she had lost—the little lad she remembered staggering to her arms with merry ringing laughter—the boy whose new clothes for his first going to school she could hardly see to mark legibly, for the tears that rose so fast, and had to be dashed away between every dip of the pen! Who can read aught of the sublime mystery of a mother's heart mourning over the backsliding of the child she brought into the world? Ruthven grew almost to fear his wife. Her dim eyes meeting his would send a chill through every nerve in his body.

He had never been a man of much religious profession; but now in these terrible days he was driven to God's feet by the scourge of pain; he learnt to pray, more with the heart than with the lips, perhaps, yet none the less fervently for that; to pray, not for himself but for Alice, his wife, that Heaven would have pity on her suffering soul, and lift the cloud that was darkening all her life.

About this time an old friend came to visit Alice Dyott, one of those friends whom it is given to some women to make, oftentimes truer, fonder, and more faithful than those to whom the ties of kindred bind us ever so closely.

"Let your boy come home with me for a while," said this good friend to Ruthven

when her stay under his roof drew to a close; "your wife is breaking her heart over him."

"I know it," said Ruthven, his head sinking on his breast; "who better? And yet I am helpless, I can do nothing."

"Oh yes, you can," said his companion. "You can let Cuthbert come to us. He is my godson, you know; so I have some claim to a part and lot in him."

"What will your husband say?"

"What, James? He'll say I'm the most sensible little woman in the world; he always does, you know."

"With cause too," answered Ruthven with a smile.

So Mrs. James Coveney had her way, and Cuthbert left home for a time, an arrangement in which, after a long talk with her friend (an interview from which Mrs. Coveney came forth with no eyes to speak of, but in which Alice shed no single tear), his mother quietly acquiesced.

The Dyotts at this period of their lives were living in London. Mr. and Mrs. Coveney dwelt far north, in a lovely nest of a place among the English lakes; so Cuthbert found little similarity between the life he went into and the life he had left; and, for a time at all events, the excitement of change must—so his father thought—tend to keep bad habits in abeyance.

Mrs. Coveney wrote at intervals, but beyond a general cheeriness of tone, nothing very definite could be gathered from her letters.

At last, Ruthven Dyott, going into his study one evening just when the daylight was dying and the gloaming dropping earthwards like a grey veil, saw the gleam of a white patch upon his desk.

It was a letter, and in Cuthbert's hand.

Now the boy seldom wrote when away from home. What indeed was there for him to say? Was it any good to make promises that were but "written in sand," doomed to be washed away and leave no trace once the tide of temptation should arise?

Silence was better than meaningless words, as both father and son had by this time learned.

Hence this letter took to Ruthven's eyes the guise of a possible evil. Had the boy got into some fresh trouble—yielded to some new temptation—made the friends who had nobly stretched out a hand to him bitterly repentant of their generosity? Was it that old story, a demand for money

to pay debts of so-called honour, as the only way in which public exposure might be averted?

Ruthven Dyott was no coward, yet he shrank from opening his son's letter. Renewed hopes had lifted themselves in his heart, like tiny shafts of green piercing an arid soil. He had begun to fancy that Heaven had heard and was about to answer the prayers offered through sleepless nights and weary, anxious days. Now, might it not be that his hopes were to be slain at a breath, as the tender springing herb by one night of biting frost? With quickened pulse and breath, he broke the seal of Cuthbert's letter.

What were the words he read?

"Since I have been here, it has seemed, dear father, as though scales have fallen from my eyes. Is it too late, I wonder, for me to win your love and trust once more, to try and make some reparation for the past? I have a friend beside me as I write who tells me that it is never too late to mend. It is this friend who has led me to strive after better things; who has shown me the possibility of retracing all the past. The whole thing has been so strange, so wonderful, I hardly know how to tell you of it, or to explain it, even to myself. I first went with Mrs. Coveney to see this new friend of mine. Then I went alone. Then I could not bear to be a single day without going. There seemed some strange kind of influence that drew us the one to the other—this dear sweet woman and me. She is quite old, her hair is white, and turned back over a high cushion, like an old picture. Her face is perfectly beautiful, and has no colour in it except the darkness of her eyes. They are eyes which seem to look you through and through. The first time I saw her, it was wonderful; you would almost have thought she had known me all my life. She held my hand in hers, and as she looked at me, I saw two bright tears gather in her eyes. I cannot tell you how the friendship between us grew: it started into life at once, I think, like Jonah's gourd that grew all in a night. I have told her all the past. I have kept nothing back; not even things that it hurt dreadfully to tell. There never was anyone in the world so easy to tell things to; and, as she talks to you, she makes you feel that you would rather do anything in all the world than give her cause to be sorry about anything ever again. I see I have not told you her name. It is *Mannering*—Miss *Mannering*—for she is what I suppose would be

called an 'old maid.' She is very rich, and all the poor people round about here look upon her as their best friend. Mrs. Coveney says she has given, at different times, large sums of money to help the poor in our crowded cities. Isn't it like a beautiful story? But I must not forget the sad side of it. This dear lady is almost always suffering. She cannot walk about like other people, but lies all day long upon a couch near the window of her room, where she can see the lake. She says she loves to watch the changing shadows that pass across its surface, and hardly knows whether she loves it best on a sunny day or a cloudy one. I heard a lady say to Mrs. Coveney the other day that 'poor Miss *Mannering's* life hung upon a thread.' So this is the sad side of my story, you see; but I am glad with all my heart that I have seen and known her before that slender thread has snapped in two. I want you and my dearest mother to try and believe in me just a little. It will help me more than anything else in the struggle which must come, to see that you do, however little it may be. It must be a hard thing for you to forget and forgive the past and to put some faith in the future; but, dear father—try do all these things for me!"

We can most of us bear a great sorrow once we brace ourselves to meet it; but the touch of an unlooked-for joy is sometimes more than the full heart can endure.

When he had read thus far in his boy's letter, Ruthven Dyott crossed the room sharply, sat down beside his desk, hid his face upon his arms, and broke out crying like a child.

Sometimes in a black and stormy sky a tiny rift appears, through which a struggling sunbeam "strikes the world."

The bitter home-sorrow which had come upon Ruthven Dyott and his wife Alice had oftentimes made them feel like weary travellers beneath a sunless sky.

Now came the rift overhead; and the sun-ray of hope. Ruthven saw his wife's sad face soften to a smile; noted a new buoyancy in her step; a lifting of the misty dimness that had stolen the light from her eyes.

She was none of those jealous mothers who grudge to see the working of any influence save their own in the lives of their children. Only let her be sure that influence was for good and she could thank Heaven for it as for a welcome boon. She set in her prayers the name of

this new friend whom Cuthbert had grown to love; she knew that the hand which should lead him back to the lost pathway of rectitude must lead him back to her—his mother.

She felt as if her boy, innocent and loving, was about to be given back to her.

When the Sunday came round it so chanced that the Lesson for the day contained the parable of the prodigal son, and as Alice listened to the exultant cry: "For this my son was dead and is alive again; was lost, and is found," her husband saw the big tears gather and fall, and knew that they were tears of joy.

For Cuthbert's father and mother believed in the sincerity of his repentance, believed in the reality of his determination for the future; and Alice had written to him a letter that no one else, not even her husband ever saw—a letter in which she had poured forth all her heart, speaking of the past as blotted out, of the future as radiant with hope and firm resolve.

They began to look for Cuthbert's return home, and were full of plans for his welfare. Hitherto he had cast aside all opportunities of making a career for himself in life; now things would be different. He would work with them, not pull against them.

But instead of the expected arrival came a summons.

"Dearest father," wrote the boy, "will you come up here as quickly as you can? An old friend wants to see you. If you do not come at once you will come too late. Miss Mannerling was once Millicent Warner. She had to change her name to take possession of some property; but she says you will remember the name she bore in days long past. Father, she has been so much to me, will you not do as she asks, and come and see her before she dies? She is so feeble one can hardly hear her speak. Yesterday we thought she would not live till night."

"Oh, Ruthven!" cried his wife, "do not lose an hour—go and tell her how Cuthbert's mother blesses her name; go and see your old friend, dear husband!"

So Ruthven Dyott took a hurried journey north, to take a last farewell of the woman he had loved long years ago, and to whom he now owed a debt of gratitude which never could be paid; for death was stepping in to claim the future.

She lay in a darkened room. Her worn and attenuated frame was draped in a snowy wrapper whose folds were scarcely whiter

than the face of the dying woman, or the still luxuriant hair that was put back from her brow. The small, high-featured, clear-cut face that he remembered so well looked up at him. The sensitive, delicately-chiselled nostrils had grown transparent; the mouth was deeply lined; the lips pallid; but the old sweetness lurked in the smile that greeted him. It was not a meeting of many words at first; hearts were too full for lips to be eloquent.

"Ruthven, old friend," said Milly, and then, with her hand in his, kept silence.

"You have been so good——" began Ruthven presently.

"I have done my best," she put in quickly; "and that is what I wanted so much to see you for; your boy has done you and his mother great wrong, but I believe in him. Ruthven, do you have faith in him too. I feel that the turning-point in his young life has come, and that he will take the straight road now. Surely, dear friend, the old impulsive ways that I used to scold you for long ago, have hung about you still, for sometimes, so it seems to me, you have been hasty with the lad, and met his expressions of sorrow with a hot word or two that would better have been left unsaid? As to your wife—ah, Ruthven, I should like to have seen your wife—you will see that in the time to come her boy will make up to her for the pain he has cost her in the past, and she will not grudge the tears she has shed. Mothers never do, I think."

"She is the dearest, tenderest, best——" said Ruthven.

"I am sure of that. Tell her that she does not seem like a stranger to me, but like someone I have known and loved, and suffered with. I have thought so much about her since I knew her boy, that she has seemed to grow quite near me."

Millicent lay there like a waxen image, so white, so still, with closed eyes, and lips gently moving.

And Ruthven watching her, felt old memories rise and surge in his heart like the waves of a troubled sea.

All at once she looked up at him, eagerly, intently.

"I knew Cuthbert for your son the moment I saw him, and I took him straight into my heart."

"You put me away from your heart in the old days, Millicent."

A slight spasm crossed her marble features.

"Did I? Well, I have made up for it

now. I have kept you in my memory all these years."

"Why did you never answer my last letter?"

"I always was one to do things thoroughly, you know; even my enemies allowed that; and so I sent you away thoroughly."

He thought the hand that still lay in his was growing strangely cold, and had half a mind to call for some attendant. But, as if divining his intention, Milly gently shook her head.

"What a careless boy you were, upsetting all my cotton bobbins!" she said presently with a faint smile.

"But I was very sorry, and picked them all up again; you counted them, you know," he answered, humouring her mood.

She muttered some words he could not catch. Surely, surely, the hand in his was growing colder still.

Her mind was wandering back to the old home.

Once more she saw the river stealing on, whispering through the sedges, gliding beneath the alder-boughs; and Ruthven, not the life-worn man who stood beside her now, but a slender, dark-eyed boy with a smile like sunshine.

Hearing her breath come short and fast, Ruthven would fain have sought some aid, but the feeble fingers held him fast.

"Do not go," she said, seeming to battle for a moment's fresh strength; "there is something else I want to say; put your head closer down to me. I am not strong, you see, and—my voice fails me."

He fell upon his knees beside the couch, crushing his lips against her hands.

"Ruthven," she said softly, "you say I put you from my heart, and it is true, dear, but—I loved you all the while."

Silence: no sound but the ticking of a clock hard by. A life's secret has been told, and the answer to its telling is the sound of a man's weeping.

"I knew it was best so, for you and for me—and I was right, you see, wasn't I? It was a passing fancy, that love of yours. It was 'lad's love,' dear, and nothing more. Such as it was, you gave it to me in all truth, and, Ruthven, it has lasted me all my life."

She drew one hand from the clasp of his, and for a moment gently touched the bowed head which almost rested on her breast.

Ruthven's hair was thickly lined with grey, worn from the temples; almost white just above the brow.

But the eyes of the dying woman were dim. She noted none of these things.

To her that bowed head was dark with clustering locks as in the olden time; the dear dead time whose last knell was now quivering through that silent, shadowy room.

How long Ruthven knelt there he never knew. When at last he raised his head, the face of the woman he had once loved so well was still—the hands he clasped were cold—in death.

"OPEN SESAME"

CHAPTER VI. BON VOYAGE.

THE quartermaster's office looked out upon the quadrangle formed by the barracks, and a brilliant light from its windows made a path of brightness in the surrounding gloom.

Delisle noticed that this corner of the building was better cared for than the rest. Creepers were trained against the walls; plants grew in the windows, the outlines of the leaves in strong relief against the light within.

M. Huron was perfectly polite, but also reserved in his manner. He motioned Delisle to go before him into his office, dismissed the men who were waiting for orders, closed and fastened the door, and placed a chair for his guest, or prisoner.

"Monsieur, we have met before," he said after a long searching look at his prisoner.

"Possibly; I do not recollect it."

"Permit me to recall the circumstances. Before I became a gendarme I was sous-officier of artillery. It was my unlucky destiny to aid in the attack upon Paris, when Paris was occupied by the Commune. Frenchmen fighting against Frenchmen—oh, it was terrible! Well, monsieur, you were there also, but on the opposite side."

M. Delisle felt his heart sink within him. He saw himself once more a prisoner exposed to the sufferings and indignities of convict-life. It would be death to him, slow and painful death.

"Pardieu," went on the gendarme. "If ever there was a man for whom I felt a profound respect it was for him who directed the artillery on the opposite side. What vigour of fire, what marvellous practice, despite deficiencies of all kinds! It warms the heart to think of. There was a splendid artillery officer lost to France in that brave man."

Delisle bowed and said, "Possibly."

He could not help feeling that here was a snare. He was to avow himself, and thus save the gendarme the trouble of identification. Huron read the other's suspicions in his face and was hurt by them.

"On the faith of a soldier," he cried, "I am not seeking to entrap you; remain to me what you like to be, but I declare that I long to grasp the hand of that man, to thank him for keeping up the honour of the artillery, even on the wrong side."

Delisle smiled and held out his hand.

"At any rate," he said, "I can do no harm in grasping the hand of a brave soldier."

"Ah yes; you understand, monsieur," cried the other, grasping the hand held out to him with enthusiasm. "A soldier, always a soldier—still a soldier—never a policeman. Bah! Now that rascal of a Père Douze, he had marked you down. Well, I thought it was time to act then. And now, monsieur, a moment for business. Perhaps it is my duty to ask you all kinds of questions—to demand your papers. Well, I shall only ask you one question—not whence you came—but whither are you going?"

"To England," replied Delisle without hesitation.

"Upon your word of honour?"

"On my word of honour."

"Then I have only to wish you bon voyage," said Huron, bowing politely.

"And I am at liberty to go?" asked Delisle.

"Certainly if you wish it; but a word of advice. You are going to the station on foot. You are liable to be interrogated on the way. Wait here till morning, and then take the first diligence. That will be safer, and I shall be proud if you will be my guest for the night."

Delisle accepted the offer gratefully, and M. Huron set himself to work to entertain his guest. They talked freely of the events of which they had both been witnesses: of the war, the siege of Paris, the Commune, and all the rest. Then they passed to less exciting topics. Huron was something of a naturalist, and Delisle had tastes in the same direction. The gendarme was also a collector. He had sundry Napoleonic relics which he valued highly. Also he had formed a collection of coins, chiefly of curious pieces which he had met with in actual circulation.

"And here, monsieur," cried Huron, exhibiting an ordinary-looking five-franc piece. "is the gem of my collection—a five-

franc piece of the Commune. It will interest you, perhaps, monsieur."

Delisle took the piece and examined it. It was an ordinary five-franc piece with the effigy of Napoleon the Third, and the imperial arms upon the reverse.

"I don't see anything to recall the Commune in that," he said as he handed back the coin.

"Ah, monsieur, you were not in the Ministry of Finance, evidently," said Huron, laughing. "But it is really of the Commune, and here is the history of it: The federates, short of money, set to work to coin silver. But there were no means of striking a new die. Artists, workmen, all had disappeared from the mint. Thus they were obliged to use existing dies with the effigy of the Emperor. But the acting director of the mint found means to effect a slight modification. On the reverse of the five-franc pieces of the Empire, are certain small marks, one of which represented the stamp of the director, at that time a bee. For this a trident was substituted, and you will observe, monsieur, that my coin presents this quite unique mark. Hardly were the coins struck when the national troops entered Paris. All the new coins went back to the melting-pot—all but a few specimens preserved in the mint, and perhaps a dozen or so which had somehow got into circulation. Hence you will agree that this coin is a curiosity. In fifty years time it will be worth—ah!"

The quartermaster vaguely indicated with a wave of the hand the fabulous future value of such a curiosity.

"Well," said Delisle, smiling, "I can assure you that the fugitive federates did not carry many of such curiosities away with them. They were not so skilful as the imperialists in making their profits."

"They had not had the experience," replied the quartermaster with a grimace.

After this the conversation languished, and Delisle was glad to turn in, wondering not a little at the chance which had turned what seemed a fatal mishap into the means of safety. It was broad daylight when he awoke, and the quartermaster was standing over him with a café au rhum.

"I hear the bells of the diligence, monsieur; it will be here in two minutes."

CHAPTER VII. "OPEN SESAME."

M. BRUNET spent a very troubled, restless night. He could not help grieving over the fate of poor Delisle, and he felt that his misfortune was in a great measure

owing to his unselfish conduct in the matter of the money. And was Charles worthy of such a sacrifice? Brunet tried hard to think so, for he loved the youth. He had always taken his part against everybody, and felt quite a paternal tenderness in his behalf. Still he had acted badly, and terrible evil would have come out of it but for Delisle's chivalric and somewhat unpractical generosity. Early in the morning, as he was preparing to start for the gendarmerie to see what he could do for Delisle, he received a message from Huron. His friend was all right and had started by the first diligence, en route for England. Thus one of his troubles disappeared in the bright morning light, and Brunet took his way to the bank in a more cheerful mood. It was necessary to be there early to see about Charles's affair, and he took the precaution to remove his hoard from its hiding-place, tied it up in one of M. Lalonde's canvas bags, and left it on his way with the proprietor of the hotel where he took his daily meals. There were some little precautions to be taken before he finally paid away the money. When he reached the banker's house he was surprised to see Charles sunning himself in the open air on the bench by the door. He was not in the habit of rising early, but then it must be admitted he had something to occupy his mind on this particular morning.

"Dear Brunet," said Charles, taking him by the arm and leading him to the quay, "will you forgive me for having made you the subject of a harmless mystification? All that I told you last night was pure romance. I took it into my head to try your friendship, and also to decide a question which had arisen with some comrades as to whether you were really as poor as you pretended to be. The result, my dear Brunet, has been to raise my opinion of you as a friend and a capitalist. If you have many such little sums to dispose of, I shall be happy to undertake their investment for you."

Brunet dropped his hold of Charles's arm and looked at the young man in a kind of terror. What was true about him? what false? It wounded Brunet more to think that Charles should have played upon him such a heartless joke, than that he should have been led away to commit a criminal act; and when Charles, rather frightened at the effect his manœuvre had produced, tried to soothe his friend with flattering words, Brunet could only reply:

"Charles, you are an excellent actor."

As he thought over the affair, however, Charles's conduct assumed a less sombre aspect. And when Charles reiterated his assurances of affection for Marie, and declared that he would exact his father's consent to their marriage before he left for Paris that day, Brunet almost recovered his equanimity.

"Let me speak to your father first, Charles," he said; "perhaps I may smooth the way for you."

He remembered M. Lalonde's words on the previous night: "If only the ten thousand francs were in hard cash!"

It was nearly mid-day when Lalonde made his appearance in the bank. He put on his black silk cap, which meant that he was resolved upon work; went to his safe and tried to open it. But the lock resisted his efforts.

"Hum! it is very strange," he whispered, and went back to his desk. There he sat tapping his forehead, and trying to recall distinctly the events of the previous night. A thing like this was unexampled; he constantly changed his password, but never before had he suffered it to escape his memory. Last night he had certainly taken a little wine. What could have been in his head at the time?

At this moment the huissier's clerk came in with a list of bills, some to pay, others to receive. There was a balance to pay, however, of a few thousand francs. Brunet looked towards his master.

"All right," cried Lalonde snappishly.

"As soon as he has opened the safe, I will bring in the money," said Brunet, and the clerk took his departure.

"Now what was running in my head last night?" repeated the banker, and once more he tried over his usual passwords. But the door of the safe remained obstinately closed, solid as adamant. He went into the house to take counsel with his wife. She was a poor frightened thing, but not without mother-wit.

"What are your usual passwords?" she asked.

"If I told you they would be no longer secret," said Lalonde.

"Try some of your words with the variation of a letter," suggested the wife, and the banker went back to put the suggestion in practice. After a certain time had been spent in this way without result, Brunet's attention was aroused, and, leaning back in his chair, he looked round to see what was going on.

"Here a pretty thing happened!" cried the banker, giving the studs a vindictive twirl. "I've forgotten my password."

An expression of malignant satisfaction came over Brunet's face. He had often secretly resented his master's want of confidence in him. After his five-and-twenty years' service, surely he could be trusted with the charge of the safe.

"Well, there is nothing else for it, Brunet," said the banker. "You must come here and try every combination of letters till you come to the right one."

"Wait a moment," said Brunet, beginning to make rapid calculations on paper.

He was a great calculator, Brunet, skilled even in algebra and mathematics, it was believed, whereas Lalonde could hardly add three figures together on paper, although his head rarely deceived him.

"Well, what are you figuring about now, Brunet?" asked his master severely.

"I am calculating how many possible permutations there are in your five buttons, each with its twenty-four letters."

"And how many do you make it, eh? About a thousand?"

"Close upon ninety-seven millions," cried Brunet, his face purple with an emotion not altogether painful, but keeping his eyes steadily fixed upon his calculations; "and assuming I make six changes a minute, and work for twelve hours a day—and the employment is monotonous, monsieur—twelve hours a day, without ever making holiday, it would take me just sixty-one years to exhaust all the permutations."

"Grand Dieu!" cried the banker, really appalled. "But, Brunet, what is to be done?"

"Send for the locksmith," suggested Brunet.

"And spoil my magnificent safe which cost two thousand francs! Besides, he might hammer away for a month."

"Telegraph to Paris for a skilled work-man."

"And in the meantime I haven't two hundred francs outside my safe."

"I can tell you a means," cried Brunet, radiant with satisfaction, "by which you will have ten thousand francs at your disposal at once. Consent to your son's marriage with Marie. And then ten thousand francs shall be in your hands in five minutes."

"Nom d'un nom!" muttered the banker under his breath. "It is his doing, after all."

And then there flashed into his mind the recollection that Brunet had been in the office on the night before, very late, while he slept, and that, awaking, Brunet had told him some foolish story about a prisoner at the gendarmerie.

"The artful man—how ready he was with his figures! And now he has me in a regular snare!"

He must temporise with the rogue.

"Well, well, Brunet, let us see the money, anyhow. But we must talk to Charles, the rascal. If his heart is upon this girl—well, who knows? Go and fetch the cash."

Brunet hurried out to fetch the money, delighted with the turn affairs had taken. Hardly had he gone when Père Douze put in his head at the door, his face mottled purple and orange, and one small patch of crimson at the tip of his bulbous nose.

Lalonde felt that he must take the père into his confidence. Unhappily, there was no Commissaire of Police at the moment. The office was often vacant at Canville, the people being so peaceable and honest that no one who looked for promotion would take up the appointment; and on the other hand, there was such hospitality that a man of genial habits might well fall into disgrace like Père Douze.

"Brunet is at the bottom of it," cried the père, apprised of all the circumstances. "He came in when you were asleep; he found the safe open, and he pillaged it."

"He did not find it open," cried the banker firmly. "I never in my life left the safe open."

The père, who knew Lalonde's obstinate disposition, did not venture to controvert this.

"But perhaps you whispered the word in your sleep," he suggested in a low tone. "It was perhaps some pet word that you might repeat in a dream, and he overheard you."

Lalonde turned from crimson to purple. The père talked as if he knew all about the password. Was it possible that he babbled in his sleep—that all the world knew about his open sesame? Where was safety to be found? And his safe pillaged! He might be ruined, stripped of every sou, and yet not be able to move a finger, the secret of his loss locked up in that miserable safe. He had almost a mind to dash his head against it, such was his rage and despair.

"He is off—you may rely upon that," whispered the père again. "One of his

accomplices went off by the early diligence. He took the bulk of the plunder, no doubt."

"Stop him, stop him!" roared the banker. "Grand Dieu! am I not the maire? Telegraph—post—rouse the gendarmes!"

"Leave it to me," cried the père; "don't trouble those worthless gendarmes. Give me your authority. I'll telegraph to the Commissaries of Police all round."

"But stop!" cried the maire, recollecting himself. "He is going to bring me ten thousand francs. Why should he do that if he has robbed me?"

"Will he bring it, think you?" cried the père derisively. "And if he does, is it not a blind to keep you from having your safe opened by main force?"

"You are right," cried Lalonde, "it is all treachery. Away with you, père!"

But when the père had gone, Lalonde grew a little more calm. After all he had never detected Brunet in filching the value of a centime; and all the world had a good opinion of him. And then Brunet had looked positively comical as he contemplated his master's troubles. Was it a joke after all? Had Brunet surprised his secret, and substituted his own password out of mere mischief. Well, in that case he would have chosen some word quite familiar to him, a word of five letters, the first that came to hand. Lalonde was not wanting in penetration, once on this track he soon came to the conclusion that the range of words likely to occur to his clerk on the spur of the moment would not be extensive. He looked curiously on Brunet's desk. A little slip of paper lying there contained his memoranda for the day. Among them, "To speak about C. and Marie."

"Ah! if Marie should be the charm after all," growled the banker, and he went to the safe to try. "Open sesame!"

Lalonde threw himself eagerly upon his treasure and gave a sob of relief as he recognised that the bulk of his funds at all events was safe. He laughed softly to himself, pleased with his own penetration.

"Sixty-one years, and ninety million

trials," he growled out. "Ah, Master Brunet, you did not think you had a penetrating intellect to deal with."

But he lost not a moment in verifying the contents of the safe. Yes, there was missing the exact sum of ten thousand francs.

"What, you have got the safe open, monaieur!" cried Brunet, entering at the moment.

There was something troubled and tremulous in the voice, and the banker turning round threw at him a look full of anger and reproach.

"Villain!" he cried, "it is you who have robbed me; robbed me that you might palm off your miserable niece into my family; and you thought to cover your crime by spoiling my beautiful safe. Go down upon your knees, man, restore the plunder, ask my pardon—then you may hope to escape the Court of Assizes."

Brunet, his eyes flashing, his teeth clenched, advanced upon Lalonde in a rage.

"Miserable slanderer!" he cried, while Lalonde, almost paralysed with fear, called in a strangled voice:

"Help! Help!"

"I am here, monaieur," cried Père Douze, pushing in at the moment. "Lucien Brunet, I arrest you in the name of the law!"

At this dread formula Brunet's forces forsook him. He sank into a chair in mortal dread and despair. In a moment the truth flashed upon him. The banker had been robbed of ten thousand francs. He, Brunet, had upon his person that exact sum, and it was quite impossible for him to account in any creditable way for being in possession of it.

"Ah," cried Lalonde, who had recovered his voice and courage, "the moment for mercy is passed. It is for the Court to deal with you now."

"I care not," cried Brunet, rousing himself from the despairing torpor which had come over him, "if you, whom I have served all these years, believe me a thief."

He could say no more, but hid his face in his hands to hide the burning tears that welled from his eyes.

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER XV. MISS DOYLE'S DIAMONDS.

"THERE lived, in an obscure and humble quarter of a great city a young girl who knew nothing of herself but this—that she was not the daughter of the man whom she called father, and that she had a soul very much above her neighbours. And there fell in love with her two young men—one, a gloomy, churlish foster-brother, whose active character was composed of jealousy and violence; the other, a noble foreign exile, picturesque in person, an accomplished artist, of gentle manners, and with a dash of old-fashioned Byronic dignity. The rejected churl, maddened with jealousy and revenge, took advantage of one dark night to attack his rival, and, to escape the consequences, fled beyond the sea. But it was not fated that the course of true love should run smoothly, even now. The girl was claimed as his child by a mysterious stranger who suddenly returned from the East, rolling in gold. She had no choice but to submit to the claim. But should wealth make a woman false? Surely no—and all the more surely no, when the man to whom she should be true is on the eve of dying, more likely than of conquering, in a great and noble cause. For truth's sake she suffered persecution, even to imprisonment, at her father's hands. But her lover proved a match for them all. The cause for which he had courted death or victory had been lost and betrayed. Yet, like a veritable hero of romance, he followed her, in disguise, into the very castle where she was confined, though his discovery would

imply a defeated rebel's doom. And then to this very castle there came the jealous and defeated lover, the violent and unscrupulous enemy—the very man of all others whom there was special reason to fear."

Thus reads Phoebe's romance so far. And there can be no question that, taken just as she read it, it had at last become desperately real. It is true that the romance like all others, took no notice whatever, of things from the tyrannical father's or rejected lover's points of view. Rightly enough; for if these were considered, an unfortunate reader would not be able to distinguish hero from villain, and would constantly blunder into sympathy with the wrong man. He might fancy, with Doyle, that Phoebe was in danger of becoming perversely cunning, and might think that some gratitude was due from her to the man who, despite or because of all her faults, had learned, from her absence, what loneliness means. He might even fancy that Phil Nelson was very nearly as fine a fellow as Stanislas Adrianski, and that he showed much more folly than villainy in his manner of loving her. It would be even more bewildering than it would be interesting to read a version of *Ivanhoe* written in the interest of Brian de Bois-Gilbert. But, for Phoebe, the more sides of the shield were omitted, the clearer were those which remained. Whatever had been unreal heretofore, was real enough now. For Phil was real—terribly real; and everything else must be real too. It was impossible to make Phil Nelson the pivot of a dream.

I am not going to claim for that dinner at Cautleigh Hall the distinction of being an exceptional nest of misunderstandings. On the contrary, the next dinner-party, given anywhere, will contain quite as many

eggs of that sort, and very likely a great many more. But there were certainly a few. There was Sir Charles Bassett, as sure as of his life that Phœbe was there to collect evidence wherewith to beggar him. There was Philip, in doubt, even while sitting by the side of the woman to whom he had given up his very reason, whether she were in truth that woman or no. There was Phœbe herself, believing the life of an English gentleman's valet to be in danger from the Czar and Philip Nelson—terrified by the consciousness that she ought to do everything, while she knew not what to do. The list is not complete, by any means, but it was long enough to defy even common-sense, for once, to reach the bottom, unless it were a great deal more profound than Phœbe Doyle's.

Even Philip's was obscured instead of being made clearer by the light of the next morning. He had dreamed heavily; and the result was an increase of certainty that his discovery of Phœbe in Miss Doyle must have been part of some general craze, which the sharp light of a winter morning was bound to scatter. He went over the whole story "once more, and convinced himself that he would deserve a mad-house if he allowed fancies and likenesses to protest another moment against due submission to reason, or himself to be tricked by so notoriously deceptive a sense as that of sight. He did not enquire too closely how far he was disappointed not to have found Phœbe in Miss Doyle. It was enough, for the present, to be convinced that he must let his anxiety imagine her likeness in every young woman whom he might happen to see. So, once more making up his mind to wait and work patiently for nothing, he left his room and, finding himself an inconveniently early riser, went out upon the terrace to clear his brain yet more completely in the raw air.

But he did not prove to be quite so exceptionally an early riser as he had at first believed. Presently Ralph Bassett came lounging along the terrace, and hailed him with the self-conscious geniality of a man who is proud of having seen the sun rise, though but the latest of winter suns.

"Good-morning—if you'd not been so late, you might have gone round with me to the stables. I've been looking after old Mab, for Miss Doyle. What became of you last night? You never turned up in the smoking-room. Lawrence and I were there till nearly two; I suppose he'll turn

up again somewhere about the afternoon. What are you going to do? My father can't manage the Holms to-day, I hear. I'd ride over there with you myself, only I've got to act riding-master, and we've got a rehearsal in the afternoon. But no doubt there'll be something or other going on."

"I think I'll go over the Holms by myself," said Phil, "and take a look round before going with Sir Charles. I rather like having the first sight of things with my own eyes."

"Well, if you like to do that, you shall have a mount, and I'll have one of the keepers told off for guide. The Holms are awkward to get into, and a good deal more awkward to get out of again. You haven't seen my man anywhere about, have you? But I suppose one mustn't expect one's masters to get up before they please, whatever we may do ourselves. But—Miss Doyle! Aren't you surprised to see me?"

It was certainly Miss Doyle who suddenly came from the steps of the terrace that led into a sort of lower garden; and Phil noticed that she started slightly, as if to find the terrace occupied before breakfast were really something remarkable. And it seemed to Phil that, by daylight, in less unaccustomed costume, she was even more completely a double of Phœbe than she had been in evening dress and by lamplight.

She had indeed a warmer colour than Phœbe's had ever been, but sharp air and early exercise would account for that, and even in Miss Doyle it seemed too deep and too sudden to be normal. Had Ralph been absent, he must, in spite of all his reasonable resolutions, have put her to some absolutely decisive test, whatever the result or effect might be. But, for this, it was needful to be alone. He could only watch and listen. He could not even say a common good-morning to a girl whom Nature had made in the same mould with her, for caring a straw about whom he now almost hated himself.

Miss Doyle did not seem to notice the existence of a man whose behaviour, or rather want of behaviour, towards her at dinner had certainly given him no claim to a single hour's place in her memory.

"No," she said hurriedly to Ralph. "I suppose you like the early morning too. But I—I must run in now, or Mrs. Hassock will be having the pond dragged for me," she said hurriedly, with a sort of half laugh, and passed on. Nothing in her words or manner, scarcely in her voice, was in the

least like Phoebe. It was a sort of relief that unlikeness was the effect that she left behind.

"There certainly is something out of the common about that girl," said Ralph reflectively. "She's the only girl I ever knew who cared twopence about air or exercise, or Nature before breakfast or alone. They're all such humbugs in general—but there can't be humbug in turning out on a winter's morning with nobody to see. However—come and have some breakfast. I told that man of mine to see that some was ready as soon as I came in from the stables. I don't see why the late birds should condemn the early ones to wait for their worms."

Phil followed him into the breakfast-room. But there were none of the expected signs of an early breakfast; so Ralph rang the bell, and asked if it had not been ordered half an hour ago. Not even that, however, had been done.

"Well," said Ralph, trying to be angry, "it's clear that it's not the early bird who picks up anything. I suppose that fellow's still snoring, if the truth were known. You must wait, I suppose. I'll prepare for heavy business, and look to you to help me."

Phil remained in the parlour till breakfast became a fact, and the later sleepers began to drop in, one by one, Mrs. Urquhart being in the first flight. But Miss Doyle, though she must have been up among the very first of the company, did not appear. Sir Charles himself never showed at breakfast, which was spread at Cautleigh Hall over the whole forenoon, and was an eminently unsocial meal. The present was an especially loose and lazy morning, as there was to be a full rehearsal in the afternoon, and few other plans or engagements had been made. Phil scarcely knew why he lingered, except that he had to ask Ralph presently about getting to the Holms, where he fully intended to spend the rest of the day. But at last Miss Doyle herself entered, alone, when the room was nearly empty, and seated herself as quietly as possible at a corner of the table.

"I've been seeing after Mab, Miss Doyle," said Ralph, while doing double justice to his long-deferred meal. "You remember your promise of last night, and as you're not in the play, you won't be fined for absence from rehearsal. I'm going to teach you the whole art and mystery of riding in a single lesson. When shall you be ready? In an hour?"

"Yes," said Phoebe, afraid of anything more dangerous than single syllables before

Phil—not imagining that he could doubt her identity, and therefore all the more afraid of some explosion. She would have kept her room yet longer had she known that he was still in the breakfast-room. That he did not openly proclaim his recognition of her was in itself a cause for alarm, all the more vast for being vague.

"All right; Mab and I will be ready in an hour. And I'll see about your mount and guide, Mr. Nelson, if you really want to ride over to the Holms. You'd better come round to the stables with me now, and——"

The door opened; and there entered, not Lawrence or any other professionally late riser, but Mrs. Hassock, looking like a thunder-cloud upon its dignity.

"I beg your pardon," she said, "but I've duties to myself as well as others, and I've a right to do as I'd be done by. I've a right to have my trunks and boxes searched through and through, if I'm to stay in this house another hour."

She looked neither at Phoebe nor at Ralph, but appeared to be addressing the abstract justice of the world at large.

"And I request," she added, "not to be lost out of sight till my trunks and my boxes have been searched, through and through."

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Ralph. "Of course you may have your boxes searched if you like, but certainly not without knowing why."

"Thank you, sir. Then, if you please, I'll have 'em searched now. And if you find in one of 'em a gold watch and chain, I'll consent to send for the police myself and be took to gaol."

Ralph suddenly looked grave. "Let me tell you something at once, Mrs. Hassock," said he. "There is one thing that nobody is ever allowed to do at Cautleigh—and that is to make mysteries. Tell me at once what you mean."

"Perhaps Miss Doyle will kindly remember when she last looked at her watch, and see if she's got it on now. And perhaps she'll excuse me not speaking to her in private, seeing how I've got a public character that's got to be kept up and seen to. If I've mistook, I'm sorry I spoke—that's all."

Naturally all eyes turned upon Miss Doyle; and all eyes saw that her cheeks were aflame.

"My watch?" said she. "Why I took it out with me this morning—and——"

"Then that's all right," said Ralph, "and Mrs. Hassock must be content to lose her character for never making much ado about

nothing. Now, Mr. Nelson, if you're ready——"

"Nothing it may be, sir," said Mrs. Hassock. "I know my manners too well to contradict, I'm sure. Perhaps, miss, you've got your watch on. And perhaps, if you haven't, as I don't see it nor the chain, then perhaps you took out your purse, and your jewel-case, out into the park too. And perhaps if you didn't take them, you might have thought you took out your watch when you might have forgotten——"

"You mean to say that a watch, and money, and jewels, are missing from Miss Doyle's room—in this house? Impossible——"

"If you say 'tis impossible, sir, no doubt it is impossible. P'raps they've walked away, of their own selves. But I don't choose to have it thought they've walked into my boxes—that's all."

"Have you your watch, Miss Doyle?" asked Ralph. "Where are these things of yours? Don't you know? You must forgive me, but this is our house, and your maid seems to be hinting robbery against somebody. Are any of these things lost? Or is it only a mare's nest, after all?"

Phœbe, from red, turned pale. "Robbery?" asked she, "No——"

"Perhaps we'd better not talk here. My father must hear this—would you mind coming to him into the library? And you, Mrs. Hassock, will come too. I would sooner lose everything I have than have you lose a single sixpence here—and there isn't a servant on the place that I wouldn't trust with untold gold. Come, Miss Doyle, if you please. Mab must wait, now."

The guests who had been present at this unexpected scene did not disperse. A little household drama, piquantly suggestive of a mystery at somebody else's expense, seemed likely to compete for interest with the play to be rehearsed that afternoon. Jewel-robberies in great country houses were not then the regular part of the day's business that they have since become, and had to a considerable extent the zest of novelty.

"The Doyle lost her diamonds?" asked Lawrence, dropping in at last, and hearing a more circumstantial account of the matter than the case thus far entirely warranted. "We must get up *The Merchant of Venice*, and have old Doyle down for *Shylock*—he'll be in the humour, when he hears."

"Perhaps they were paste," said Mrs. Urquhart. "Miss Doyle seemed to take the matter very coolly—very curiously, so she seemed to me."

No; it could not be that Phœbe had turned into a young lady with diamonds and a maid, even were it possible that she could have spent her whole girlhood both in India and in London. In this sense, certainly in no other, this fuss about a young lady's trinkets had a sort of interest for Phil; and they settled every question except that of his own complete sanity. Miss Doyle had certainly received the first news of her supposed loss very curiously, if not very coolly. So much even he had seen. But that could in no manner concern him, since Miss Doyle could not possibly be Phœbe Burden. The talk buzzed on about him unheard, until Sir Charles Bassett himself came into the room, with Ralph and Mrs. Hassock, but without Miss Doyle.

"I'm sorry to say that a most painful thing seems to have happened," said he. "It is quite clear that Miss Doyle has lost from her room all her jewellery, her watch, and all the money she has with her. Besides that, one of my servants is missing—my son's foreign valet. Last night, he and they were safe; this morning, they and he are gone. I shall of course put off every engagement in order to communicate with the police. If the thief has not caught the morning train—which is next to impossible—he can't possibly be very far away. Meanwhile, I hope nothing worse has happened—though I can hardly talk of anything worse, for myself, than that such a thing should have happened, in my house, to any guest of mine. I mean—I hope the thief has not made off with anything except Miss Doyle's."

Then, indeed, in something like a sudden confusion, all in the room were scattered, except Sir Charles, Ralph, Lawrence, and Phil. Phil had nothing to lose; Lawrence had but just left his room, and had exceedingly little to lose. But Mrs. Urquhart had brought all her valuables en masse to Cautleigh Hall, and there were others who had things that were of real value, and maids who might not have proved proof against the fascinations of a foreign valet.

"I'll ride over to the police myself," said Ralph to his father. "You needn't go——"

"No. I must go myself," said Sir Charles. "Miss Doyle—nobody must think that the utmost trouble is spared. So Miss Doyle was out walking before breakfast, it seems. That's your opinion, Mrs. Hassock—that the thief must have found his way into her bedroom while she was out of doors! But I beg your pardon, Mr. Nelson. This

household trouble of ours cannot concern you, and must not be allowed to waste your time. You are going to ride over to the Holms, I hear. Ralph, you had better put Mr. Nelson on the road. I'll ride over myself to-morrow, if I possibly can. I'm going to ask you a question or two, Mrs. Hassock," he said, as soon as the three young men left the room together. "Don't for a moment think they have anything to do with any possible suspicion of you. You may take it that you are absolutely clear. But I may have to do with this business as a magistrate, and before I see the police there are some things I must know. How long have you been in the service of Mr. and Miss Doyle?"

"Oh, Sir Charles, as to that, you may ask me what you please. I've offered to be searched, as I've took care to have witnesses to prove. I've been months in my place, and I came to it with the best of characters."

"You were not with Miss Doyle in India?"

"I was not, Sir Charles. But I've lived in the best Indian families."

"So you know their habits—eh? A great many old Indians are early risers, I believe. Is Miss Doyle in the habit of taking walks before breakfast? The thief might get to learn her ways, you see; and nobody else, it seems, has lost a single thing."

"She is not, Sir Charles. She mostly lies in bed till the last minute, so to say. And I never knew her to go out of an early morning before."

"Why did you not tell Miss Doyle of her loss, instead of proclaiming it before a whole roomful of company?"

"Why? Because I had to think of my own jewels—and that's my character, Sir Charles. That's why. Whatever happens they can't say I didn't offer up my trunks to be searched through and through, open and fair."

"I believe you to be an honest, truthful, respectable woman, Mrs. Hassock."

"I am, Sir Charles. None more so, anywhere."

"Did you ever see this Stanislas What's-his-name, my son's valet, before you saw him here?"

"No, Sir Charles. Never but once, when he came to our house with a letter—I thought he was some never-do-good, up to some mischief of his own, but when I came here and found he was naught but Mr. Bassett's own man, then of course I

knew the ins and the outs better than I did then. And that's the only time I've set eyes on him—and I hope 'twill be the last, before I see him at Botany Bay."

"Thank you, Mrs. Hassock; that will do. No," thought he, "Ralph never sent a letter by that man to Miss Phoebe Doyle. But the maid's honest; if she hadn't spoiled matters by publishing the whole affair at once, we needn't have heard a word of this before a very long to-morrow. Well—it won't do to have in the police to find out why Miss Doyle stole her own jewels and her own watch and her own purse. That question must be for me. No—she's not such a first-rate actress after all."

FAIRY LEGENDS OF THE COUNTY DONEGAL.

THE FAIRY GUEST.

JOHN and Peggy Donnel lived half-way up Dooish Mountain, in a region of frequent mist and storm. Far below them lay Gartan Lough, embosomed in rugged furze-covered hills; and above and around stretched mile upon mile of mountain; acres of heather, the abode of grouse innumerable; patches of grass where droves of sheep and cattle grazed; and inaccessible heights, known only to the golden eagle and her wild brood.

Donnel was a drover—that is, he bought up cattle, let them graze upon the mountains, and sold them when fattened. He was very comfortably off, and his cottage was well built and thatched. He found no difficulty in paying his rent to the day, and had always abundance of such simple food and clothing as satisfied his desires. It was a November night of storm and rain. The gusts of wind thundered at the door, tossing the bare arms of the few stunted sycamores that grew near the house; and shrieked and howled madly round the gable. An occasional lull in the storm brought the clamour of seagull and cry of plover to Donnel's ear. He locked the door, stuffed a wisp of straw under it to keep out the cold wind, and sat down opposite Peggy in the ample chimney-corner.

"God send the cattle has found shelter the night," said he, shaking the ashes out of his pipe.

Peggy was spinning. She stopped her wheel suddenly to ask, "Did you no hear something, John dear?"

"Ay, Peggy, I heard the sough o' the wind."

"Sure it was a voice, honey. Whisht,

whisht, there it was again; it wasna like the wind."

"It was the seagull an' the plover," replied her husband carelessly.

Just then another blast of hurricane swept across the lake and thundered at the door, tossing the carefully-arranged wisp of straw into the middle of the kitchen.

"It was a pitiful cry, an' it wasna the birds, let alone the wind," said Peggy, listening intently.

"Wha wad come to we'er door the night?" asked John impatiently. "You're aye talking foolitchness since that thief o' the world, Tim O'Brien, went awa'."

Two days previously the servant had taken his departure without giving warning, or letting his master and mistress have the slightest inkling of his intention. They had both been overworked since then, and the consequence was that one was cross, and the other tired and nervous. Again came the whistling, raging blast. Mrs. Donnel shivered, and muttered a prayer for all sailors and wanderers as she threw more turf upon the blazing hearth. There was a strange cry at that very moment. She went to the door and unlocked it, and while the wind burst in resistlessly, it brought something like a human figure in along with it.

"Woman! woman!" screamed the outraged husband, jumping up with an oath to re-shut and lock the door. As the cloud of turf ashes began to settle again, the figure, the gift of the storm, was more distinctly seen. A miserable, stunted boy, thinly clad, without cap or shoes and stockings, crouched over the fire, holding his numbed hands towards the warmth. He had red hair, large blue eyes, and a gentle, intelligent face. Peggy Donnel felt her heart drawn towards him at once.

"Poor wean, but you're kilt wi' the wet an' cold! Did you come far the day?" The poor boy lifted his large soft eyes to her face without speaking.

"Be seated an' warm yoursel'; the gude man makes you welcome." The boy sat down on the stool she placed for him before the fire, and smiled at her in silence.

"Who had the heart to let the likes o' you travel the night? What do they call you, my poor wee man?" No answer. "I declare he's a dummy, John," she cried, "the poor wean!"

The storm continued to rage, but the wanderer was safe. He stretched out his bare feet on the warm flagstone, and the steam rose from his rags, which had been

soaked through by the rain. Meanwhile Peggy set back her wheel, lifted the pot from the crook, and filled a wooden bowl with mealy potatoes. The boy eyed them hungrily, and when she spread a handful of salt on a stool, and put a tin of milk into his hand, he required no further invitation. John Donnel's ill-temper vanished as he watched the child eat his supper, and heard his sighs of contentment.

"Where will he sleep? Tim O'Brien's bed's no made yet."

"I'll shake straw in the corner there near the fire," replied Peggy, "an' throw a whean sacks over him; he'll sleep rightly, I'll warrant him."

"Ay, it'll be better nor the back o' a dyke, I'm thinking," returned John.

The poor creature was now quite dry and warm. He lay down on the straw which the kind woman prepared for him, but he first caught hold of her hard hand and pressed his lips upon it. "Look, John, look!" cried she, with tears in her eyes; "did you ever see the like o' that?"

It was twenty years since a child had slept under that roof—full twenty years since a small black coffin had been carried down the mountain, containing Peggy Donnel's son and more than half her heart. She dreamt of her dead son that night as she had not dreamt for a very long time; she fancied that he came to her bedside and begged her to be good to the friendless child for his sake.

The storm lulled before dawn, and by the time the Donnels got up to their work the stranger was up also. When Peggy took her milk-pail to go out to the byre, he sprang forward and took it from her hand. Smilingly she consented to let him help her to milk Molly and Buttercup and strain the milk; then, while she made breakfast, he signed to John that it was his wish to assist him also. Very useful he was in finding the cattle and driving them to fresh grazing ground; and he did a hundred other helpful things during the day.

"He's a sight better than Tim O'Brien. Let us keep him, an' he'll be as good a boy as we could get," said John Donnel that evening.

"What name shall we call him?" asked Peggy, quite pleased at her husband's proposal.

"Niel wad be a name good enough," replied John. So the dumb boy was called "Niel," was given a suit of grey frieze and shoes and socks, and became the farm servant. A season of extraordinary prosperity began

for the Donnels from the day Niel came to them. No accident happened to the cattle that winter or spring: the hens and ducks laid diligently; the churn was always so full of butter that the staff would hardly move in it. When Donnel sold, he gained more than his neighbours did; when he bought, everything was cheap for him. "We did weel to shelter the boy," he was wont to remark when any striking instance of Niel's industry or cleverness came under his observation; but sometimes, to his wife's anger and disgust, he would animadvert upon the large appetite of his little servant. Niel gained the good will of the few neighbours who lived on the mountain; but, what was more remarkable, he seemed to have a strong attraction for all birds and animals. The mice sang in corners of the house; the cocks and hens loved to roost on the rails at the foot of his bed; the cattle lowed, and horses neighed, when he appeared; singing birds alighted on his shoulder in the field; and the seagulls from their island in the lough flew to pick up insects at his feet. An indescribable sense of peace and well-being hovered over the dwelling of which he was an inmate.

The night after his arrival he procured some wood and amused himself by making a bow, and each evening, while Peggy sat at her spinning-wheel, he sat near her making arrows which he tossed up to the loft as soon as he finished them. There was soon a large sheaf of arrows lying beside the bow, but he never shot away a single one of them.

"Why don't you tak' your bow an' arrows outbye an' play yoursel' a wee, Niel dear?" asked Mrs. Donnel when the bright spring evenings came; but no answer was forthcoming. It was a real vexation to her that she had no means of discovering why he had made the bow, and why he made so many arrows. When May Eve arrived, and flames leaped up from fires on every hill, and dark figures moved round the blaze—when the glow was reflected in the lough, and the gulls flew screaming in a thick white cloud from their island, disturbed by the unusual noise, and the snipe whirred by bleating their astonishment—on that most enchanting night of all the year Mrs. Donnel's dumb servant was greatly agitated. More than once he went to the door to gaze at the fair scene without, and returning, as if with a strong effort, to his kind mistress's side, kissed her hand, his favourite mode of showing his affection.

"He's cryin', the crathur," said Peggy on one of these occasions; "maybe it's because you scolded him this morning, John, for just naething ava."

Things went on thus throughout the summer and autumn; but when Hallowe'en approached Niel grew restless again. The dry benweeds shook their withered yellow heads in the cold breeze; there they stood in their ugliness, spread over many a field, ready when Hallowe'en came to turn into fairy steeds, each one ridden by an elfin horseman. Niel went out in the moonlight on the mysterious night, but returned in time to smile his good-night to Peggy before lying down on his humble bed; and he was not able to tell her whether he had caught a glimpse of the fairy troop or not.

One November morning a year after Niel's arrival John Donnel came into the kitchen pale with grief and dismay.

"The cattle is all away," he cried; "all driven off the mountain in the night. Thieves! Robbers! Oh, Niel, avick! Oh, Peggy, what'll I do anyway?"

"Gone! Stolen!" exclaimed Peggy, and she was unable to utter a word more.

"Ay, gone, stolen!" repeated the bereaved owner, crying bitterly.

"Whist!" said Niel, coming forward quietly and speaking in an authoritative tone; "whist this minute, an' saddle the mare, an' let us awa' after the thieves."

The surprise of hearing Niel speak calmed John at once. He let him bring out the mare, and helped him to saddle her. Then he mounted and it seemed quite natural that the boy should spring up behind him, first taking his bow and arrows from the loft.

"This way," directed Niel, when they reached the high road, "I see the tracks o' the beasts."

Donnel could not see any tracks, but he suffered Niel to guide him at each cross-road. They rode steadily forward, but the day was far advanced before they caught sight of the drove, accompanied by two colleys and four men.

"How will we fight a' these thieves and rascals o' the world," cried John, again reduced to the depths of despair.

"Leave it to me," replied Niel, bending a little to one side, and shooting an arrow in the direction of the drove.

There was a strange commotion ahead when that fairy arrow reached its goal, for the animal hit by it turned round at once and galloped back to its owner. Another and another arrow followed that

one, till the whole drove turned about and surrounded John and Niel.

The four robbers stood gazing after them as if spellbound.

"Now," said Niel, "we may ride home again: the cattle will go before us."

They rode on, driving the recovered heifers. Donnel had not spoken a single word of gratitude, and as the glow of pleasure caused by the restoration of his property died out a little, his usual fretful temper returned; but Niel did not appear to notice his morose silence.

"Will you be pleased to stop at this house by the roadside, John, till I get a drink?" asked the boy, who was tired and thirsty.

"We havena the time to stop, an' night comin' on; sure you can wait till we get home," replied the churlish master.

Niel said nothing until they reached another house a mile further on, when he again made his request, and was again refused. But Donnel himself began to be thirsty and weary, and at the next roadside cabin he drew up.

"Good woman," called he, "be pleased to gie me a drink."

The woman hurried out with a bowl of water from which Donnel drank; and then he said to Niel, "Here, boy, you may drink now."

"No, John Donnel," returned the boy, "you are a selfish ungrateful man, an' I'll neither eat nor drink mair frae your hand. I brought your cattle back, but you wouldna stop a minute to let me drink; an' you'd take the drink yoursel' before you'd hand the bowl to me! If it wasna for Peggy, I'd just send the beasts back to the thieves; but I'll leave your house, an' that'll be punishment enough for you."

So saying Niel jumped down from the horse, and climbing a ditch, disappeared.

"Oh, Niel, avick, sure I didna mean to affront you. Oh, come back! How will I get the beasts home anyway?"

No answer; no trace of Niel, search where he might! With the utmost difficulty, and after having hired a couple of men to help him, Donnel did succeed in driving his cattle home, and late at night he entered his own kitchen and sank down by the fireside.

"Where's Niel?" was the first thing Peggy said. Sorrow and dismay overwhelmed her, as she listened to her husband's story.

"Oh, John," she cried, "oh, you unfortunate foolish man, don't you know what you've done? You've banished luck frae

we'er roof. Sure I knowed he was one of the good little people the minute I heard him speak this mornin'."

The poor woman threw her apron over her head, and wept as she had not wept since her son's coffin left the house one-and-twenty years before. And she had good reason for her tears. From that moment nothing prospered with John. His health failed; his cattle met with accidents; ill luck attended him in everything he undertook. He had indeed abundant cause to mourn for the loss of his fairy guest.

THE CROOK LADDER.

Several old crones were assembled in Grace McDonough's kitchen to drink her health and that of her new-born daughter, who had just been dressed and laid down to sleep at the foot of the bed. A tribe of brothers and sisters were packed into the large bed in the inner room; but poor Grace was as well pleased with the ugly red-faced new comer, as if it had been her only child.

A kind mother, excellent wife, and obliging neighbour, Grace was very popular, so the good women in the wide chimney-corner drank her health very heartily, and wished Joseph McDonough at the same time joy of the child and of his new situation—that of bailiff to Mr. Todd, of Buncrana Castle. The cabin was built in an exposed spot on the side of a hill which commanded a view of a large portion of the property to which McDonough had just been made bailiff. Down below was the castle nestling in gardens and plantations, and beyond it lay the old town of Buncrana and the broad waters of Lough Swilly bounded by pale blue mountains. It was an extensive and beautiful landscape; but the situation was cold and bleak, and exposed to every wintry storm that swept across the lough.

As Grace slept and her attendants drank by the fireside, a little feeble wail was heard. Mrs. Rooney got up, and went over to the foot of the bed where she had laid the infant. What was her amazement to see two babies where she had placed but one! Two little puckered faces; two lilac print frocks; two white pinafores! There did not appear to be the slightest difference between them. Mrs. Rooney's cry of terror and astonishment brought all the women round the bed and awakened the poor weary mother. Exclamations of "Save us!" "Dear, but that beats all!" mingled with the feeble wailings of the two babes.

"What'll we do, anyway? There's some-

thing bad an' uncanny here!" cried Mrs. Rooney. "Which o' these weans is the richt ane?"

"Gie them to me an' reach me thon big knife," said the mother. "I'll kiss them baith, an' the one my heart warms to will be my ain child; as for the other one, I'll just settle it wi' the knife."

"Stand back, you women there," commanded Mrs. Rooney, speaking authoritatively in her character of nurse. They obeyed, sitting down again beside the fire.

"Now gie them to me," said Grace. Mrs. Rooney handed her one of the infants. She kissed it and laid it beside her on the pillow. "My heart warmed to it, Molly Rooney; that's my ain child. Now gie me this wee rascal that's come to this house for no good end."

She took the second baby and stretched out her trembling hand for the knife, prepared to cut its throat; but at that very instant a noise was heard overhead, and a small, beautifully dressed, and very pretty lady came down the chimney, using the chain of the crook as a ladder. She bounded over the fire, across the room, and stood beside the bed. In a second she had snatched the child out of Grace's hands, and ran back with it to the fire-place, turning to shake it furiously at her as she cried, "You'll rue the day you tried to hurt my child."

So saying she sprang upon the hob, put her tiny dainty feet into the links of the chain one after another, mounted them as a staircase, and was out of sight like a whirlwind.

"Oh, my poor wean," sobbed the exhausted mother, sinking back upon her pillow, "she'll hae you yet."

"Na, na, Grace," said Mrs. Rooney in soothing tones, "she'll no get your wean; but it'll tak' you to watch it weel, an' never leave it alane in the house unless you put the tongs across the cradle. But sure you ha' plenty o' childer to watch it."

Joseph McDonough was spending the night in a neighbour's cabin, and the women were really afraid to venture out of doors to call him; besides, what good could he have done had he been there? They sat on, telling quaint and strange stories about the wee folk, but all agreed that so strange a circumstance as that just witnessed was a bad thing for the neighbourhood, and especially for the McDonough family.

"I never affronted the gentry to my knowledge," sighed the poor mother, "but Joe helped Mr. Todd's gardener to cut down

the old hawthorn-tree on the lawn Friday was eight days; an' there's them that says that's a very bad thing to do. I fleeced him not to touch it, but the master offered him six shillings if he'd help wi' the job, for the other men refused." She sighed again and closed her eyes.

"That's the way of it," whispered the crones over their pipes and poteen—"that's just it. The gude man has had the ill luck to displeasure the 'gentry,' an' there will be trouble in this house yet."

Grace did not hear these cheerful prophecies, for she had dropped asleep. Weeks passed and the augury had not been fulfilled. Little Eliza throve apace, but her mother never lost sight of her for a moment. She lay fast asleep in her cradle near the fire one day while Grace, standing at the dresser, was occupied in cutting up vegetables with the large knife. All at once a tumult of the elements arose. A rush of cold wind hurried up the mountain, and whirled round the house. Grace was startled at the sudden sound, and dropped the knife in terror. The door burst open and the hurricane dashed into the kitchen, overturning the cradle and driving it, bottom upwards, across the floor. Grace ran to lift it up and see what had become of the baby. The little creature was crying, and her pretty straight ankles were twisted and her feet turned inwards: It was a long time before she ceased to scream. The storm subsided as suddenly as it had arisen, but the mysterious evil it had brought the child did not end. She became sickly and very fretful, and the other children grew weary of nursing her. They had been very fond of Eliza, but they now began to dislike her, and the poor overworked mother could hardly ever lay her out of her arms. Weeks, months, years went by. Eliza was five years old, but looked like a child of eighteen months, so small and shrunken was she. She still fitted into the cradle, and therein spent most of the day. She had been a very sorrowful burden to her mother all these years, and her cross, fretful temper had driven joy and contentment far from the cabin. The healthy, rosy, elder children were sometimes so provoked with their wailing sister that they would have hurt her if their mother had not watched them very carefully. But though so sickly, Eliza was much cleverer than any of her strong brothers and sisters, and she said extraordinary things that were repeated from house to house in the neighbourhood.

Mrs. Rooney happening to pay Grace a visit one day, saw Matt, the eldest brother, give Eliza a wicked pinch as he passed the cradle; and when the child's howl had a little subsided, the wise neighbour took it upon herself to speak a word in season.

"Do you no mind what happened the night thon wean was born, Grace darlin'?"

"Do I mind it? Rightly I mind it, Mrs. Rooney."

"An' the time her feet was turned in."

"Ay, it's weel I mind it."

"Weel, Grace, if you tak' my bidding, you'll no let the childer offer to touch thon wean to hurt her, for if you do, knowin' what she is, some black trouble'll be coming to this house."

"Is it a wee elf, then, Mrs. Rooney dear, that was put in the place o' my ain child, do you think?"

"Is it?" cried the neighbour scornfully.

"An' do you ax me sich an innocent question, an' you working wi' the crathur these five year? Sure enough it's an elf, Grace McDonough, an' if you hurt it, your ain child will be hurted, just as much; an' if it's kilt in this house, your ain child'll come to its end where it is—an' that's wi' the 'gentry' in their grand parlours underground, as sure as I'm a living sinner this day!" concluded she, dropping her voice to a mysterious whisper.

Poor Grace was deeply impressed. She had a tenderness for the wailing child so hated by the rest of its little world; and although she believed Mrs. Rooney, she believed her most unwillingly. "Maybe the poor crathur'll no be very long troublesome. She looks but sickly; she'll die quietly an' you'll get rid o' the trouble that way," said the wise Mrs. Rooney in comforting accents as she got up to take leave.

Grace sighed. She took Eliza out of the cradle, and pressed her to her bosom. Even though she were a changeling, she was dearer to the woman's heart than her own child growing up in fairyland, and she did not wish to see her die. For the true Eliza, stolen at a few weeks old, was almost forgotten; while this unfortunate elfin Eliza was a daily trial to love and patience, and had been so for five years.

Joseph McDonough, as Mr. Todd's bailiff, had often dangerous work to do; and Grace was uneasy about him if he did not return home at the usual hour. He went out one morning to serve several ejectionment processes upon non-paying tenants at some distance from Buncrana, saying he hoped to return home by four o'clock; but the

day waned, and there was no sign of him.

"What's keeping him, anyway?" was the question that Grace asked over and over again as she paced the little yard on the look-out for her husband.

"Mother," said Eliza from her cradle, "my father's in sair trouble this minute, but I'm awa to help him." She lay unusually quiet for a quarter of an hour, seeming to be in a drowsy state. "But he's all right now—he'll be hame soon," said she, at the end of that time opening her eyes and looking gravely at her mother.

Supper was ready when the door opened, and Joe came in covered with mud and with his clothes torn.

"Save us, Joe! what ails you?" cried his wife.

"I served the processes, Grace dear, an' I was comin' away, when six o' the Brady an' Healy boys met me at the wee brig of Roshine wi' stones in their hands. They pelted me an' they battered me, an' I thought I'd be kilt intirely, when all at once I was awa frae them at the other end o' the brig. I canna tell you how I got awa, for I dinna know mysel'; but just I was there, an' they were at the far side cursin' an' shakin' their sticks at me. It's the quarest thing I seen in all my days."

Grace related how Eliza had told her that her father was in peril, and repeated what she had said about going off to help him. He shook his head and meditated while he took his after supper-smoke. He was a quiet thoughtful man, whose voice was not much heard in the house; but his cogitations took expression in the following words addressed to his assembled family: "Childer, if one of yous offers to annoy Eliza, I'll break that one's bones."

The peaceful days which now commenced for the poor changeling did not last long. She had been growing weaker during the summer, and when the cold blasts of November came she died. Grace wept piteously over the tiny wasted corpse, regardless of the reproofs of her neighbour.

"You suldna cry that way for the crathur, Grace, an' you knowin' what she was," said Mrs. Rooney severely.

"I dinna care what she was," replied Grace, giving way to fresh tears; "sure I ha' nursed her, an' fed her, an' waked for her all these five year."

It was long before her grief was quite softened, longer still before Eliza's history ceased to be a winter's tale at Roshine.

THE BLIND EYE.

Mrs. McPherson was a very important person in the townland of Crohanroe, having something to do with the exit of her neighbours from this troublous life, but still more with their entrance into it; in short she was the Mrs. Gamp of the entire district. Her duties, therefore, took her to every wake and christening in the country. Thus it happened that she spent few nights at home in her lonely cabin by the roadside.

The townland was very extensive. It embraced a tract of well-cultivated country, as well as a wild region stretching up into the Donegal mountains. Crohanroe took its name from a rocky piece of land where furze-bushes and blocks of granite abounded. The high road lay between this picturesque wilderness and Mrs. McPherson's cottage, and no other human habitation was in sight. Somewhat lonely felt the good woman one afternoon after returning from Matt O'Donoghue's funeral, where, out of respect to the family, she had keened till she was quite hoarse.

She was having recourse to her short pipe for oomfort when steps were heard at the door, and glad to welcome a neighbour in her solitude, she looked round briskly. A stranger entered—a man apparently between forty and fifty years of age, dressed in a long-tailed coat, knee-breeches, and coarse blue worsted stockings.

Mrs. McPherson bade him kindly welcome, and prayed him to be seated.

"My good woman," said he, "will you be pleased to gie me a drink of water?"

"With all the pleasure in life," replied she, going over to her water-can and handing him a drink.

"An' where do you get your water, ma'am?" he asked, when he had thankfully returned the cup.

"Why, sir, I go a good little piece for that water—down to the well at the foot of Donnel's potato-field."

"Why do you go that far, an' a spring at the foot o' your ain garden?"

"There's nae spring ava in my garden, sir."

"Troth is there; just a fine spring bubbling up beside the ash-tree."

Mrs. McPherson knew that there was no well in her garden; but being too polite to contradict the stranger she remained silent. At length he got up and said he must be going. "How far have you to go, sir?" asked his hostess.

"Not far, ma'am; I'm a neighbour o' yours; I live on Crohanroe."

"Crohanroe, good man! There's nae house on Crohanroe, an' I never seen you before to my knowledge," replied she in extreme bewilderment.

"But I ken you well; I'm livin' on Crohanroe these hundred years."

Mrs. McPherson stood at the door and watched the visitor, who crossed the high road and went up to Crohanroe; but there she lost sight of him; there were so many furze-bushes and great stones that he might easily be hidden. Slowly she turned into her little garden, and walked over to the ash-tree. There sure enough was a clear spring bubbling up at the foot of the tree, and wearing a reservoir for itself in the gravelly soil! She rubbed her eyes; she pinched herself; at last she faltered out, "I didna tak' a drop but one wee glass o' poteen, just for company an' civility like, at Shaun Doyne's on my way home frae the funeral." No, she could not understand it; she knit her brows and puzzled all day, and was still musing upon the young-looking man who declared he had lived on Crohanroe for the last hundred years, when she heard the trot of a horse on the road and presently a knock at her door. It was then night, and the moon had lately risen.

Mrs. McPherson, well accustomed to be summoned in the night, was not surprised to see a man holding a horse at her door.

"You're wanted, ma'am, to attend a lady, a friend o' mine," said the man. "Can you come wi' me at wanst?"

"Where do you come from, sir? I dinna know you, an' I know all the people in this country far an' near."

"Not very far," replied he evasively, and he pulled out a purse and showed half-a-sovereign and several shillings. "I was bid offer you all that money if you'd come."

The good woman had never earned such wages in her life, and could scarcely turn her eyes away from the attractive sight of so much money. Her scruples were at once overcome, and wrapping herself in her shawl, she locked up the house, and let the stranger assist her to mount the horse. For a short time they kept to the high road; but then, turning into the fields, they passed ditches and hedgerows and other landmarks known to the good woman.

"Whysurelythese is Squire Montgomery's fields?" said she at last. "There's nae house that I know anywhere hereabouts."

"Mak' your mind easy; we'll be at the place in a minute," replied the guide.

A blaze of warm yellow light presently mingled with the cold blue moonlight. They were approaching a stately castle whose many windows were illuminated. Mr. Montgomery's house was big and grand, but it was a cabin compared with this castle; which Mrs. McPherson, who had been in the immediate neighbourhood all her life, had never seen before. But she had no time to express her surprise, for servants in splendid liveries hurried out to conduct her into the castle. She passed through several rooms beautifully furnished and lighted with countless candles, until she reached the large chamber where her patient, a handsome lady, lay on a sumptuous bed. There was a fire burning on the hearth. Mrs. McPherson sat down near it, leaning her elbow upon a white marble table and gazing as if in a dream at the lady and the attendants who flitted about the room. One of the latter, a respectable-looking woman, came close to her, and pausing for a moment as if to dust the table, whispered: "I'm your grandmother's sister that was took by the 'good people.' You'll presently be offered cake and wine; but you'll neither eat nor drink if you value your life."

Mrs. McPherson trembled. How she cursed her avarice, and wished she had never seen the gold glittering in the messenger's purse! When a man came in carrying a silver tray laden with refreshments, and pressed her to partake of them, she civilly but decidedly refused, to his evident chagrin.

"Will you no taste the spirits, ma'am?"

"Faix an' troth, my good gentleman, that's a drop never passes my lips," replied she, oblivious of the glass at Shaun Doyne's and of many a cup of comfort besides.

"Do tak' a little sup, ma'am; it will lift your heart bravely," persisted the servant.

But Mrs. McPherson saw her grandmother's sister looking back anxiously at her, and she steadily refused. Thenight advanced. There was a small green pot lying on the table, which she took up idly to examine. A short time afterwards, something tickling her left eyebrow, she raised her hand to rub it, and marvellous was the effect of that simple action. All her surroundings were changed in a moment. The lady no longer lay upon a sumptuous bed, but upon the damp ground; the carpets, sofas, chairs and tables, turned into grass and benweeds; the gaily-dressed attendants were dwarfed into diminutive green-coated and red-capped creatures; and the castle itself vanished,

leaving nothing but the long grass and old trees of Mr. Montgomery's fort.

Mrs. McPherson was so terrified that she could hardly refrain from screaming; but knowing that such a course would be suicidal, she controlled herself and made no sign. She then tried the effect of covering her left eye, and looking with her right. The castle's fairy splendour returned as magnificent as it had been on her entrance, but if she used her left eye the metamorphosis at once took place. The patient now required her care. A fine son was born, whom she dressed and laid on the pillow beside his mother. Her business concluded, the same servant who had brought her to the castle whispered that it was time for her to go home. Never were words more welcome. She hastened to the door without looking behind her, and suffered the man to help her to mount her horse. She rode home in a trance of terror, not speaking lest she should betray her fear.

"Here are your wages," said the messenger as she dismounted at her own door. Caring very little for the money, she took it and dropped it on the window-sill. The man rode off, and she locked her door on the inside, and sat down beside her cold hearth to brood over her adventure and congratulate herself upon her safe return home. There was a black bottle in the cupboard; she drank a good portion of its contents to cheer her quaking heart. She had not been half an hour at home, before daylight made its way through her window and fell upon the money on the sill. Had it turned into dead leaves or bits of stick! No; there it lay, a heap of coin of the realm, consisting of a half-sovereign, five shillings, and sixpence. She examined it with her right eye, then with her left, then with both eyes, and the result was the same.

When the sun was high in the heavens, she plucked up courage to go near the fort—at least as near to within a field of it. There was the old mound with trees growing round its outer edge, and rank grass and benweeds in the centre, all looking just as usual. But at her feet lay a small red cap, very like those she had seen worn by the fairy servants. She picked it up and hid it beneath her shawl, and as she did so she heard distant music—music that was sweet and pleasant, but that had a muffled sound as though it came from some region underground. She remembered all at once how her little brother Dan, dead years before, had once been herding in the squire's fields, and had

come home with wonderful tales of pipes and fiddles that he had heard while lying with his ear against the ground.

"It's a gentle place, this fort, and so is Crohanroe to be sure; an' I'll just tak' the bonnie wee cap hame wi' me for luck."

So the red cap lay on the dresser all day; but there was no trace of it next morning.

"It wasna for luck, then," soliloquised she. "I'd ax we'er minister what he thinks of it, only he'd be sure to bid me go to meeting regular, an' pay my stipends an' quit takin' the wee drop that helps me through wi' me wark." This last thought decided her not to consult her minister. So she did not tell anybody about the man who had lived on Crohanroe for a hundred years, the spring at the root of the ash-tree, her night at the squire's fort, or the little red cap she had found in the field.

There was a fair held in the town of Donegal. Mrs. McPherson put on her cap and shawl, and set forth to spend the fairy money. She was undecided whether to buy a pair of blankets, or a "slip of a pig" to eat up the potato-skins.

The town was crowded with people from all parts of the country, and the fair was a gay scene—the booths covered with such goods as would be most tempting to poor farmers and their wives and daughters. As Mrs. McPherson stood watching the sprightly dark-haired maidens teasing their sweethearts for a fairing, and the mothers anxiously counting their halfpence, she observed a dwarfish man making his way up the street. He seemed to stop at every stall to take something off it—now a cravat, now a pair of socks, now an orange or a wedge of bacon; and she could not perceive that he ever paid for anything. His brown jacket was bulging out with the goods he had managed to stow away. But the most remarkable thing about the whole affair was that the owners of the stalls did not call him to account. They put up in a surprisingly philosophical manner with the loss of their property—indeed, they did not appear even to see the little thief.

Nearer and nearer he came, in and out among the crowd, snatching articles from the booths and stowing them away upon his person. Mrs. McPherson touched him upon the shoulder when he came close enough, and asked: "Why do you tak' the things frae the stalls without paying for them, sir?"

The dwarf did not reply to her question. Instead of doing so he asked another.

"Which of your eyes do you see me with?" he asked.

"With my left eye," replied the poor woman, wondering at the question.

The man said nothing more, but making a sudden spring into the air, thrust his finger into Mrs. McPherson's left eye, putting it out completely.

SHEPHERDS' SUNDAY.

"DEAR NEPHEW,—We have made up our minds to send Black Bartholomew to the show, and Shadrick to tend him. Can you look after Shadrick? just to see he keeps steady, for the boy has never been in London, and it's a great temptation, and if anything happened to Bartholomew I should never forgive myself for trusting him out of my sight. Paddington Station, mind; some time on Saturday."

The enigmatic in the above was not so dark as appeared at first sight. For looking to the date of the letter, the 2nd of December, and bearing in mind the sudden appearance on the omnibuses of placards bearing a picture of some animal of the bovine kind, it was not hard to read that the "show" meant the Cattle Show, and that probably Bartholomew was a beast of some kind.

But to Betsy in the kitchen the thing is no enigma at all, but all as plain and clear as daylight. For Shadrick is a countryman of hers. All our servants come from Aunt Priscilla's country—they come up one by one, each the greatest treasure in the world, the most indefatigable worker, and each goes on gaining her experience and losing her perfections day by day till the end comes and she departs to better herself in some more ambitious household, or to marry a corporal in the Coldstreams. But this present reigning Elizabeth, the seventh, whom may Heaven preserve to us, is still in the heyday of her young experience, retaining the crispness of the country, while she has lost its gaucherie. And Elizabeth declares that Bartholomew is a steer, and that Shadrick is no other than Aunt Priscilla's herdsman, and one of the pleasantest of young men.

There is a little comfort in this, but still a steer has horns, as I learn from Elizabeth, unless he belong to the polled variety, which it seems that Bartholomew doesn't, and if Aunt Priscilla expects me to steer that animal and the mild-mannered Shadrick from Paddington to Islington,

the old lady is doomed to disappointment. Still, we have expectations from Aunt Priscilla, to the extent of a goose at Christmas, and if it will ease her mind to hear of Bartholomew's safe arrival at the Hall, I have no objection to meet Shadrick at the safe end of his journey.

Surely it is a long time ago since Islington could have been justly called "merry," and never an echo of its lost merriment has come down to these days. One would rather call it "dingy Islington," with mud-coloured houses, which are old without being old-fashioned, and a general air of despairing effort to keep up appearances. But merry or dingy there is abundant life about Islington, and it would be difficult to find a livelier corner than that watched over by The Angel.

Being Saturday the tide is setting in early from the City. The causeway is crowded with people, and the shops in Upper Street, gay with Christmas-cards, and all kinds of smart and useless trifles, are surrounded with gazers. But the Agricultural Hall itself at this point—where it looks upon Islington Green, with its minute shrubbery and the statue of Sir Hugh Middleton, of New River celebrity, in his starched ruff and long cloak—the hall itself is as quiet and deserted as if the show were put off for a twelvemonth, and the Minstrels, whose placards adorn the lamp-posts, had all been scalped by a rival war-party.

And nobody knows anything of Black Bartholomew on this side of the house.

But if I am looking for the beasties, suggests a friendly Scot, who though not fat himself, has the air of having driven fat cattle, and who has just been renewing his spirits with a dram at the neighbouring public-house, "why the beasties are now arriving at the other side of the hall."

It is a far journey to the other side of the hall, but, once there, I find abundant signs of the forthcoming carnival. Christmas can hardly be coming much amiss to the urchins of Islington when it is heralded by such a delightful and gratuitous exhibition. And the locale is just suitable, a raised causeway, suggesting country high streets, with railings for young Islington to hang upon, and in front the opening to a narrow and rather dirty street, down the throat of which are dropping all kinds of queer vehicles in a continued stream. The glass roof of the hall and its towers, of a dinginess quite in keeping with their surroundings, rise a

little to the right, and there are men at work fixing up the electric light in front of them; but the main interest of the performance centres in the animals whose carriages stop the way—the close carriage of Lord Front de Bœuf, the open landau of Mesdames Desmoutons, while piggie arrives in a family van packed in a crate like so much china.

But the audience is the thing. The gallery, a festive little gathering hanging upon the railings; children who go to school in the week, but who have one happy day for the run of the streets. Youngsters warmly clad, if somewhat seedily, and sound as to the boots; a tribe intermediate between the arabs of the street and the race that lives in nurseries and is taken out by governesses. And who so happy as Bob, sent out to buy a quarter of a pound of dripping, for whom the pan waits, and the wrathful mother and the fry for father's dinner all forgotten in the entrancing scene before him? There are boys, too, with hoops, and girls with baskets; and small fry with smaller fry in charge, but all as merry as grigs, and inclined to wait the pleasure of all the new arrivals, whether pigs or otherwise.

And here comes a buffalo van, its wheels grinding the stones as it turns, in testimony of the weight of beef within, and if there is a little window in a corner, with a fawn-coloured muzzle sniffing the air, then is excitement at its highest pitch. If it had been a black muzzle now, one might have had hopes of recognising Bartholomew. But no, the wooden gates open and shut, the various loads are deposited within, oxen bellow and sheep bleat as if they felt that life were bewildering and unsatisfactory, only the pigs seem to enter into the humour of the scene in a kind of joyous excitement, and still I am uncertain as to Bartholomew and his attendant. And the people in the office—where there is quite a nice house, with brass knocker and visitors' bell, and all the rest—know nothing about B. B. You might take a look round, suggests one; but I might as well have looked round the ark before the animals had settled down, and when all hands were getting in provisions for the voyage. And the men in long coats, who are wrestling with the beasts, and working them about from point to point, rather give cover to the Noachian illusion; the floor seems to tremble as if we were getting afloat. It is too much for the nerves this, I must save myself on terra firma.

When I get home I find Shadrick there

before me, not with Bartholomew, thank Heaven! but with a hamper from Aunt Priscilla. And if I had been at Paddington, Shadrick informed me, I might have had a ride in the van along with Bartholomew, which evidently Shadrick considers a privilege. He is indeed a joyous youth, and the house rings with the laughter they presently have in the kitchen, Elizabeth and he. A born mimic, too, is Shadrick, and takes off the tones of Aunt Priscilla, and each of her seven sons, with really charming fidelity, while Elizabeth hangs on his words, and is ready to expire with convulsions of laughter.

But Shadrick can't stop long; he is bound to be back at the hall to feed and bed up for the night. And he won't trust himself to the Underground. There was one of his mates came by cheap trip for a day and a night to see his sister, who lived at Queen's Road, London, and he was travelling round and round till it was time to go back, "and never got no furdur." Shadrick's notion is to look out for "one of them vans with the pictures on"—the engraving of the bull, that is—and hang on to that. And as for Sunday! Well, Shadrick would gladly come and take his dinner and go for a walk "long with 'Liz'beth." But Bartholomew must be thought of first, and he had promised faithfully not to leave him till the judge's "foiat" had been delivered. "But what do you say, sir," suggested Shadrick, "to come and do your churching 'long with us 'morrow night? The Shepherds' Service. They call us all shepherds," explained Shadrick, "for Sunday work. Sounds more Scriptural, don't ye see."

Yes, decidedly I am for this Shepherds' Service. The very name suggests one can hardly say what faint associations, sweet with the perfume of old days, of early Christmas times, and the soft refrain of carols in the midnight air—"When shepherds watched their flocks by night." Well, to-night the shepherds watch their flocks in Islington, and will see no stars but the gaslights, while the wild-beast roar of London sounds faintly in their ears.

Just before six o'clock, then, on Sunday night I am looking out for Shadrick at the corner of the hall by Islington Green, while people pass and re-pass, and now and then somebody scans the placard announcing that the special services usually held at the hall will be held elsewhere to-night. But not a word about the Shepherds' Service, which I trust has not been a figment of

Shadrick's lively fancy. And there is nothing to be seen of Shadrick, and I wander along the side of the hall towards the Liverpool Road, seeing lights shining faintly through the windows and hearing the grunting of pigs within, but finding all entrances rigorously closed and barred. And then there is the sound of a hymn welling out from unknown regions within, a sure sign that the service is a reality, and that I am likely to be late. Now, if it had not been for my experience of yesterday, I should never have found my way into the hall, for one could hardly have guessed that the only practicable entrance was along a back street, behind a Gothic chapel, itself lighting up for service—but with no connection with shepherds, unless of the typical kind—and so by a doorway, that might lead into the counting-house of a brewery, right into the penetralia of the establishment. But, with my experience of the day before, I march straight to the end, happily independent of Shadrick's guidance.

"Shepherds' Service?" says the policeman on guard. "Round the barrier and up the staircase and round the 'all, and there you are."

What a sight was that, looking down from the gallery along the vista of the great hall. Perfect stillness and peace, and not a human creature visible, with the cattle in long rows stretching out into the distance, quietly chewing the cud, and mostly lying down, while here and there you may see a couple crossing their long horns with some feint of enmity, the silence broken now and then by the melancholy low of some huge beast, or a long-drawn sigh almost humanly pathetic. All this under the soft light of myriad lamps and in the most wonderful cleanliness and propriety, as if this were the Sabbath of the animals, all silent and expectant, as if waiting for their tongues to be unlocked. As if it were Christmas Eve, when the cock crows at midnight, "Christus natus est," and the ox bellows, "Ubi, ubi," and the sheep bleats, "Bethlehem." The sheep to-night are wonderfully quiet in pens under the galleries, and as for the unbelieving swine, they are stowed away in some limbo out of sight and hearing, and, thank goodness! of scent as well, while everywhere pervading is a quaint wild smell, strangely stimulating and pleasant to the nostrils, with a kind of suggestion of wild free life, as if one had lived ages ago and faintly remembered it.

Just now in coming in there was the

soft echo of a hymn from somewhere far away, but that has ceased. The galleries are all deserted, with their rows of strange implements and machinery in the bright colouring affected by such objects, and I wander round almost despairing of reaching the shepherds' meeting—or sharing any other service than that unconsciously held by the silent cattle. But at last a footstep—a human form approaches.

“Blame me if I haven't lost the road to church,” it exclaims. It is Shadrick, and we recognise each other with mutual joy; Shadrick profuse in his apologies and explanations. It was all the fault of his stepping out for just one moment for a little drop of gin, taken for hygienic considerations, keeping his eye on the corner all the time.

All this while we are trotting round the galleries, and looking in vain for an opening. Shadrick pauses once and looks over the railings. “A pretty sight it be, and there be my old chap among 'em, lying down,” with quite affectionate interest. And then he confides to me his hopes of a first prize, and that will mean for him “a sovereign and a 'tificate,” which gaining, he will buy a fairing for 'Liz'beth, and come and take her to the play, “if her mistress will let her goo.”

And then we catch sight of a policeman within hail, and he directs us to a corner we had passed just now, and we descend a few steps into a room and find ourselves among the shepherds.

It is a good-sized room, devoted on other occasions to refreshments, and now half filled with countrymen, eight or nine score, thus Shadrick reckons them up with keen professional glance. Somebody, as we enter, obligingly hands us a neat printed paper of hymns, the first of which, the well-known paraphrase, “The Lord my pasture shall prepare,” has already been sung. An assemblage of honest, weather-beaten country faces; of smock-frocks here and there; of white jackets and corduroys; of gaiters and knee-boots; an assemblage of faithful men evidently, of men faithful to the herd, to the flock; faithful to the land and what the land supports; all very attentive and serious in demeanour. Men with tall heads and carefully smoothed forelocks, a Scotch face or two among them, the solemn Northumbrian, his more frivolous brother of the South, the sturdy men from Wessex—a gathering of the men of the soil to whom this parish of Islington through its worthy vicar offers this night a Christian

greeting. Christianity as it were come back to its origin, to shepherds and herdsmen and the tenders of swine, and raising its hymns among the mangers of the cattle. The vicar himself is not well enough to be present, but he is well represented by a curate, who gives us a spirited address, bearing upon the general lines of shepherds and wandering sheep, but with especial allusion to our own particular trials and temptations. The whole service lasts only an hour, and then the assemblage disperses in a quiet solemn way, and loses itself in the expanse of the great hall.

And then the contrast from the quiet solemn order within, to the crowd and bustle of the streets! It is a fine clear night, and all the world is abroad, but if Shadrick asks me what he is to do with himself for the next hour or two, I shall be puzzled to reply. The sweetstuff shops are open, indeed, and you may revel among oranges and apples; but as Shadrick has outgrown these simple tastes, I am afraid there is nothing for it but gin. Shadrick's heart is set that way evidently, and he has so much to say about its wholesome properties, that we determine to try it. Shadrick's honest face glows contentedly in the gaslight of the bar for glasses only, and he acknowledges that he likes his drop of gin, although he likes his bit of church as well.

Now as we pass out after our humble refreshment, we notice that The Peacock is the sign of the house, although there is no swinging sign as of old, nor, indeed, any sign at all but just the name on ground glass, and we remember that here it was that the coach stopped with Squeers and Nickleby on board, and where the merry-faced man got up for that long journey northwards; and close by is The Angel corner where London begins in earnest, and where you may fancy you see the Dodger scudding past with Oliver close at his heels, and crossing to St. John's Street Road on their way to Fagin's hospitable hearth.

And past this corner Shadrick fears to go. He may never find his way back, 'wildered in these noisy lighted streets. And then what will Bartholomew look like when he comes before the judges to-morrow?

Among others, 'Liz'beth is looking eagerly for the prize-list to-morrow that shall tell the fate of Shadrick and of Black Bartholomew. But, whether first prizeman, or, as is more probable, nowhere. Shadrick will have some fine stories to tell

this Christmas over the fire of his week at the Cattle Show, of the crowds and the crushes, and of the quiet Sunday too, and its Shepherds' Service.

PREJUDICES.

I HAVE a prejudice for prejudices. Now having said this and thereby avowed himself unreasonable in the first degree, one may be allowed to be unreasonable in the second degree by giving his reasons for being so unreasonable.

In the first place then, I am lenient towards prejudices on account of the hard measure they have lately received. Never since the beginning of the world have they had such a war of extermination waged upon them, as in the present generation. There is no longer any reverence even for the hoary and the tender. Resolute to destroy to the last one, we slay and slay with Israelitish zeal. A whole batch of prejudices known collectively as Patriotism has lately been gibbeted. Another prejudice known as Regard for the Rights of Property has been roughly handled and barely allowed a little respite from destruction. In fact, at present so ardent is the crusade against prejudices that there is a custom of vexatiously stopping and questioning the most rational feelings to ascertain that they can duly account for themselves, and sometimes the most unexceptionable of them are set upon and abused because they have not proof of their origin at hand. One who looks on at this system of persecution may well grow into a sympathy with its victims, and may be permitted to ask if those prejudices have been after all such very great malefactors, or if their eradication will be so certainly a benefit to humanity.

A prejudice is essentially a feeling not based on reason, and capable of creating a disposition to resist a logical conclusion. It is, in short, a condition of the heart not determined by the brain. Among the sentiments thus denoted there may be many unworthy and ignoble, but there are some which all the ages have admitted to be the holiest things in human nature, and the highest, purest forms of spiritual life. All that we call our instincts, all spontaneous movements of our being, all love that springs up unbidden in the soul, all affection that is faithful through disgrace, all confidence that refuses to be shaken—all these are only various forms of prejudice, all these are feelings which do not own the

government of reason, which as it approaches supreme control gradually suppresses and destroys them. As it approaches, I say, for it may well be doubted whether the domination of the brain over the heart has ever in anyone been, or ever in anyone can be, perfect and absolute. There is always some little sanctum in the breast which reason is not permitted to invade, some nook where a remnant of natural feeling stands at bay. Few men would hear the character of their dead mother aspersed, were the evidence against her ever so convincing. The most mathematical wretch would shrink from discussing her shortcomings and dispassionately recognising her faults. Yet what is this but prejudice? What is this but an irrational resisting of logical conclusions because they happen to concern the person who bore and nursed him? What is it in short but an admission that there is some place in every soul too sacred for reason to be allowed to enter there?

But, alas, on the whole, how that place narrows! How, like the Indian Reservation of the Americans, ever encroached on by the rising flood of Yankeedom, this poor refuge of aboriginal sentiment of untutored, wild-wood feeling grows every day more circumscribed, loses this province or that after a bitter agony of opposition! How reason advances and gains, how all goes down before it! Chivalry, loyalty, patriotism, generosity to enemies, fidelity to friends, these are by nature mere emotional things, the Cherokees of human sentiment, ardent, simple, uncontrolled, and independent.

Against some of these reason has openly declared. Others, on the contrary, if they would abandon their wild ways, it is prepared actually to befriend. It will not destroy them! No, it will adopt them, it will civilise them, it will instruct them, it will appoint their functions and mete out their aliment. And as they sicken and die out, in the natural course of events, it will set on their tombstones an accurate inventory of the merits they possessed, and even shed a number of tears over their extinction. But the result is always the same. Where logic enters feeling dies; dies by its hostility; dies, no less miserably, by its alliance. The heart withers under the dictation of the head. Make critical approval the basis of love, and soon you have the basis without the superstructure. Refuse to denounce any act until you have analysed the evil of its consequence—soon you will not have in you one flush of honest

indignation at the completest evidence of wrong. And so on. Feeling supreme; reason struggling with or supporting feeling; reason supreme, and alone; these are the stages in the transition that is taking place on every side. In the next generation, if things go on in the present groove, children may regard their parents with discriminating esteem, and lovers their mistresses with intelligent approbation.

A stand ought long ago to have been made against this desolating progress. Suppose I have an irrational attachment to a particular part of this terrestrial sphere, which my logical friends can demonstrate to be no more fertile, or healthy, or pleasant than many other localities not similarly dear to me. Suppose I have an unjustified preference for its products and faith in its inhabitants. Suppose, in fine, that I put the climax to my imbecility by regarding with reverence and sentimental effusion a certain impersonal entity named "Old England," which can be shown by the clearest evidence never to have had an existence outside my imagination. Well? Am I not better for my illusion? Is not every human soul the better and the happier for every motion of love and enthusiasm within it, the worse and the more wretched for every access of doubt and disgust? And shall I submit, and expose myself to have my quick fibres dissected, for the sake of having one thrill the less in my sentience, one glow the less in my veins? Assuredly not. If I am fortunate enough to possess such a feeling, let me treasure it, let me clasp it to me and protect it as a thing that is precious and brittle. In a world where there is so little that is truly love-worthy, where there are so few things that can come scatheless from a critical examination, let me not destroy the poor flower of affection which still blooms within my breast by plucking it up to see if its roots are in the arid soil of reason.

At some point we must say to discussion, "This is not your field." Sydney Smith once declared that a certain question should be "argued in hollow squares and debated with volleys of musketry." That he was right as regarded that particular question may be a matter for doubt, but that there are such questions, and that some of them are being forced forward at the present day, many must have felt. We ought then to fortify our hearts, and instead of joining in the hue and cry that is raised against all prejudice, we ought to oppose with a robust determination the intrusion of reason where its presence is an outrage.

"OPEN SÉSAME."

CHAPTER VIII. BEFORE THE PARQUET.

ON the morning after the fête Madame Desmoulin rose, according to her custom, very early, and after dusting her room and watering her flowers, sat down by the open window and began her endless task of needlework. This was the best part of the day for her, the air fresh and cool, the flowers fragrant and dewy, and nothing in the sleeping world about her to suggest painful thoughts of present decadence and future misery. And the workaday world began to rouse itself presently, not in any sudden peremptory fashion, but easily and gently, with preliminary yawns, and folding of the hands to sleep again. The locksmith was the first fairly to open the day with the sharp ring of hammer and anvil. Then the blacksmith with a slower heavier stroke. Presently the Angelus from the church tower rang out with peremptory clamour, and not long after the early diligence came rumbling and jingling along. Then the rivulet below that had been gurgling full-mouthed all the time, changed to a thinner, shriller note, as the flour-mill above began to work, and even this was shortly lost in the sound of splashing and bawling as the washerwomen began their labours. Now the shrill tongues of women take the lead, the constant chatter, which to Madame Desmoulin might have supplied the place of a local daily journal. Not that she generally listened to it; indeed, the clang of the patois, and the confusion of tongues, among half-a-dozen speaking together, made the undertaking difficult without constant attention. But on this particular morning her attention was attracted involuntarily. For the women were talking of the arrest of the night before, and of the prisoner's departure in the early morning.

The news startled her. If Delisle had left the town it was evident that he had considered his mission impracticable, and she was relieved from the necessity of making an immediate decision as to the future. That Delisle would soon see her husband, and tell him that his wife was unwilling to return to him, was almost certain. And she knew him well enough to be sure that bitter anger would be excited in his mind. Well, she could not help it. If he had a home to receive her in, and money to pay her passage, she would not refuse to join him. But to share the vagabond life of an exile, to languish in some miserable garret in darksome foggy London

—no, she could not give up what she had for this. Probably he had relied upon borrowing some money from her brother Lucien, and that was the meaning of Delisle's mysterious allusion the night before. As if Lucien had not enough to do to keep a roof over his head! There had been disappointment there, sure enough, for although Lucien was soft-hearted enough for anything, he was almost penniless at the moment, she knew, and was too proud to borrow.

Madame Souchet heard the news of Delisle's departure a little later, and was heartily glad thereof. She had felt some remorse at the thought of its being through her instrumentality that the young man had got into trouble. Now they were fairly quit of these escaped prisoners, and could arrange about the marriage in peace. It was hardly likely that Desmoulins would try any other personal embassy after the warning he had received, and as for any postal communications she, Madame Souchet, would take charge of them. Anyhow, it was a happiness to be able to set the poor child's mind at rest, and Madame Souchet went joyfully to Marie's room to tell her the news. And yet although Marie appeared to be relieved in her mind to find the fugitive out of danger, she was not altogether satisfied when she heard that he had been sent out of the country. For had he not promised to take her away to her father? And the vague satisfaction which she had felt at the thought of meeting her father was supplemented by the warmer pleasure of having Delisle as a guide and companion. And she had thought that, in spite of her mother's opposition, Delisle would contrive that she should be of the party. He seemed so brave and capable of carrying all before him that she could hardly fancy that anybody should resist his will. But he was gone, and she, with growing discontent and repugnance, would be obliged to reconcile herself to Madame Souchet's wishes.

The postmistress watched Marie with growing alarm. It was a bitter disappointment to her that she should hanker after her father and his people, rather than the staid and sober people among whom her lot was cast. It was the wicked turbulent blood which she inherited from her father that was stirring in the girl's veins. A misgiving came into her mind whether the future would turn out so smooth and pleasant as she had planned and hoped. But all these misgivings as to the future

were soon forgotten in the new trouble of Lucien Brunet's arrest.

M. Huron brought the news. He had been profoundly moved when he first learnt it—profoundly incredulous. But when he had heard all the circumstances his incredulity gave way. That Lucien should have ten thousand francs belonging to him seemed even more unlikely than that Brunet should have stolen such a sum. And if he had come honestly by the money; if, as he had at first affirmed, it had been invested in some loan; what more easy than to bring forward the person to whom it had been lent and who had repaid it. But, challenged to do this, he had shifted his ground. The money had been hidden, forsooth, since the year 1871! As if any man in his senses would thus dispose of a sum of money which would bring in a yearly revenue of five hundred francs! And then there was something flighty and generous about the crime, that seemed to make it possible for Brunet to have committed it. It was not a vulgar theft. Brunet himself would not have profited by it in the least degree. He had robbed his employer, intending to return the money as his niece's dowry. His only object had been her happiness. Then, everybody knew how great was his attachment to Marie; how he had felt indignant that she should be disposed of in marriage by Madame Souchet rather than by her mother's family; and an absurd family pride was one of poor Lucien's weaknesses. There was not much to be proud of in the family now, alas!

And thus thought M. Cavalier the elder, who had already sent a note to Madame Souchet renouncing, on his nephew's behalf, the honour of the proposed alliance. The communitard was bad enough, but to have a thief in the family! No amount of fortune would compensate for that.

Madame Souchet's anger at Cavalier's insolence did her good, and caused her to espouse the cause of the Brunets more eagerly than she would otherwise have done. She was the first to visit Madame Desmoulins, taking with her Marie, whom she had not ventured to tell of her uncle's trouble. But Madame Desmoulins was herself ignorant of the affair, not having stirred from her needlework. Then followed a trying scene. The news of her brother's dishonour seemed the final crown of all the trouble of her life. Pride had held her up hitherto; now even that was broken down. Even she could not believe

her brother to be the innocent possessor of ten thousand francs.

Madame Souchet feared some desperate resolution on her part, so much the woman was beaten down. And then Madame Souchet formed a supreme resolution. She would sacrifice her own wishes, her own dislikes. If, after all, the banker would put an end to the scandal by proclaiming the affair a mistake—well, she would accept Charles as a husband for Marie, and there should be a dowry that would make a decent figure in M. Lalonde's big safe.

But the affair had gone too far for that. Information had been given to the court, and the matter was in the hands of justice. And then the banker's antipathies were sometimes even stronger than his love of gain. He rejected Madame Souchet's offer with contumely, and all hope in that quarter was at an end.

The case had been deemed so important by the authorities that the juge d'instruction himself had come over to conduct the investigations. To say the truth, the tribunal at Neutôt found very little in the way of grist coming to the judicial mill, and was fain to make the most of such business as fell in its way. And there was some talk in high official circles of suppressing those tribunals which fell short of a certain modicum of activity. Hence a feverish anxiety on the part of all concerned to make up a goodly list of causes. Times were certainly hard when, instead of congratulating each other on the lightness of the calendar, and complimenting the district on its high state of morality and Christian fraternity, judges and officials saw before them, no longer the traditional white gloves, but the dismal schedule of compulsory retirements. In this affair, indeed, the presumption against Brunet was so strong that the most cautious magistrate would hardly have hesitated in committing him to prison. Not only did Lucien fail to give any satisfactory account of the money found upon him, but it was shown that at the time he was being pressed for outstanding debts—not of any great amount, indeed, but such as a man who had pecuniary resources at his command would hardly have failed to discharge.

Charles had left Canville before Lucien's arrest, and, even were he recalled, it did not seem to Brunet that he could give any exculpatory evidence. Only one thing could save him—the evidence of

M. Desmoullins, who had deposited the sum of money in his hands.

Lucien was permitted to have an interview with his sister, in which he urged this upon her, but even she scarcely could credit the story. And, were it true, how could Desmoullins appear as a witness, and put his head into the very jaws of the lion? He would devote himself again to slavery, without saving his brother-in-law. As for Delisle, he was by this time safe out of the country. The search at first made for him had been stopped, when it became evident that nothing beyond the ten thousand francs had been taken from the safe.

One person, however, had the liveliest doubts as to Brunet's culpability, and this was the huissier who had held the bill for ten thousand francs, and who had received from Charles the exact sum stolen from the safe. He had found Brunet so exact in his dealings during a business connection of many years that he could not believe in his guilt. Whereas he was not equally certain as to Charles, sundry enquiries having come to him from Paris as to the position of his relatives at Canville, which suggested the inference that the young man was straining his credit—and perhaps his father's also—in an alarming way. But the huissier had an excellent client in M. Lalonde. He contented himself, therefore, with mentioning the matter quietly to the banker himself. Staggered at first, M. Lalonde resolutely shut his eyes to any suggested possibilities. His son had resources of his own, and although he regretted that he should forestall them, yet if his bills were always met at maturity there was nothing more to be said. And the huissier came to the conclusion that he could say nothing more. Experience had taught him that the justice of his country, while in the outset it sifted its evidence carefully enough, yet, having once made up its mind, and selected the guilty one, was not disposed to admit anything to shake its convictions. The president of the court took up the views of the juge d'instruction, the jury accepted the opinion of the president. The mouse once caught, the rest might be considered play.

Marie alone, perhaps, of all Canville, was convinced of her uncle's perfect innocence. Of course her father had left the money in his hands, and M. Delisle had come to Canville to reclaim the deposit, and employ it in delivering her mother and herself from their bondage at Canville. And she would have written to her father

at once, only both her mother and Madame Souchet forbade it. She might even have ventured to disregard this prohibition, but she could find no opportunity. Madame Souchet never lost sight of her for many minutes together, and even if she could have written the letter, could she hope that its address would escape the vigilant eyes of the postmistress?

Madame Souchet, however, did not know anything about M. Delisle and his handwriting, and Marie then remembered that he had given her his address upon an envelope, which she could make use of to enclose her letter. He had begged her, if ever she were in need of a friend, to write to him, and she wrote a short note, telling him what had happened to her uncle, and begging him to help them. Marie slipped this note into the post unobserved. She contrived to be in the office that evening when Madame Souchet sorted the letters. The postmistress paused over that envelope, and considered it critically for a moment. The handwriting was strange to her, indeed, but it suggested no doubtful associations. The letter passed on its way, and then Marie felt relieved and thankful, for she had unlimited confidence in the power of M. Delisle. He would save her uncle—she knew not how, but he would do it, even if he broke into the prison to get him out.

Unhappy as Brunet might be in his prison, probably Lalonde and his son were still more wretched; the one in his snug bank parlour, the other in the gilded Parisian café he frequented. Obstinate as Lalonde was, he could not keep out of his mind the suspicion that Charles was the real culprit after all. Not that he absolved Brunet on that account. No, whether or not he had taken the money on that particular night, the money in his possession had been filched from the banker's coffers, of that he felt convinced. And thus his trouble was not caused by the thought of having wrongfully accused an innocent man.

It was due to the dread of there being another hand, and that still at liberty, which could find its way to his hoards.

How did he know but that his wife was in the plot? She loved Charles devotedly; she did not care for her husband. She might have surprised his passwords, she might continue to do so in spite of all his precautions. Was there no one whom he could trust? And if Charles were raising money, ten thousand francs at a

time, what might not be his future demands, to be supplied in the same surreptitious fashion? And these were people whom he could not drag before the Court of Assizes!

As for Charles, who had received a telegram from his father informing him of his loss and of Brunet's arrest, he felt quite unable to face the consequences of confessing the truth, and yet despised himself the while as a miserable cowardly wretch. And being thus, he could not expose himself to the reprobation of his friends, to the loss of the inheritance which was otherwise sure to come to him from his father, whose threat of turning all his money into life-annuities would certainly be carried out after such a confession. As for the small fortune coming to him through his mother, that would hardly suffice to pay his present debts. No, Brunet must bear the blame for the present. By-and-by when his father was dead, and the inheritance come into his possession, he would obtain his release and compensate him handsomely for what he had suffered. Perhaps he would settle down then, and take his father's place at Canville.

CHAPTER IX. AMNESTY.

ANYONE passing through the place would have seen and noticed the two flower-covered windows over the pluchôt, and the pale face bending over its work, thrown out by the inky blackness of the shadows behind. These are the shadows that lurk about the dwellings of the poor—that mean four bare walls, darkened with the dust of years, the one chair, the broken pitcher, the miserable truckle-bed. Where you have polished furniture, mirrors, knick-knacks reflecting and refracting light in a thousand insignificant particles, you can never have the luxury of such splendid velvety darkness. And yet the pale wistful faces that peer forth sometimes seem hardly conscious of their advantages. But as everybody admits that hard work is the best cure for an aching heart, and as this is a remedy which is more in their way than any other, on this head also the poor have much reason to be thankful.

There was no thankfulness, however, expressed on Madame Desmoulins's face as she bent over her work. Was it worth while going on living, she said to herself, like this?

Then the diligence came thundering down the hill, and drew up in a cloud of dust in the middle of the place. Some

traveller getting down at the hotel, no doubt. In fact, a young man descended just opposite and gave his bag to the waiter from the hotel, a young man dressed in deep mourning, quite a distinguished young man, whom the host himself came out to welcome.

But he stood as if undecided on the steps of the hotel, and finally, after a few words with the waiter, turned away into the place.

He raised his eyes presently to where Madame Desmoulins was sitting at her window. He took off his hat gravely and respectfully.

Madame Desmoulins mechanically acknowledged the salutation.

It was Delisle himself, and he was coming to see her. His melancholy face, the mourning he wore, struck a chill to her heart.

When Delisle knocked at her door, she was there awaiting him, and her first words were :

"He is gone—my poor husband. Is it too late?"

Delisle shook his head in melancholy confirmation.

"And I would not go to him," she moaned, covering her face with her hands. "I might have been there to close his eyes, and I would not. He died thinking himself deserted."

"Pardon me, madame," said Delisle gently, "he understood it all, and he was even thankful that you should have been spared the sorrow and trouble of the last scene. His last words were: 'La patrie, Lucille, la petite.'"

Madame Desmoulins wept bitter tears, but even as she wept she recognised that all this was just. And yet he had died in exile and tended by strangers, in a strange cold land. If she had ever entertained a faint lingering hope of a happier ending to the story of their lives, that last hope was extinguished. And yet the happier ending had long been an impossible thing.

Their disconnected lives could never have been firmly welded together. He had died as he had lived, warm-hearted and full of illusions. As for her, the cold had touched her heart.

She saw too plainly the harsh uncomely features of reality.

As all this passed through her mind, she listened like one in a dream, while Delisle gave her some further particulars of her husband's last hours.

"The hardships we had suffered must have left their deadly seeds in his frame. I found him on my return almost prostrated by fever, and he had not strength to fight against it. But he had time to confide to me the task of caring for the welfare of his wife and daughter. Between comrades who have suffered together, and for the same cause, there is a closer bond than that of brotherhood."

There was an assurance, a decision in his tone that made Madame Desmoulins look up in some surprise. How could he talk of caring for the welfare of others, who himself was a poor exile, as poor as the rest of them.

"I should not have intruded upon your sorrow," continued Delisle calmly. "I should have written, but I heard of the absurd accusation against your brother."

"Ah! you have heard of that," said Madame Desmoulins, her features contracting with pain. "And he said that my husband could clear him. Well, that hope is lost to him now."

"There is other evidence to clear him," said Delisle, rising to take his leave. "I will see this aggressive banker at once, and I venture to say that I have your brother's freedom before I leave him. A bientôt."

"But, monsieur, consider the danger you run," urged Madame Desmoulins.

But Delisle was striding away with rapid paces towards the quay.

Poor M. Lalonde was in a very unhappy state of mind on that particular morning. To say the truth he found that he could not get on without Brunet. The stress upon his brain was too great. He had replaced Brunet by two clerks, who were willing and active enough; but they did not understand his ways and threw him into a fever by their clumsiness.

"I would almost give ten thousand francs to have that fellow back again," he muttered to himself.

And then the door opened and a stranger entered, no other than M. Delisle.

The banker saw at once that the person he had to deal with was entitled to consideration, and as he demanded a private interview, Lalonde, with a wave of the hand, dismissed his clerks to amuse themselves outside. But when the banker found that his visitor came to vindicate Lucien Brunet's rectitude, he decidedly refused to entertain the question.

"It is in the hands of justice!" he cried. "It is not for me to interfere. If you

have anything to say, impart it to the authorities."

"Ah, but you will save me all that trouble," cried M. Delisle. "You will yourself vindicate the character of your faithful servant, and then there will be no more scandal, all will be arranged en famille, and I assure you that it is to your interest that it should be so."

Lalonde could hardly meet the clear, frank, but searching eyes of his visitor, and his last words caused the banker a vague uneasiness connected with his own misgivings as to the possible culpability of his own son. Thus he listened, but impatiently and with averted head, as Delisle explained that Brunet's account of the money found upon him was perfectly true. It had been entrusted to him by his brother-in-law, then a fugitive. It might seem strange that Desmoulins should leave his wife in poverty, his daughter to be educated at the charge of others, while this sum, which might have brought comfort to the household, lay there unproductive. But the matter was easily explained. Desmoulins was a man of scrupulous probity, and the money was not his. At the time when the national troops entered Paris, a friend, a combatant, who had decided to die sword in hand, entrusted him with the sum, to be used as he pleased if he were the survivor. As it happened, the friend did not meet with the death he sought, but shared Desmoulins's penalty of transportation for life. In the end the two friends formed part of a band who escaped from the penal settlement, and after innumerable hardships found their way to Europe.

"Pardon me," said Lalonde at this point, "your narrative is very interesting, but I must interrupt you, to give one or two orders." He sounded the bell for his servant, and when he made his appearance gave him some whispered instructions. Jules left the room, and the banker, turning politely to Delisle, begged him to continue.

"I don't think there is much more to be said," said Delisle. "The friend came to Canville to reclaim the money, having persuaded Desmoulins to use it for their mutual benefit. But it turned out that other claims had arisen, and the friend returned empty-handed."

"And I may conclude, perhaps," said the banker, "that the friend is yourself?"

Delisle bowed. "You have guessed it, monsieur."

"And that you also are a claimant for the ten thousand francs?"

"Oh, decidedly yes!" said Delisle with a smile; "rather than it should be swallowed up by justice, or even by a millionaire like M. Lalonde."

M. Lalonde too smiled grimly.

"Monsieur, without presuming to doubt your word, permit me to say that all this story sounds wildly improbable."

"But, monsieur, I saw the money in his hands, the identical sum, and that at an early hour of the evening long before the time assigned for the alleged robbery."

"Well, monsieur, justice must decide as to the possibility of your story." And here M. Lalonde decrying the shadow of a well-known form against the glass door assumed a bolder tone. "You will have abundant opportunity of telling the tale, for I must remind you, monsieur, that I am not only a banker, but the maire of this town, at present also charged with the duties of the Commissaire of Police; and that in virtue of these double functions, I should be culpably negligent in permitting to escape an evaded convict, a communard——"

Here the banker hemmed loudly, and Père Douze glided in with a slight clinking noise, occasioned by a set of well-polished irons which he carried about him in case of emergencies. Behind him loomed the stalwart form of the quartermaster of gendarmes. To the presence of the latter it was due that Père Douze darted upon his victim with such eagerness that he almost tumbled over him.

"I arrest you, monsieur. M. le Maire, you will bear witness that it is I who arrest him?"

"Ah, monsieur," cried Huron, peering over the other's shoulders, and shaking his head mournfully, "what a misfortune! To be arrested, and by a common policeman!"

"Stay!" cried Delisle, shaking off the grasp of the Père Douze as he sprang to his feet. "Look here, M. Huron; if you will examine these papers you will see that, although yesterday a political exile, to-day I am amnestied."

"Sapristi!" cried Huron, having glanced at the papers, "it is exactly that."

The père lifted his hands to heaven, and even a tear glittered in the corner of his eye. The disappointment seemed to have aged him all of a sudden. He tottered out of the bank quite infirmly, unable to utter a word, his rattan trailing behind him, his chin sunk upon his breast.

"Monsieur," cried Huron, "you will not leave the town, I trust, without visiting me at the gendarmerie: I have certain objects

there that will repay a more lengthened examination."

"Stay, M. Huron!" cried the banker bitterly. "Perhaps you do not know that in this gentleman we have a claimant for my ten thousand francs."

"Ah!" exclaimed Huron, striking his forehead, "I see it all now. The poor fellow's story is true then. I felt it all the time. And yet—and the money was really yours, monsieur? Ah, ah! I thought you federalist gentlemen did not understand the art of helping yourselves."

Huron exploded in a loud guffaw as he patted Delisle approvingly on the shoulder.

"It was my own money," said Delisle gravely and coldly. "There was an absolute lack of coin at one time, and I advanced ten thousand francs to the administration. It was repaid to me in money freshly coined."

Huron struck his hand to his forehead.

"No, it could not be possible! It would be too much!" grinding his teeth. "Permit me for a moment to retire, and set at rest a dreadful suspicion."

"You will admit now, perhaps," said Delisle when Huron had left the bank, "that we had better settle this matter between ourselves. We will go together to Neutôt and release poor Brunet, and then we will talk over the future. By poor Desmoulins's death——"

"Ah, he is dead!" said the banker in an undertone. "There is another blow for the poor père."

"I am left the guardian of his daughter. I understand that you have a son, and that the young people are attached to each other. Well, I propose as Marie's guardian to give her certain dowry—say, twenty-five thousand francs."

"Hum!" cried the banker; "including the sum in dispute?"

"No, no; that will be at the disposition of the widow."

"But," cried Lalonde, crimson with eagerness, and his eyes twinkling keenly, "are you yourself in a position to guarantee the sum you name?"

"You know, perhaps, the firm of Delisle and Co., of Marseilles, the bankers?"

"Ah yes, monsieur," cried Lalonde effusively; "the firm is known all over the world."

"The head of the firm is my uncle. Well, a considerable property having

come to the family by the recent death of our grandfather, a very old man——"

"Yes, yes; I have heard of him—rich, very rich," cried Lalonde, smacking his lips, and folding his hands devoutly, as if contemplating some saintly object.

"My uncle, unknown to me, used his influence with the government to get me amnestied."

"And thus you inherit your share of the fortune of the elder M. Delisle?" cried the banker with an air of respect and even awe. "Oh, monsieur, it is sufficient, abundantly sufficient. As for this troublesome little affair of the ten thousand francs, let it pass; I will own myself mistaken. M. Brunet's character shall be rehabilitated. And for your kind intentions for my son——"

"Pardon me," said Delisle with a curl of the lip. "Not for your son, but for my friend's daughter."

"Exactly. Well, the young rogue will be too proud of such an honour!"

"Here is a misfortune!" cried Huron, entering at this moment with a weighty parcel under his arm. "Here is a misfortune for me, although it comes in happily to end all disputes. Behold the coin which was left in my hands, as one of the 'pièces de conviction'; you know how strenuously you demanded, M. le Maire, that the money should be restored to you."

"Did I?" said Lalonde, scratching his chin; "well, it was very natural at the time."

"Quite natural," with a loud laugh. "Well, on examining these coins—the five-franc pieces, that is—what do you think I find? Why, that they are everyone of them communards, just fresh from the federal mint."

"How do you make that out?" cried Lalonde, turning pale.

Huron explained the difference in the marking of the coins. They were all of the same pattern identically; evidently struck at the same time. M. Lalonde could not resist this overwhelming proof that the money was none of his. Huron promised to drive over at once and communicate all these facts to the juge d'instruction. Lalonde would go with him, and they would bring Brunet back in triumph. He should be reinstated at the bank, and all the world should know his perfect innocence.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER XVI. IN THE MIST.

A PLUNDERED dressing-room—a thievish valet. Sir Charles Bassett might see something dark and dangerous floating about beneath the muddy surface, but to the house in general the combination was nothing more than pleasantly exciting. To Phœbe herself, the discovery was indeed thrice confused confusion. That she had warned the proscribed nobleman of his peril, that she had eagerly given her watch to help a penniless lover to escape from his enemies, nobody, not even Sir Charles himself, knew better than she. A lucky sight, from behind her blind, of Stanislas crossing the terrace in the direction of the stables, a sudden impulse, a desperate resolution, a hurried flight into the park, a snatch of breathless talk—all this was on her consciousness, if not on her conscience, during the scene at the breakfast-table, and had made her conduct as peculiar as anybody could desire. But she had not been so mad as to carry her trinkets out into the park to be missed by her duenna; her watch she had given, but her jewels had been stolen. There at any rate Mrs. Hassock's clamour had been right; Sir Charles Bassett's silent assurance had been wrong. Nor had she given Stanislas her purse, that also she had left in her room when she hurried downstairs. What had become of them? Not so much as a suspicion entered her brain that a hero of romance, because he had been given a part of her treasures, therefore held himself entitled to make free with the whole. A

wicked, flourishing marquis might do such things, but not a count in disguise; for disguise is the very livery of Honour. To say that she did not suspect is almost to hint at a suspicion that did not come even near enough to her to be scouted and denied. Somebody must have taken these things; there were other servants in the house; but who? Yet she could not defend Stanislas without betraying him. And it was altogether desperately unlucky. The police would be at once upon the alert to catch a common thief, and would thus cut off every avenue of escape from Stanislas Adrianski. They would go out for a fox, and would find a lion. If only the real thief had been considerate enough to put off his or her coup till tomorrow! Stanislas would have been clear off by then, and the scent would have been led away.

She felt like anything but a heroine when she escaped at last from the informal court of enquiry in the library back to her bedroom. "The police"—she had heard the word spoken, and its very sound went far to vulgarise even the romance of a hunted patriot and an imprisoned maiden. Had Sir Charles summoned his serfs and retainers by bugle-horn to hunt an outlaw, she knew, or supposed she would have known, what to do. But to have a knight-errant tracked, and perhaps caught, by a county constable in a blue coat—that was beyond knowledge. And that blue coat with a stiff collar might find her watch upon the supposed valet in another hour. She would not be able to say, "That is not my watch;" for Mrs. Hassock could contradict her, and, even if she could bribe or persuade her duenna to silence, her monogram could not be persuaded or

brided to disappear. She would not be able to say, "I, a young lady, made a present of my watch to Mr. Ralph Bassett's valet," because then she would have to say why. And yet, if she did not say so, Stanislas would escape the Siberian mines only to fall upon an English treadmill. And what should she write home—to her father? Some sort of letter must be written, and at once; and what in the world should she say?

And she had wasted tears over the sorrows of heroines who had never suffered from policemen, and postmen, and the hundred things which make, in these days, the career of a heroine difficult indeed. Once upon a time—to be as precisely exact in dates as possible—it would have been so easy to make great deeds marry with great desires. Now all was changed; and Phœbe felt that fate was growing too much for her, that things must be as they must be, and that she had been born terribly after her time. But this was only in the background. How soon would Stanislas Adrianski be brought handcuffed, like a common thief, between two common policemen to Cautleigh Hall? All she could do was to throw open her window, and from a curtained corner look out over the park, in a state of suspense beside which, she felt sure, all the heartaches of which she had ever read had been as nothing. Nay, less than nothing; for those hearts had ached with love, "And so do I!" cried Phœbe's. "That is all that is left me to do, and I will. I am in torture because I love Stanislas, and because we shall be parted, he to the mines, I to despair, and I shall never see him or hear his voice again." The fear felt curiously like hope; but, for that very reason, she gained the greater strength to keep on despairing, with all her might and main. As to the outward upshot, the arrest of Stanislas, her having to make a public choice between betraying him to the mines and leaving him to the treadmill, the exposure of her inner life, the confusion, the explosion, the ridicule worse than tragedy which must crown the drama of her destiny—all these made up a very different sort of fear, and compelled love and its despair to fight hard for their very lives.

Only through all Phœbe's follies, falsehoods, and fears, through all her feeble fancies, and phantom vanities, and savage ignorances, there ran the one ruling note which was, and had been from the beginning of her story, their end, their life,

their cause: "I'll be the highest I know of, and if I can't be all, I'll be all I can." Ralph Bassett had never said so much—Philip Nelson had never said more.

"So Miss Doyle has got a headache—and no wonder—and can't ride," said Ralph to Phil, "and my father won't leave the police to me, and it's too late now to do anything worth doing before that confounded rehearsal. And Lawrence is no good—his stage fever gets hot as mine gets cool. I'll cut the rehearsal to-day. I'm the only one of the company who knows his part or hers, so I'll give the rest a chance of making up leeway. So if you're still game for the Holms, I'm your man. I want to gallop off my temper—Miss Doyle to be robbed, and here! I was never in such a rage since I was born. And by my own man!—I feel like a thief myself. I shall have to live like a miser till I can buy her a Koh-i-noor, unless they're found. Are you game for a gallop across country—bull-finches and all?"

"I don't know," said Phil. "There were no fences where I learnt to ride. But I certainly mean the Holms, whatever's in the way."

"I'm more vexed about this business than I can say," said Ralph, as they rode down the avenue towards the road. Phil was anything but a graceful horseman, but he had done his share of rough riding on the steppes, and had the hand, if not the knees, that a horse understands and obeys. Or perhaps it was the mind and not so much the hands—horses are human enough to make it mean much the same thing. "Miss Doyle is the only stranger among us all, and that she should have been singled out is an abominable shame. And my own man—there's only one comfort; he wasn't an Englishman."

"What was he? A Frenchman?" asked Phil; curious, although he had convinced himself she was not Phœbe, about anything and everything that concerned Miss Doyle. "A Pole."

"Which means—scoundrel," said Phil, thinking of Stanislas Adrianski, as the type of a Pole. "I have been in Russia, and I know." He was a mathematician; therefore a reasoner. But a mathematician, when in love, has not been found to differ much from men who have never so much as heard of the hyperbola. Stanislas Adrianski had carried off Phœbe Burden. Stanislas Adrianski is a Pole. Therefore a Pole is a scoundrel.

"I wish I was called," said Ralph. "To the bar, I mean," he added, condescending to explanation for the benefit of a lay and unenlightened engineer. "I'd prosecute my servant as hotly as if I were defending him—I'd get him penal servitude for life, and be made attorney-general on the spot for my eloquence and all that sort of thing. It's a confounded nuisance altogether. If the scoundrel's caught he'll have to be tried; and Miss Doyle will have to swear to her jewels, and how she had them safe."

And so he ran and rambled on about Miss Doyle and her diamonds till Philip Nelson became vaguely jealous on account of a girl who, not being Phoebe, was of no earthly account to him. They were riding towards an open gate, but he put his horse at the hedge and cleared it handsomely, while Ralph took the easier way.

Ralph nodded approval. "Qui m'aime," he shouted with a laugh, and led off at a gallop, Phil following with good will.

Without anything more in the shape of talk, the two young men, seemingly so opposite in all qualities and conditions, had become friends before they reached the threshold of the dreary prospect that signifies Cautleigh Holms. Ralph's gallop was whim; Phil's something more than whim—the need of working off a ferment which troubled his heart and which he honestly believed was troubling his brain. But the conditions were the same; the swift, straight rush against the slight, sharp wind, the subtle sympathy between horse and man, the conquest of accidental or intentional difficulties, the rivalry of ridership, the sharp taste of the air already salt with the sea. The supposed right to pride was on the side of Ralph. But the real pride of self was on the side of Phil. So that Ralph, in heart, lowered himself, Phil exalted himself, and both met half way. Ralph was, and had to remain, the gentleman, in the sight of all who hold, and rightly hold, that by "Nature's gentleman" we may mean more than simply gentleman, but never exactly the same. Yet across the gulf of circumstances, men may join hands. And a frank gallop together through the same air is the best hand-shake in the world.

The Holms proved to be, as Philip had been given to understand, a wide and desolate tract of marsh-land, dotted here and there with island hillocks of rank vegetation, which promised fertility should the whole be reclaimed from the state of half-flood which was its normal condition.

Probably these marshes had at some period or other been under the waves of the now faraway sea. Parts already formed natural water-meadows, affording occasional pasture, but in general the waste was as complete as the steppes which had been Phil's last field of work, and far less habitable.

"There's your work before you," said Ralph, reining up on a roughly run-up causeway whence was to be had the most characteristically dreary view of these marshes which a thin winter mist now rendered doubly drear. "It doesn't look much like a gold mine. But it's the best snipe-shooting in England, Nelson. I shouldn't myself have the heart to turn the Holms into a lot of common cornfields. But then I should never have the heart to be an engineer at all. I believe you wouldn't stick at pulling down the Alps, if you knew how."

"When Nature makes blunders, they have to be put straight," said Phil, settling the question once for all.

"Nature never blunders," said Ralph. "If only one thing is ever right, and everything else is always wrong, then she blundered wofully either in making you or in making me, for we're as unlike as if we'd been turned out by different hands. I should hate a world turned out by an engineer. Not that you can make even a couple of railway lines as you would like to."

"Then you think that Nature never makes two things the same?"

"Never. Not even two leaves."

"Not the two Lesurques—not the two Martin Guerres?"

"No, nor the two Dromios; and not even Shakespeare could do it."

"Then you would not believe me if I told you that here, in your own house, is a lady so like a girl with whom I was brought up as if we were brother and sister that, when I met her last night, I could not get it out of my head that they were the same?"

"Not believe that you thought so? Of course I should believe. But that you couldn't find plenty of difference if you saw them side by side—no. Which girl do you mean?"

"Miss Doyle."

"Perhaps they are relations?"

"No. The girl I mean was a foundling, brought up by my father and mother—and my father is, or was, a struggling copying-clerk who has never been out of London since I was born. And yet she is as like Miss Doyle, who has always lived in India,

and has diamonds to lose, as if the two were one."

"A foundling? I wonder if old Doyle had twins before he turned nabob. Now let me see what's the best way of getting you into one of our show-bogs; you'll want to see the worst at once, I suppose. There's a fine one, I know, out there—but I'm afraid getting there's not so easy at this time of year; or for that matter at any time. Let me see—if you don't mind waiting here a few minutes, I'll ride out and scout. I know the ground and there's less chance of my meeting with the fate of Edgar of Ravenswood than you. If I'm not back before midnight, you may give me up till you find me in the shape of an obstruction to one of your draining pipes. If it's all right, I'll wave my hat, and you can follow."

Philip watched his new friend dismount, lead his horse from the causeway, and, having remounted on a starting place of fairly firm ground, proceed at a walk as straight towards a distant osier-copse as the horse's instinctive wisdom would allow. The way seemed passable, but uncertain; at any rate Ralph neither signalled nor turned. The delay, however, seemed by no means long. The possibilities of preternatural likenesses were once more disturbing Phil's mind. If Ralph was right, and if such things were indeed beyond the working laws of Nature, then Phœbe was not like, but was, Miss Doyle—that is to say, of two impossibilities the more incredible was the less impossible. "I must speak to her," thought he, "come of it what will." Then he tried to consider what he had already seen of the Holms, and to attend to business in spite of Miss Doyle. He must not think, in working hours, of anything but work. So he worked out, in his mind, a quadratic equation by way of pulling his mind together, and then—Ralph Bassett suddenly disappeared. A thick wreath of mist had come between the causeway and the osier-copse, and made the prospect a faithful picture of Phil's own mind, wherein all that he did not care to see was clear and plain, all that he did care to see, blotted and blurred.

There did not appear to be any particular danger, because Ralph would have nothing to do but wait where he was till the mist should pass away. But it was certainly awkward, because, for aught Phil could tell, a mist on the Holms might be a matter of hours—it might last till sunset, even. On the other hand, it might be a matter of

minutes only; in any case Phil had to stay where he was, like a sentry on duty, if only that Ralph might not miss a landmark as soon as the fog cleared.

Minutes passed, and the fog did not clear.

On the contrary, it grew thicker and deeper, though, with the seeming caprice of mists, whether mind-born or marsh-born, it held well away from Phil's own post on the causeway, and stood over the marsh about three hundred yards away, less like a veil than a wall. It was more like a sea-fog than anything Phil ever had seen on shore, and told him a good deal about what the nature of his report on the Holms would have to be. How long was this going to last, even if it was not going to end in cause for serious anxiety? At the end of about half an hour he shouted, but no answer came.

Still, to wait patiently was all he could do. And at last patience seemed on the point of being rewarded. The mist thinned and lifted a little, and broke on the left and shifted on the right. But it soon settled down again, with this result—that the copse and the rider were as closely veiled as ever, while the causeway itself was covered in the direction of the way home. Not only was Ralph out of sight, but Phil's own retreat was cut off for the time. Yet, all the while, his own part of the causeway, and its continuation through the marshes, were left clear. As he looked out towards the invisible osiers, there was dense fog in front, dense fog to the right along the road, and a gathering film behind. But overhead and to the left the air was nothing more than a little damp and dull.

It is a good thing, however, to be on horseback now and then, if only for the sake of having somebody to think of besides oneself, and besides what one loves better than oneself; which last is double selfishness if it keeps out the rest of the world. One cannot forget a horse to the same extent as one can forget one's fellow-creatures. Phil was beginning to feel himself growing damp and cold, so he kept moving in order to prevent Sir Charles Bassett's horse from getting colder. He became conscious at last of a curious but not wholly unwelcome sensation of being in his life, as well as for the moment, cut off from the whole world, and alone. Absolute loneliness had not upon him its lately developed effect upon Doyle, because he had never known the contrary—he certainly did not miss Ronaine. Phœbe was lost—must be lost. He might, if he ever saw her again, put formal questions to

Miss Doyle, but he knew beforehand what the answer would be; that a rich girl, just home from India, had never heard the name of Nelson or been aware of a double. And since Phoebe was lost, what then? There lay the Holms: the land and the work nearest his hand. Every vain bewilderment about Phoebe was henceforth treason to the Holms. "There lie my best," thought he, looking out straight at the dead, blank, wet grey wall. "And if it can't be my all, I'll make it all I can."

All at once while, in the course of mounted-sentry to and fro, he rode towards the mist upon the causeway, he heard footsteps approaching. Hope suggested the escape and return out from the fog of Ralph Bassett, helped either by lucky accident or judicious skill. But had it been Ralph, whether mounted or on foot, he would have heard the steps of Ralph's horse, and he heard none. Next best to Ralph, however, would be a native who knew the Holms and who might be of service as a guide. Instead of calling out, therefore, he rode straight on, and met the owner of the approaching footsteps just where the air began to clear.

It was the form of a phantom giant which seemed, at first, to separate itself from the broken edge of the mist and to glide towards him. But this optical illusion soon resolved itself into a wet, muddy figure, limp and weary looking, with a hurried and anxious gait as if it had been utterly lost in the fog and had been wandering about in some devil's circle for hours. Then it became clearer still. And then the brain of Philip Nelson seemed consciously to reel, as he saw, straight in front of him, and yet still as if some phantom of the marsh mist, a face that had haunted his fevered dreams on the steppes of Russia—a thin sallow face, with dark, deep eyes, set in a frame of long black hair. But his brain did not reel for long.

"If there are two Phoebe Burdens, there are not two Staniaslas Adrianskies—thank Heaven for so much!" he exclaimed in spirit, as he felt the mist half clearing, and rode forward in the spirit of a dog upon a wolf.

A "NOTICE B" MEETING.

THE School Board for London is frequently spoken of as the Educational Parliament, and such a description of it is very good, as far as it goes. But it goes rather less than half-way. The board is a

legislative body, but it is still more an administrative one. The administrative duties which fall to the lot of a member of the board are many and varied, but perhaps the most onerous and certainly the most sorrowful of them is that of hearing and adjudicating upon "the statements of parents under Notice B." The School Board notices so lettered are served upon parents, who, in despite of previous "warnings," have continued to habitually neglect to cause their children to attend school regularly and punctually. Such parents already stand within the law, but this notice is intended to give them "another chance," if they choose to avail themselves of it. By the terms of the notice they are "invited" to attend at a given time and place "to state any excuse they may have, and to show cause why they should not be summoned before a magistrate and fined." The total number of these notices served is, in round numbers, seventy-five thousand a year, and fifteen hundred meetings a year are held, for hearing cases under them. The general rule of the board is to hold one such meeting per week in each of the various sub-districts of the eleven divisions into which, for School Board purposes, London is mapped out; and arrangements are made for hearing at them, not only those who are called upon to show cause against being summoned, but also those who wish to apply for remission of school fees, or the granting of half-time certificates. These Notice B Meetings, as they are technically called, incidentally throw a considerable degree of light upon how the other half of the world—the half dwelling upon poverty's side of the social gulf—live, or to use a phrase familiar to themselves, do not live, but linger.

In their essential features all Notice B Meetings are alike, and we will take as our illustration one recently held in a fair average School Board district. It is as a whole a working-class district; one in which there are a good many well-to-do artisans, as well as a great number of unskilled labourers, regular and "cas'alty." These, with their families, make up the bulk of the inhabitants, but within the district are also to be found a small but strictly exclusive Irish colony, a similar colony of street folk—costers, chair-caners, tinkers, and the like—and a warm little corner which the "no visible means of support" and "well known to the police" classes, have marked as their own.

The meetings for this district are held at offices attached to one of the board schools. An inner office serves as committee-room, an outer one as waiting-room. In the former are assembled the member who is to hear the cases, the clerk to the divisional committee, and the three visitors concerned in the cases to come on. Before the members are the "hearing" books of the visitors, wherein the official particulars of the cases are duly entered up; a pile of forms of birth, and medical certificates, and a packet of the Charity Organisation Society's tickets. The clerk has in hand the "record of proceedings" sheets, while the visitors are armed with their note-books.

Five minutes before the time of attendance named in the notices, everybody and everything in the committee-room is ready for work, and of course an air of official decorum reigns over all. But in the waiting-room the scene is much more animated, and, after a fashion, picturesque. There are ninety cases on the books. In the event sixty-five of the invited put in an appearance, and already about twenty of them are assembled, and others are dropping in. They are about as motley a gathering as could well be got together.

They include representatives of almost every type of men and women "who live or die by labour." Where there is a male parent concerned in the case, he is the person legally responsible, but in the great majority of cases the mothers appear to the notices, while in some instances children are sent. Four men and two girls of about twelve years of age are now here to make answer; in all the other cases women have come. Several have infants in their arms, and others have brought with them, to be "talked to," the children for whose misdeeds in the way of truanting they are called to account. Two or three of the women are well-dressed, and in being so stand out distinctly from the others, from whose companionship they are rather inclined to shrink. Those others belong to the poorest classes, and even a stranger would be able to see at a glance that the thriftless and reckless types of poverty are as fully and variously represented as are the struggling and self-respecting types. In the picture as a whole the dirt tints predominate, and occasionally extend to faces as well as draperies, while the reek of humanity which begins to arise as the room fills up is appreciably tempered by spirituous odours. With few exceptions the women

are of the working classes in a double sense: are not only the wives or widows of working men, but themselves hired workers for daily bread. A majority, as their hands and arms testify, are charwomen or washerwomen. In one corner, buttonholing collars, as she waits, is a sempstress. She figures on the official record as a "deserted woman." Her husband deserted her three years ago, leaving her with two children to support. She was not strong enough to engage in any heavy labour, and not sufficiently skilled to take to the better paid classes of needlework. She had therefore perforce to resort to plain needlework for a living — to slop shirt-making, and cuff and collar buttonholing. By working for sixteen hours a day she can earn seven shillings a week. That with a weekly allowance from the parish of two shillings and two loaves, is at the best of times all that she has wherewith to provide food, clothing, and shelter for herself and family. But work is often slack, and in very dull times she has only her parish pay. Thus her average income is very small, and her average life proportionally hard. Employers in the buttonholing trade are strict taskmasters. Their hands must daily deliver a full tale of work, otherwise there will be stoppages from their scant pay, or, it may be, dismissal. Therefore it is that this sempstress is busily plying her needle here, and it needs no expert to see that she is sewing at once with a double thread a shroud as well as a shirt.

Sitting by the fire in a crouching attitude is another woman, who more literally than even the poor buttonholer is "killing herself to live." She works in a white-lead factory, and suffers from chronic lead-poisoning, which she is quite well aware will "finish her." She has worked at the business "off and on" for years, and for a labouring woman earns fairly good pay, but the action of the poison is sure, and with her has reached a stage when it will no longer be so slow as it has been.

Near her are two stalwart Irishwomen chattering together with wonderful rapidity of utterance and richness of brogue. They are market-garden women, daughters of the soil, and with, as the old joke has it, a good deal of their mother about their clothing, and more especially upon the heavy "lace-ups" which serve them as foot gear.

Next to these two is seated Mrs. "Joe" D——, wife and working partner of a fish-hawker. Probably she has none other

than "working" clothes; at any rate it is in her working garments that she has come, and they give off an ancient and fish-like smell of a very pronounced character. It is perhaps from a consciousness of this latter fact, and with a view to qualifying the smell, that Mrs. Joe has been indulging in spirituous refreshment. She breathes forth an unmistakable, if neither rich nor rare, aroma of whisky. If really intended to have a deodorising effect in relation to the fish smell, the spirit is a failure; its only practical effect has been to make Mrs. Joe look and talk like a very foolish fishwife indeed.

Of the men who are among the earlier arrivals in the waiting-room, one, it is painfully evident, is in an advanced stage of consumption. He is a son of toil, but no longer a horny-handed one. His hands are white and thin almost to transparency, and so, too, is his face, except when it is flushed from the effects of the "church-yard" cough with which every now and again he is seized.

Beside him, standing up with his back against the wall and his hands thrust deeply into his pockets, is Mr. "Curly" F——, a well-known corner-man in the district. His countenance is far from prepossessing, but he is tall and large of limb, and would be muscular but that drinking habits and a life of idleness have made him flabby. Even as he is, however, he looks the sort of man that a ganger of labourers would readily give work to. But "Curly" does not believe in work—for himself, that is. He chooses to give himself brevet rank as a labourer, but as a matter of fact he is wholly and solely a loafer. His wife, a very hard-working washerwoman, maintains such home as he and she and their children have. "Curly" spends his time in cornering about, and only exerts himself to the end of obtaining drink "on the cheap." In a relative way, he is passing honest. He has frequently been suspected of having had a hand in "sneaking" goods from shop doors, but the only offences for which he has been actually convicted and "done time" are those of drunkenness and violence—generally combined. He has ill-treated persons who have objected to treat him, or who have protested against his treating himself at their expense by seizing and drinking the liquors they had ordered for their own consumption. For the heinous offence of not drinking fair he has severely assaulted fellow corner-men. On several occasions he has smashed the windows of public-

houses, the landlords of which have refused to serve him, and more than once he has gone a considerable way towards fulfilling his threat to "corpse" a policeman. For these offences he has served sentences of from seven days to three months' imprisonment. And he is lucky at that, say his friends, as he would certainly have had to do more than one "six-monther," could his wife have been persuaded to have appeared against him for his brutalities to her.

Over his other deeds of violence "Curly" is wont to be boastful, but over his wife-beating performances he has the grace to be apologetic.

"It is only," he explains, "when he has 'got the distiller proper'"—which is his euphemism for being mad drunk with spirits—"that he 'slogs' the old girl; but then," he admits, "he does 'slog her to rights.'"

Though he will not work himself, he is strict in seeing that his wife works. To have attended this meeting she would have had to lose half-a-day's employment, and it is to obviate this sacrifice that "Curly" himself has condescended to put in an appearance.

The individuals mentioned above are fair examples of the assembly, and there is no time now to describe others. The business of the meeting is "just about to commence."

First come, first served, is the order of the day, and the earliest arrival is a tidily-dressed comfortable-looking woman, who drags in a boy of about ten years of age—a healthy, thoughtless, mischievous-looking customer, whose portrait would require very little idealising to serve as an illustration to the text, "Unwillingly to school."

"How is it, Mrs. Blank, that your boy attends school so irregularly?" asks the member, as soon as that lady is seated opposite to him.

"It isn't our fault," she answers. "We do all we can to get him to go regular; but it is all no use; he will play truant."

"Do you hear what your mother says, boy?" asks the member, assuming his severest tone.

Johnny makes no verbal reply, but proceeds to "knuckle" his eyes, with a view to, if possible, squeeze out a tear.

"Is what your mother says true?" is the next question, put in the same tone.

And this time Johnny, still continuing to knuckle, faintly answers:

"Yes."

"Then don't you think you are acting very ungratefully to your parents? I can see you are well cared for, and yet you cause your mother to be brought here and are likely to bring disgrace upon your father by getting him summoned to a police-court."

Johnny making no answer, the member proceeds:

"How would you like to be sent away from home for five years, to be sent to a school where you would be kept in night as well as day, and birched whenever you misbehaved yourself?"

At this point the attempt to get out a tear having proved a failure, Master Johnny sets up a dismal yell.

"It is all very well to howl now that you have brought yourself into trouble," the member goes on; "you should have thought of this before."

Then, turning to the clerk, he adds in a stage-whisper:

"I think we had better make the order to send him away at once."

Hearing this, Johnny redoubles his howling, and energetically draws the sleeve of his jacket across his face, where the tears might have been, but are not. Professing to be softened by these evidences of remorse and terror, the member, after a pause, asks:

"Well, if we let you off this time, will you promise to give up truant-playing?"

"Yes, sir," answers Johnny fervently.

"Very well then, I'll take your word, but remember, if you break it, you will be sent away immediately — you can go now."

Johnny needs no second permission, and is out of doors before his mother is on her feet.

"Mind, Mrs. Blank," the member adds, as she is about to follow her son, "though I have said this to your boy, it is still the father who is responsible. You had better see Johnny into school yourself for a time," and Mrs. Blank promises that she will do so.

On the second case being called, a girl of about twelve years of age comes in. She brings a note from her mother, which runs in a sort of phonetic spelling, and without capitals or stops:

"gentlemen please excuse me not coming to your meeting i enjoy very bad health with tonsils in the throat and boots not fit to go out in if you will look over it she shall go regular."

"Very well, my girl," says the member

when he has mastered the contents of this document, "tell your mother we will look over it this time, but if she does not send you regularly in future, your father will be summoned."

The third person called is the sempstress. Hers is an "application" case. She wishes to apply for a half-time certificate for her elder child, a daughter who has just turned ten years of age—the earliest age at which it is by law permitted to School Boards to grant such certificates. In cases of this class the applicant is called upon to show that the child will be "necessarily and beneficially employed." In the present instance the circumstances of the parent are known, and the necessity is taken for granted. With respect to the beneficial character of the employment proposed, the mother states that she can get the girl a "morning" place as domestic help to the wife of a small shopkeeper, who will pay her a shilling a week and give her all her food. She knows the woman, and is sure she will be kind to the girl, and give her good food and plenty of it. The last consideration, she adds, will certainly be beneficial to the child, seeing that she is a growing girl, and has very often to go short of food at home. The member fully agrees with this view, and the certificate is unhesitatingly granted.

The succeeding case is also an application one, but this time the application is for remission of school fees. There are three children concerned, and the fee at the school they attend is a penny a week per child. The mother appears, and addressing her the member remarks:

"Really, the sum is small; if we cancel the month you are now in arrears, couldn't you manage to pay regularly in future?"

"No, sir," the woman answers with a decisive shake of the head; "we paid as long as ever we could, till it became a question between the school pennies and a bit of bread."

"Your husband," the dialogue goes on, "has been out of work a good deal, I see."

"Yes, he has only worked one week in the last three months."

"How is that?"

"Well, he was out of work six weeks through slackness of trade, and the first week he got into work again he poisoned his hand, and has been off ever since."

"How have you been supporting yourselves then?"

"By our home and clothes. We have parted with everything that money could

be raised upon. You can see for yourself," and she places a bundle of pawn-tickets upon the table, and then covering her face with her hands, sobs aloud.

Her statement is true; a once comfortable little home has, so to speak, been boiled down into this packet of pawn-broker's duplicates, and the position of the family is, as the member at this point remarks, a sad, a very sad one.

"How are you managing now?" he goes on when the woman has recovered herself a little.

"Well, friends and neighbours have been very kind to us. A few of my husband's old shopmates made up a pound for him, and at times, when we haven't had even a bit of bread to break our fast with, those but little better off than ourselves have shared their loaf with us."

"And about your rent?"

"Well, the landlord he's been very good to us too. We've lived under him eight years, so that he knows us, and he's told us we need not be afraid of him; in fact, one or two Mondays when he's been collecting at the other houses, he has left us a trifle."

The member is now fully satisfied that the case is a deserving one, and accordingly announces his decision.

"I will recommend the board to remit your children's fees for six months," he says; "though of course I hope," he adds, "that your husband will be at work again long before that time."

"I am very much obliged to you for your kindness," the woman answers; "but at the same time, sir, I don't see how I am to send the children to school yet awhile. They have no boots, and scarcely any other clothing, they are not fit to be seen out of doors, and besides would catch their deaths of cold. I've borrowed clothes to come here in to-day, but you can't manage in that way for children to go to school, week after week."

"All that I can do in that matter," observes the member, "is to give you a ticket to the Charity Organisation Society. If your case will bear investigation—as it seems to me it will—they will probably give you some assistance; I am sure I hope they will."

The ticket is signed and handed to her, and gathering up her pawn-tickets, she passes out.

When she is beyond earshot, the member, turning to the visitor having charge of the case, instructs him to keep him posted in

the case, and this bodes well for the poor family, seeing that this member is one who liberally does alms in secret in connection with his present function.

The next case is an application for a half-time certificate for a boy of twelve years of age. The mother who comes to support the application has evidently been "priming" herself for the occasion. It is palpable alike to eye and nostril that she is under the influence of "the gin fiend." She has been before the committee before, and now enters the room with a confident air. There is—after a fashion—pride in her port, defiance in her eye. She seats herself unbidden, and without waiting to be questioned exclaims:

"I want half-time for my boy!"

The member glances at the record, and then briefly and decisively answers:

"I can't grant it."

"Oh yes you can," is the instant retort. "I wasn't born yesterday; this is the shop where you do grant 'em. I know plenty as has had 'em from here, and for younger boys than mine too."

"That may be, but your boy has not passed the necessary standard."

"Whose fault is that?"

"Yours chiefly, I should suppose," promptly answers the member, "seeing that your son has always been irregular in his attendance at school. But that is not the point just now; I have no power to allow your boy half-time, and that ends the present matter. In fact, the visitor ought to have told you that it would only be a waste of time for you to come here."

"I did tell her so," the visitor puts in.

"Oh yes, he told me fast enough not to come," she admits; "and I told him as fast that I would come, and that if he thought I was the sort to be stalled off by an under-strapper, he had got the wrong pig by the ear. Who is he to order me about, I should like to know? I soon settled him; I told him straight that I would talk to his masters, and give 'em a piece of my mind, as I'm a-doing of."

"We have heard quite enough of your mind," the member breaks in at this point of her harangue, "and to be plain with you, madam, we have seen quite enough of your condition. You have heard my decision, and now you had better go."

"You don't mean to let me have the half-time, then?" she asks, rising in wrath, and bringing her fist down upon the table with a bang.

"Certainly not; now leave the room."

"Ah, it's all very well for you!" she exclaims, "your bread is buttered, but perhaps it won't always be."

At this juncture the visitor in charge of the door through which the disposed of cases pass out, "catches the eye" of the member, and cuts short the further flow of invective with an emphatic cry of:

"This way out, please; this way out, Mrs. G——."

"Your bread——" she is beginning again, when the visitor steps between her and the table, and by advancing himself edges her towards the door, which closes upon her undignified exit.

It is now the turn of the consumptive labourer to appear. He is called upon to answer for the total absence from school for several weeks of his son, a boy of ten years of age. His plea is that the boy is beyond control, and the visitor in charge of the case reports that in his opinion the plea is substantially true.

"If what I read here is correct, Mr. S——," says the member, looking up from the record, "I am afraid we shall have to send your son away."

"Well, I'm sorry and ashamed to say it, sir," is the answer, "but for his own sake I think that is the best thing that could happen to him. If you don't send him away to a school, it is pretty certain he will get himself sent away to a prison. He is going to the bad in other things beside playing truant. He has stole money from his poor mother, and made away with things she had took in to wash. It is often eleven o'clock at night before he comes indoors, and he has stopped out all night. I used to lug him to school myself as long as I was able, but I'm not strong enough for him now, and he knows it."

"Our information," the member observes in reply, "bears out what you say. Your son would appear to be a fit subject for an industrial school. I will refer his case to the proper quarter, and a school will probably be found for him in the course of a week or two. Meanwhile do your utmost to keep him from getting into trouble."

So sentence of banishment goes forth against the young scapegrace, and the father departs lighter of heart than he came, for the boy has been a great trouble and sorrow to him.

In the case which follows the mother comes prepared to "show cause" in very practical fashion. The last addition to her family has been a twofold one, and she has brought the twins with her, one in her own

arms, the other carried by a nine-years-old daughter, in respect to whose irregularities of school attendance she is called to account.

She is asked the formal question:

"Why is your child away from school so much?"

And replies, holding up the one baby and smilingly nodding towards the other as she speaks:

"Well, I should think, sir, you could pretty well see for yourself. These twins are four months old; I have another child under two years of age, and Maggie here is the oldest of six. Except for what help she can give me there is only my own pair of hands to do everything for eight of us."

"Your husband is a carpenter, I see," remarks the member, who has been looking at his papers; "what wages does he earn?"

"Six shillings a day, sir."

"Can't you engage some little assistance?"

"No, sir, I can't; of course I know there are those with less money have as large families, but, I assure you, against we have paid the rent, and my husband's clubs and the like, we have not a penny too much left to find food and clothing. I can't pay for help, and, of course, I can't leave the babies uncared for; I must have some help from Maggie."

"Yes, some help," says the member meditatively, "some help, but you are keeping her away from school fully half-time, and I can't allow that to go on. If your girl were over ten years of age I would be disposed to allow her half-time till your babies are a little older, but at present I have not the power to do so. You must manage with one day's absence per week."

"Oh, you must make it a day and a half," urges the mother; "I must have her all washing-day, and half a day for Friday's cleaning."

"Very well, then," assents the member; "under the circumstances I'll allow three half days per week," and so the case is settled.

It is now the turn of Curly F——, and he slouches into the room and seats himself with the air of one familiar with the scene, as, in fact, he is. He has been under notice quite a score of times, and summoned half-a-dozen. He and some of his children are among the hard bargains of the board. His two boys, aged respectively eleven and nine years, are—perhaps from hereditary transmission—of "Arab"

proclivities, and when not absent from school through parental neglect, do a good deal of truant-playing upon their own account. They have already been "carpeted," not only by the board members, but before the police-court magistrate also, though with but little effect. They are in all probability destined to be sent to an industrial school, if in the meantime they happily escape being consigned to some worse place. Their sister, a girl of twelve, is kept from school to drudge at home, and it is with respect to her that the father makes his present appearance.

"Here you are again then, Mr. F——," is the member's greeting, as Curly, having placed his cap under his chair, and squared his elbows on the table, scowls at him, though without looking him straight in the face.

"That ain't my fault," he growls; "it's you wot wanted me here, not me as wanted to come—wot's it all about this time?"

"About your daughter Mary having attended school only seven half days in the last six weeks."

"Polly's a good little girl."

"Just so," the member agrees. "I am informed that she is a very good little girl, and that is in itself a reason why you should not deprive her of education."

"She's got as much eddication now as ever she'll have any use for," growls the father, "but that ain't where the pinch comes in. If we're to be forced to send her to school, who's to mind the baby while her mother goes out to work?"

"If her mother was a widow, or her father an invalid, I would go into that question," answers the member. "To you I have only to say you must make such arrangements as will allow of Mary going to school regularly. If you do not, you will be summoned again."

"All right," Curly retorts; "if I am summoned I must stand the racket of it, as I have done before, that's all. You've got the game all your own way here, don't yer know, but I'll have a bit of an innings later on; wait till the 'lections come round, and see if me and my mates ain't on the job at your meetings."

This is the corner-man's parting shot. Without waiting for any formal dismissal he rises, and, throwing his cap on to his head and thrusting his hands into his pockets, again lurches out of the room.

After all, however, Curly is wise in his generation—wise with the wisdom of experience. He knows that by appearing to Notice B. he has at any rate gained time.

At these meetings it rarely occurs that a summons is ordered immediately. The meetings are avowedly instituted as a means of giving parents a last opportunity of avoiding being summoned. Even in such cases as that of Curly's the order is usually "regular or summons," and it is only after there has been further habitual irregularity of attendance upon the part of the child concerned that a summons is issued against the parent.

During the hearing of the above cases other parents have been arriving, and the cry is still they come. The member is in for a four hours' sitting, but, of course, we cannot go through all the cases with him. Those we have seen are, however, fairly typical of those to come, and will sufficiently illustrate the character and importance of this phase of the work which devolves upon members of the School Board for London.

A LITTLE LINK.

SHE sleeps—the welcome wint'ry sun
Is shining on her little face,
The firelight glints upon her hair,
My precious blossom! oh, how fair,
How very fair she is!

And soft she sleeps, my little one,
As sadly to and fro I pace,
And dream anew of olden bliss.

The flowers I plucked for her delight
Have fallen from the tiny hand;
The painted toy that charmed her eyes
With quaint design and action, lies

Beside the pictured book;
Strange thoughts arise, oh! blossom bright,
That vex and thrill me as I stand
Anear, and on thy features look.

Thy mother's face, thy mother's smile,
Thy mother's ringlets flowing free,
Her tinted cheek, her forehead white,
Her eyes, brown wells of liquid light,

Yea, all her charms are thine;
Thy mother kissed thy lips erewhile,
Before she sent thee forth to me,
And to that kiss I added mine.

And when this evening's shadows fall,
And thou art by her side again,
Will she, too, seek, as I have sought
The kiss the childish lips have brought

Our parted lips to bless?
Will she too fondly question all
I said and did, and seek to gain
A glimpse of our lost happiness?

Ah dear my wife! ah sweet my wife!
Too lightly won, too lightly lost;
Might riper age repair with tears
The havoc made in earlier years.

Should we weep, thou and I?
Should we clasp hands, and end the strife
That all our youthful years hath crossed,
And fare together till we die?

If we two stood upon the brink
Of that wide gulf that yawns between
Thy life and mine this many a day,
And one should to the other say,

"I erred the first—and most,"
Should we stretch out glad hands and link
Our lives, and let the dark "has been"
Float from us like a grim grey ghost?

'Tis hard to say, for pride is strong,
And either blamed the other's heat ;
But as I look upon the face
Of my one child, and in it trace

The looks of one away,
My heart cries out against the wrong
That bars us both from union sweet.
"And whose the blame?" I sadly say.

I was to blame, for I was hard ;
She was to blame, for she was proud ;
And so the pride and hardness built
A wall between us, high as guilt ;

And yet no guilt was there.
But when my heart grew soft, she barred
The gate on love. I cried aloud ;
But she was deaf unto my prayer.

And so we drifted far apart,
While friends came in to heal the breach.
Poor fools ! to think that they could touch
With balm the hearts that ached too much,
Too wildly, for despair.

But pride put gauds above the smart,
And we were gay and light of speech,
And jeered at love and mocked at care.

But still the child, the little child,
Goes at the stated seasons forth
From her to me, from me to her,
And keeps keen thrilling thoughts astir,
Awaking old regret.

Thought springs to-night unfettered, wild,
Oh, wife ! what is life's living worth
If thou and I are parted yet ?

Lo ! I will break the bonds that hold
My life and thine in separate ways,
And standing by thee face to face
Beseech thee fill thine empty place,
And bless my lonely soul

With love like that fair love of old,
That gladdened all our morning days,
But stronger grown, and calm, and whole.

I will not grudge to own me wrong—
Great Heaven ! what slender form is here ?
What loving eyes look into mine ?

What hands in mine own hands entwine ?
My wife, my wife, at last !

Wake up, white blossom, sleep not long,
Awake to bless thy mother dear ;
Our days of dark are gone and past.

My bird, thou hast flown home to me,
Thrice welcome to thine early nest !
Nay, not a word between us twain
Of all the empty years of pain

For evermore be said.
It is enough for me and thee
That thou art here upon my breast,
That all our foolish past is dead.

"OPEN SESAME."

CHAPTER X. THE CONTRACT.

MARIE had known all the time that it would be so—that M. Delisle would set everything right. But why did he speak to her in such cold measured terms as he told her of her father's death, of his own desire to fulfil the last wishes of his friend, and provide for her welfare ?

Marie's grief for her father, though sincere, could hardly be very poignant. It was the loss of a memory only, of a sentiment, accompanied by indefinite yearnings, vague regrets. But her daily life went on

in the same way, and she was able to think a good deal about M. Delisle. And how strange it was, though now in perfect safety, he seemed to be in a greater hurry to get out of Canville than on his last visit, when in momentary danger of arrest. And yet he had been very kind to her. She was to look upon him as her guardian, and was to write to him whenever she wanted anything. She was dissatisfied with all this, and yet, what more could he have done ? Anyhow, his visit had made all things pleasanter. Everybody made much of Marie now, as if to make up for former neglect. Charles was coming home in a few days on purpose to pay his court to her, and yet the prospect did not give her any pleasure. And even her uncle, who had before ardently wished for the match, and worked for it, had ceased to speak of Charles. But then Brunet had changed a good deal since his imprisonment—had become morose and captious. He had gone back to the bank because he had no other resource ; but he no longer took any pleasure in his work.

As for M. Lalonde, he was anxious now that the marriage between his son and Marie should be arranged at once. What with the portion promised by Delisle, and Madame Souchet's gifts, to say nothing of the impounded ten thousand francs, Made-moiselle Desmoulins would be quite a prize. With her money could be bought the practice of M. Rochet, the notary, who was getting old and threatening every day to retire, and then Charles would be drawn away from those evil companions who led him into extravagance. But Charles was now recalcitrant, putting off coming home on one pretext or another, till his father's patience was quite worn out. And M. Delisle had written to ask whether everything had been settled. The portion he had promised was awaiting the completion of the contract. For himself, he was going abroad for an indefinite period, and wanted everything arranged before he left. To Brunet, who had questioned him as to the disposal of the ten thousand francs, of which he declared he would not be again the custodian, Delisle recommended that the money should be transferred to Madame Desmoulins and her daughter. Certain formalities were required before M. Huron would be justified in handing over the specie, and it was thought that the worthy quartermaster encouraged these delays in the desperate hope that he might be able in the end to pur-

chase the silver money on his own account. For, as he said with a desolate air, if once the money got into circulation he would be undone, his coin would no longer be unique.

In spite of Charles's absence, preparations for the wedding went on. After all, there was no need for Charles to present himself till the eve of his marriage, when the contract was to be signed.

But while Madame Souchet's elaborate preparations were in progress, the bride-elect, who ought to have been in her glory among it all, suddenly broke down and took to her bed.

It was Uncle Lucien who came to see her most frequently and whose company she relished most in her illness. He was quiet and sympathetic, said little, but seemed to share in the melancholy that oppressed his niece.

"I think when you are married, Marie," he said one day, "I shall try for some post a good way off, where people won't know me or talk about me."

"Uncle," cried Marie in distress, "you will not leave me? Why, uncle, if it had not been for the thought of you, and the notion that perhaps I could make life easier for you——"

"My child!" cried Brunet, aghast, "what have I done? Is it not your heart's desire, my dear?"

Marie shook her head decisively.

"No, uncle; I have never cared much for Charles. Not since—let me see," a faint flush of colour coming into her pale cheeks—"not since the night of the fête."

Brunet started, and his hat came down to the floor with a crash.

"What, you felt that?" he cried. "Marvellous is the instinct of the pure feminine heart! Marie, you have thrown a flash of light into my mind."

Poor Marie was too much frightened to ask what it all meant. Her heart beat in violent palpitation, as her uncle snatched up his hat and hurried out of the room.

He did not lose a moment, but strode hastily to the bank. He was afraid to lose a moment, lest courage should fail him, or rather lest the powerful impulse of the moment should be lost.

The banker sat at his desk, signing his letters. Each one, as he finished it, he dusted with glittering pounce from a saucer by his side. He sent a keen glance at Brunet under his eyebrows, but went on with his occupation.

"M. Lalonde," said Brunet, standing

over him, fire glittering in his eyes, "I have found out the thief!"

"Eh?" cried the banker, making a smudge of one of his flourishes and looking up with uneasy glance. "What thief?"

"The thief who stole your money. It was your own son!"

M. Lalonde did not say a word at first, but went on signing with a shaking hand, not able to raise his eyes to encounter the flashing glance of his clerk.

"And you let me suffer for his guilt!"

Lalonde felt the pulse in his brain beating as if it would break its way through, but he contrived to say huskily:

"How do you know? How do I know?"

"M. Lalonde," said Brunet calmly, "on the evening of the fête your son confided to me that he had drawn upon you a bill for ten thousand francs. To save the boy—for I loved him, M. Lalonde, and longed that he should be the husband of my niece—I promised to take up the bill with the money you know of. Next morning he did not want the money. The affair of the bill was a joke. You know very well whether or not it was a joke."

Lalonde had not a word to say; he was stupefied; touched also, it seemed, with some remorse. He even rubbed a corner of his eye with the back of his hand.

"You see what fathers have to suffer," he said at last in a tremulous voice. "Grand Dieu! I believe you are right, Brunet. But what can be done? How can I get it back from him? The boy has not got a sou—not till he is married."

"He shall never marry my niece," cried Brunet firmly.

And from this nothing could move him.

The banker begged, implored, would have gone down on his knees to his clerk or grovelled on the floor if only he would have consented to let the marriage go on. But Brunet was inexorable. He packed up his alpaca coat, made a little parcel of all his belongings—he would not serve Lalonde another hour.

That night letters went out to all the expected guests announcing the postponement of the wedding.

Madame Souchet was nothing loth, for she had never really liked the match, and now she began once more to fondle the idea of marrying Marie to M. Cavalier. The uncle had already shown signs of repentance. After all, her preparations might not have been made in vain. The contract even would serve with the names of the parties to it changed.

It has been said that all the invited guests had been warned of the postponement of the wedding. But this is incorrect. By some oversight, M. Delisle had not been informed, and on the day appointed for the signing of the contract, he, as in duty bound, made his appearance. Brunet was the first to see him, and was shocked at the carelessness that had caused the omission. But, strange to say, Delisle himself seemed absolutely pleased at being brought down on this fruitless errand. But he listened with a clouded brow as Lucien explained that circumstances had occurred to throw a doubt on the character of M. Charles Lalonde.

"But la petite," cried Delisle impatiently; "how does she bear it?"

"Well, strange to say," said Lucien with a deprecating shrug; "she is wonderfully better since. She was prepared to obey the wishes of her friends, and especially yours, monsieur. Yes, from the moment the poor child knew that it was your wish, she submitted with the most charming resignation."

"But resignation!" cried Delisle; "I thought she had set her heart upon him."

"Well, and so did I," replied Brunet; "but she confessed to me the other day, that from the night of the fête she had ceased to care for him. And I half guess the cause," added Brunet mysteriously.

"Ah, you guess it!" cried Delisle, pressing Lucien's arm warmly; "well, if your surmise is correct, I shall be the happiest of men."

Madame Souchet herself was struck dumb with surprise when she saw Delisle walk into her salon, and recalled that he had not been informed of the postponement.

"Ah, my child," cried Delisle, making his way to where Marie had advanced to greet him; "I came here to give you away, and now I find I am to keep you. Is it to be so, petite?"

"Oh, monsieur!" cried Marie, not venturing to understand him; "I give you a great deal of trouble, but it is not my fault, monsieur. I would have obeyed your wishes."

"Ah yes," echoed Madame Souchet; "I hope I have brought her up sufficiently well for that. She is not likely to take up with notions about women's rights. And on my part I have not been wanting in my duty. Already I have secured another match for Marie, that poor young Cavalier who was almost heartbroken when his affair was broken off. And I hope I may reckon upon your approval, monsieur."

"Thunder of war, no, madame!" roared Delisle in a voice that made poor Marie quail.

"But, monsieur," cried Madame Souchet with wonderful command of temper; "the poor girl must marry."

"Madame Souchet," said Delisle angrily, "don't you see that you intimidate Marie! And she is to have her own way in everything, do you hear? But she can't speak her mind fully while you are listening."

"Well, I'll go to the other end of the room then," said Madame Souchet good-humouredly.

"Marie," cried Delisle, as soon as Madame Souchet was out of earshot, taking hold of both her hands and looking into her face, "I want you to follow exactly the promptings of your heart."

"Monsieur, I will do just what you wish," said Marie in a trembling voice; her heart was fluttering too much to permit her to speak steadily.

"Come then," said Delisle impatiently; "will you marry this Cavalier?"

"Yes, monsieur," whispered Marie faintly.

"You will!" cried Delisle in anger; "you will marry that fellow?"

"If you wish it, monsieur, but——"

"Well," asked Delisle, bending his head to the level of her lips; "you will, but——"

"But I think it would break my heart, monsieur."

"That is right," cried Delisle in triumph. "Marie, I will give you to nobody—to nobody, do you hear? I will keep you myself. You will be my wife, will you not, and follow me to the end of the world?"

"Yes, monsieur, if you wish it," replied Marie meekly.

"If I wish it," cried Delisle. "Can you say nothing better than that to me?"

It is to be presumed, however, that Marie found something better to say after a while, for Delisle left Madame Souchet's radiant with joy. He found out Brunet, and dragged him away to Madame Desmoulins.

"You were right," he cried as they went along; "it was the night of the fête that Marie began to love me. But how could you guess it?"

"Mon Dieu!" cried Brunet in amazement, "but I never guessed it at all."

But when Madame Desmoulins heard what brought Delisle to her, she turned paler than ever, and shook her head dolefully.

"Ah, I had a presentiment," she murmured. "From the first I would have kept you apart, but it was willed to be."

Still she would not refuse her consent. But it was with many misgivings that she gave it.

Her brother could not understand her coldness and reluctance.

"He is too much like my husband, Lucien," she replied to his remonstrances, "too warm a heart, too generous a spirit. One day he will give away Marie's future just as my Ernest gave away mine."

M. Huron managed to secure Delisle and Brunet on their way back to the post-office. It was about the affair of the money, the ten thousand francs. He had now received the order to return the sum to Lucien Brunet. Lucien swore that he would have nothing more to do with it; his sister might take charge of it. Huron became thoughtful, and presently took Delisle aside. He had heard the news, of course. It had flown through Canville like the electric spark. He congratulated M. Delisle. But would it annoy him very much to have him, M. Huron, as—well as father-in-law. He had long admired Madame Desmoulins.

"Excellent," exclaimed Delisle. "Huron, you are a brave fellow, and if you can make that poor woman happy, you will earn my everlasting gratitude."

M. Huron modestly thought he could.

"But, monsieur, in that case the dowry of Madame Desmoulins will no doubt be the very ten thousand francs."

"Clearly," replied Delisle. "It is hers, to do what she likes with it."

"Ha! ha!" cried Huron in triumph. "Then I will arrange it, monsieur, that my coin shall be still unique."

As for Père Douze he could not get over his disappointment, nor the triumph of the gendarmerie. He retired from public life into the hospice of the town, and there he is still to be seen on a sunshiny day, patrolling the garden-paths, and looking vigilantly after the ripening pears and apples. He is much liked by the sisters, but of the other old people there he makes small account, and he is very severe with them if he catches them on the grass borders, or infringing any of the bye-laws of the institution. Only when he hears the rataplan he grows uneasy, and vows that he must go and teach that other fellow how to do it.

It was time for the père to retire when the Marshal set him the example, and a Republican maire was appointed to replace

Lalonde, a man who encouraged the town band to play the Marseillaise under his windows. The banker could not get over that either, and presently gave up business and retired to a farm he possessed in his own pays.

It was through Delisle's assistance that Brunet took over the house and office with its belongings, including the massive safe with its mysterious fittings.

And here he carries on a quiet little business as an agent de change, earning enough for his modest wants, and sometimes contriving to send fifty francs or so to poor Charles. For that unhappy youth has come to utter need.

And Madame Souchet is still at the post-office, although she is constantly threatening to resign if they go on adding to her duties in the present ridiculous way. She was a little vexed when young Cavalier married the handsomest girl in the whole district, with an excellent dowry. But she is somewhat consoled when she hears that he has already begun to make her unhappy.

And under the present administration Delisle has been reinstated in his rank in the navy, and has even got a command in distant seas.

But Marie had promised to follow him round the world, and does not seem to repent of her bargain.

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

A STICK.

RECORDING the story of my "Gun-rack," I casually mentioned, in a list of articles which at that moment lay across it, "an almond-stick cut in the Arx at Candahar, and a thorn-stick from the Khoord Khyber." A comrade of the Afghan War pointed out to me last night that I was slightly forgetful of the facts in this description. Major L. reminds me that he cut the almond-stick referred to, with others, in the garden of the kiosk where General Stewart had his quarters, whilst I strolled round keeping watch—for damage to the trees was rigorously prohibited. As he identifies the object, I submit to correction, observing only that I did cut an almond-stick in the Arx, which apparently is lost, and that I never claimed, as it chanced, to have secured this trophy with my own hands.

The pleasant controversy recalled every detail of a scene too long familiar to General Stewart's staff. For my own part, I left it after some weeks' stay, rode

back to India, crossed the Punjab, and joined Sir Sam Browne's force operating on the Khyber line.

During our first halt at Candahar, we lived in camp on the north-east side the town, in position to repel a foe descending from Ghuzni. After the occupation of Khelat-i-Ghilzai, danger from this point was no longer to be feared, and the army sought more comfortable quarters. In spring and early summer, before the stones crack and the earth shrivels with heat, the neighbourhood of Candahar may be pretty. But my recollection of it adds no pleasing picture to the mind's crowded gallery. All round stands the circuit of grey naked rocks; beneath, the grey naked walls of flat-roofed villages, among grey gnarled orchards. For the space of a mile about the city it is all one Golgotha, a field of bones, generation on generation. Thousands of monuments dot the plain, many of them large and costly, but all ruinous. Funeral processions meander through the waste at afternoon and early morning; all through the night, jackals and wild dogs and hyenas clamorously search the new-made graves. Each few yards one must jump a rapid stream, muddy with human clay, embanked with bones.

The general appearance of a cemetery is enhanced by groves of cypress which rise here and there, dark and funereal. But in effect these trees mark villa gardens, inhabited by merchants of the town or officers. Colonel St. John requisitioned one of them for the general and his staff. As we marched in from Khelat-i-Ghilzai, guides should have been waiting to show our new quarters, but they did not appear, and we lost ourselves. An amusing promenade that was for horsemen, who "larked" over the streams and walls, but the infantry of the escort swore in many languages a unanimous anathema.

After several excursions in a wrong direction, and much aimless steeple-chasing, we found our new abode. A solid wall enclosed it, perfectly rectangular, along the top side of which coursed a deep and broad irrigation channel, traversed by a substantial bridge. Entering the narrow gateway at one angle, upon the right, in a space between the outer and an inner circuit, were stables and servants' dwellings, strongly-built, pitch-dark, venomous with filth. By this arrangement, an enemy forcing the single entrance would have all the armed retainers of the household on his flank. Beyond the inner wall ran

another stream, carefully embanked, and lined with sturdy willows; beyond that a broad terrace—the dam, in fact, of this swift brook—and the garden sloped gently from its foundations. Our tents were pitched in a long line across the ground, parallel with the terrace.

The whole space within the walls may have been two to three acres. It was divided by a canal, some twenty feet wide, shallow, paved with flat blocks, banked with masonry. Hewn stepping-stones crossed it here and there. At intervals along the sides opened sluices for irrigation. The upper half of the garden was laid out in squares, ten feet across or so, for vegetables and flowers, each of them surrounded by its water-channel. A number of walks, broad and smooth, intersected the space, each lined with cypress; and the smaller fruit-trees—pomegranates, oranges, and the like—stood everywhere.

In the middle of the garden the canal poured into a large tank, walled with masonry, and provided with steps on every face. Broken structures therein had probably been fountains. From this point the ground was devoted to orchard trees. Beyond the tank the canal still descended, till its waters fell into a stream, almost a little river, at the bottom. Very handsome trees met across it. Beyond ran the garden wall.

Three kiosks, or pavilions, stood in this pleasure-ground, a large one at the top, one right and left midway down either side. Though built of mud, they were not inelegant. The principal of them, occupied by General Stewart, Colonel Hills (now Major-General), D.A.A.G., Major Chapman (now Colonel), D.A.Q.M.G., and the chief aide-de-camp, Norman Stewart, had been decorated in the Persian manner at no small cost. Walls and ceilings of the reception-rooms were coated with stucco ornaments, brilliantly coloured, or were painted with roses as thick as they could lie. One chamber had remains of that curious panelling in fragments of mirror, symmetrically framed, which is seen, more or less, wherever Pathan architecture established itself in Hindostan. I do not know, however, that it is not borrowed from the Persian.

Furniture and carpets possibly had matched this splendour of the walls, but when we arrived, here as elsewhere, the Candahar populace had worked their will. For this dwelling belonged to Mir Afzal, the governor, who had given it as a resi-

dence to two ladies of his family. When he fled, therefore, it was looted.

In the day when those buildings were raised, and those waterworks constructed, some degree of public confidence evidently reigned at Candahar. I know not when that time was. In an epoch less happy, but more readily identified, the walls had crumbled without repair, all the glass had vanished, the fountains had clothed themselves in moss. But the garden had been cared for. At every corner stood such clumps of rose and jasmine as I never saw. The irrigated beds were green with spinach, the walks lined with iris and overhung with cypress, the orchard trees well-trained.

This is a long introduction, but readers may be not uninterested in the sketch of a Pathan villa. Memory recalls one much more magnificent, that of Rosarbad, on the Cabul side, which a great Ghilzai chief had just completed. Details of the scene there dwell among the most charming recollections in my mind, but they are vague; for I stopped but a few hours, going up and returning. Many officers who served in that campaign will remember the graceful mansion I refer to, their first halt, I think, after leaving Jellalabad.

And so to my "tale." We rode into our new quarters with a fine appetite, and the mess-cooks leisurely began their preparations.

Before the meal was ready a small group of natives gathered on the terrace, under sanction of Captain Molloy, our staff-interpreter. They were people of condition, dressed in the Persian style—long coats of pushmina-cloth, edged with narrow gold cord, beautifully embroidered on shoulders and chest; fur caps, wide breeches, and high yellow boots. To them arrived Colonel St. John, political officer, and presently the general appeared, eager for his breakfast. He listened with interest to their petition, and courteously dismissed them.

The chief of these visitors lodged a claim to the house we occupied. Mir Afzul had taken it from him by force. It appeared that the claimant was a partisan of that brother of Shere Ali's, who killed his nephew, the Ameer's favourite son, and was killed by him in action. I forget the names and the place, but those interested in Afghan politics know all the painful story, and for others it does not matter.

When Yacoub Khan took the city, he found there the widow of his uncle

with a baby boy. They were forthwith imprisoned in the Arx, or citadel, and remained there till we set them free. Ever one at mess was touched when Colonel St. John described his interview with the young prince, now twelve or fourteen years old, a captive from infancy. I know not whether he still lives. Terror and solitude had crushed the lad. His limbs, his complexion reminded one of plants grown in the dark. Suddenly brought into the day light world; born, as it were, at an age to see, and in a painful sense to understand the million of strange things around, there was great danger that his intellect would fail.

I am aware of no modern instance like this. The imagination cannot fancy what must have been the feelings of this boy intelligent of nature, when the door he had never passed was opened, and he stepped into the bustling world of Candahar.

The young prince had not been absolutely deprived of a companion. With his uncle's widow and his cousin, Yacoub Khan confined the wife and child of this sirdar, who claimed our quarters. His life was spared on that account, but he lost his property.

General Stewart ordered that the case should be examined, and an arrangement made, if it proved just. This news spread through the city, and forthwith arose a dozen litigants. The original pretender collapsed at once, for he had no better title than Mir Afzul's ladies, though one earlier in date. Colonel St. John was persecuted with all the modern history of Candahar: its invasions and confiscations, the alliance of its inhabitants, the laws of real property and the decrees of successive governors. Having other complications in hand, he appealed to the general, and our stout old chief, laughing heartily, relegated the question to the native courts. There it would still be disputing hotly, I don't doubt, if the prospect of rupees had not vanished with the sircar. And meanwhile we paid no rent.

I heard an outline of several among these claims. One of these stories dwelt in my mind. What I remember is heretofore set down.

Our garden, as was alleged, once belonged to a merchant whom I will call Haidar Khan. He traded largely in Central Asia, transporting Indian and European manufactures and bringing back tea, saltpetre, turquoises, cheap gauds, silks, and Persian goods. Bokhara was his favourite market (may I here use the

license of an expert to suggest that the accent of this word falls upon the second syllable?). When the governor of Candahar, in rebellion against Cabul, thought fit to send letters and presents to the Ameer of Bokhara, he naturally chose Haidar Khan to bear them. No trader had such tact in dealing with the robber chieftains on that long route; no one had suffered so little loss from disease of beasts and slaves.

For some years past, Haidar Khan, now growing old, had ceased to accompany his kafilas. He was rich. His town-house, jealously protected by high blank walls, contained a treasure in its plate and jewellery alone. Very many thousand golden coins lay stored in a secret place which no one knew except his confidential slave: Darics and Philips and Bactrian pieces, which to think of makes the numismatist feel tigrish, Venetian sequins, Austrian ducats, Russian imperials, English sovereigns, the spoil of every race and every age. Accomplished slaves and fair daughters amused the old man's leisure. One care alone oppressed him, and it was of a sort to which Pathans are used.

Haidar's sons had turned out ill, extravagant, undutiful, addicted to the muddy wine of Shiraz, and the bhang of southern infidels. But few of his neighbours had a pleasanter experience, and since the boys had not yet been detected in a conspiracy to murder him, Haidar had still reason to be thankful.

The command of the governor was annoying. In the first place, no respectable trader likes to compromise himself in political intrigue. There was not much danger truly on this score, since the authorities at Herat were friendly, and the clans along the road felt no interest in Ameer or Governor. But the journey would occupy twelve months at least, and Haidar left a thousand cares behind. His money would be safe under protection of the guild—as safe, that is, as money can be in Afghanistan. But the guild would not take charge of personal effects, silver dishes, and gold cups, and jewels. Who could be trusted to guard his slaves when the master was away, and his wild sons skirmished round? Haidar resolved to bury his wealth, and to take the young men with him.

Do not think, be it said in parenthesis, that I exaggerate the riches of this Pathan merchant. It is recorded in history that when the English general made

a call for funds on Shikarpore, forty years ago, thirty thousand pounds were furnished in two hours, and one hundred thousand pounds offered before night. Shikarpore is the next bridge, so to speak, of the Pactolus that flows through Candahar from Central Asia; a place even now not half so large nor half so wealthy, a mere village in comparison two score years ago. No disturbance, no confiscation, no misgovernment can stop the supply of gold which pours down that channel. For ages, Candahar has been plundered systematically, but the only misfortune which can for a while delay its recovery is the blocking of the road above.

So Haidar Khan set out, with his two sons, and his long train of camels. After many months' journeying he reached Bokhara. The usual good fortune attended him along the road. The most savage of robber chieftains accepted their black-mail without complaint, disarmed by his pleasant shrewdness; they even made him valuable gifts in return. He delivered the letters and the presents, unloaded his merchandise at the Serai, took a house and servants; prepared for a long and profitable trade whilst the Ameer was thinking out his policy, and considering what presents to return.

In some months of delay, Haidar turned his capital over several times. At length all was ready. What reply Bokhara sent to Candahar upon political questions, I am not informed. But the presents consisted of Turkestan and Yarkhundi horses, Bokhara camels and slaves; beside, one may presume, such trifling souvenirs as silks and arms gold-fretted, turquoises, embroidered horse-trappings, etc. With these in charge, Haidar made ready to start for home.

The conduct of his sons at Bokhara has not been recorded; probably, being Afghans, they did some successful trade, and in the intervals compassed as much wickedness as they could find to do. But when it came to ordering the march, Haidar found that the eldest had two Persian women—bought captives, of course—whom he proposed to carry down. This could not be suffered. In Bokhara the Prophet's law against enslaving Moslems is not much regarded, and at Candahar they are not very rigid on the abstract question. But Haidar was a personage. The eyes of the pious rested on him. It would be useless, and indeed dangerous, to plead at Candahar that Shiah heretics are not included amongst Moslem, for there are many Shiahs there, and the Kazilbashis are a powerful community.

A hundred considerations made the old man firm in his denial, and the slaves were left behind; I do not know in what position. Very vicious Haroun looked as he took his place in the caravan.

The Ameer's offerings were all of the highest class. Turkestan horses so punchy, so large eyed, so velvety of coat, so clean of limb, the Persian Shah does not possess. The heads of the Yarkhundis were long as their pedigree; when they arched their necks superbly they could bite a fly upon their chests. The silken fleece of the camels almost swept the ground, and their beautiful eyes, shaded by thick curled lashes, shone through a mane as stately as a lion's. I think I hear a critic murmuring aghast: "What animals are these the Traveller is inventing?" In truth, the descriptions would not apply to usual breeds of horse or camel. But they are true nevertheless.

Led by their syces, the steeds marched loose, the gorgeous saddles and accoutrements safely stored away. But each camel bore a gilded litter with silk curtains, and in each litter rode a slave. Haidar had not thought needful to ask whether these destined for his superiors were Moslem or no. He himself kept with this bevy, and his trustiest servants mounted guard at night. The young men, and especially his two sons, were forbidden to approach. But elderly travellers sleep sound after the day's long march. Pathan youths are enterprising; Eastern girls not less inquisitive, capricious, thoughtless, than our own. The effect of seclusion practised upon female kind is to make the prisoner especially liable to sudden gusts of admiration. To be quite accurate, perhaps, she is not more liable by nature than are her English sisters; but they get so early used to check the feeling, that it is regarded generally as household fun. The oriental girl has no opportunity to use herself to this phenomenon, nor has she any practice of self-restraint. Also it is the instinctive bent of prisoners to cheat their jailor, of young women to rebel against discipline. This impulse is naturally felt more strongly by a pampered slave-maiden than by the free-born. For such a purpose bitter enemies will combine and keep a secret. Moreover—I really must one day indite, with the Editor's permission, a brief essay on the condition, sentiments, moral anatomy of womankind under Moslem rule. Upon no subject whatsoever is such ignorant nonsense current. In twenty years of travel, through lands, for the most part,

where polygamy prevails, I have learned by daily use and hearing the pros and cons—something, at least, of the actual facts; and on a topic so intensely grave, those who think they know the truth should speak out.

From the considerations noted I can believe that Haroun established some sort of compromising relations with one of the slaves. Such a charge was made against him, or rather, against Haidar. It is not necessary to imagine that the relations were criminal in any sort; mere bowing acquaintance, so to put it, would justify a savage punishment in the eyes of the Candahar governor. Haidar Khan was not ignorant of what was passing, for he threatened his son with death if he did not amend. Some time afterwards, next day perhaps, Haroun vanished with his personal followers; the younger son remained.

In due process of time, the kafila reached that point where the road from Farah gives upon the great trade route between Hindostan and Central Asia. Every school-boy knows—quite as well as he knows many other facts attributed to his omniscience—that Farah is a great strategic position in the midst of that quadrilateral, Herat, Candahar, Ghuzni, Cabul. Owing to circumstances uninteresting to detail, but intelligible enough, the garrison of this place is generally loyal. Farah was held at the moment by a zealous partisan of the Ameer. He was informed, no doubt, of the treasonable correspondence which Haidar carried; what secret of the sort can be maintained in a land which has no telegraph, no penny press, no correspondents, special or other? But his quarters lay some distance from the caravan road, and in the space between dwelt lawless tribes, Atahzai, Alizai, Durani, who will admit no authority to come amongst them. For they live by black-mail, which government officials would appropriate to themselves.

Haidar, therefore, did not dream of peril from the governor of Farah. At the junction of the roads, nevertheless, his caravan was intercepted by overwhelming force. Without discussion of terms, the Ameer's officials seized him and marched the kafila across the hills. Incredible to relate, the robber clans, cheated of their due, made no resistance.

Arrived at Farah, the governor held durbar and tried his prisoners publicly. Haidar Khan, overwhelmed with the evidence and bewildered by the perception that treachery enveloped him on every side, could make no defence. The treason-

able letters were produced. Every slave in the kafila knew facts enough to damn him. Nothing remained but to pass sentence. All Haidar's personal property was confiscated. The presents of Bokhara, slaves, camels, horses, and the rest, were despatched to Cabul—that is to say, thus ran the decree. We may have our doubts whether the Ameer derived one rupee benefit from all this plunder.

Nothing more is said of Haroun and the fatal beauty. Our tale henceforth deals with his younger brother. The theory of Haidar's innocence—innocence in an affair which ruined and killed him!—is based on the supposition that Haroun concocted all the plot, negotiated with the chieftains, secured a free passage for the troops, persuaded the governor to try a dangerous coup. And so, perhaps, he won the stipulated prize, whatever it might have been. But, from one's knowledge of Afghans, one is inclined to think it more probable that the governor rewarded him by cutting off the traitor's head—much more probable still, that he poisoned him. And one may almost take it for granted that the Helen of this strife was transferred, with her comrades, to the governor's harem, together with all goods and treasures which had not been already looted by his faithful servants.

In consideration of his virtuous character and his high position in the mercantile community, Haidar Khan was not put to death. His captor held him to ransom—for the profit of the Ameer, of course. A large sum was named, but one the great trader could afford without serious inconvenience. Accordingly, he drew a bill upon his guild. There was difficulty in finding trustworthy persons to receive the cash, since the best adherents of the governor would have been massacred at Candahar. At length the younger son was commissioned to fetch it, under surveillance of some neutral individuals. He went, and did not return; neither did his colleagues.

After waiting an unreasonable time, Haidar Khan wrote to the guild direct, telling all the circumstances. In the leisurely course of things prevailing in Afghanistan, the cash arrived, under charge of honest merchants trading with Farah; in the meanwhile, various shrewd but painful processes had been tried to stimulate the captive's ingenuity. The guild explained that Haidar's son had duly presented himself, and had received the money; a copy of his receipt was enclosed.

It acknowledged ten times the sum demanded; by the addition of a cypher, this dutiful youth had obtained nearly all his father's fortune, and vanished with it into space.

In terrible distress and anxiety, Haidar Khan returned to Candahar. There he was instantly arrested as a traitor; the main cause of suspicion being in the acquiescence of the Durani sirdars in his capture on the road, to be explained only by Haidar's strong personal influence with them. Long before this, the governor had made up his mind and sequestered all that was left, town house, villa, accomplished slaves, fair daughters, and the rest. As for the silver dishes and gold cups, they may be buried yet, a treasure to be disinterred, with many more, when the Russians "Haussmannise" this imperial city.

After languishing some months in prison Haidar Khan was tried and found innocent. The next step was to make the governor disgorge, if possible. Whilst Haidar engaged in the beginning of this hopeless task, the governor of Farah marched on Candahar, with a swarm of Durani tribesmen, who had suddenly turned loyal. They fought some successful battles, and the city capitulated. This was final ruin. From the Ameer's lieutenant, Haidar had no mercy to expect. He died. But the sentence of the court which pronounced him guiltless of the crime for which he had lost his property was the only legal instrument bearing on his case. The claim was not forgotten by his heirs, when General Stewart rashly talked of paying rent for our quarters. But there were other pretensions, both older and newer. I incline to believe that if the title of that garden had been exhaustively gone through, some generations of lawyers would have been harmlessly consumed in the interesting task.

DAFFODIL

CHAPTER I. THE PEACH-APPLE FARM.

"OH, Mother, the peach-apples are ripe! I have just found two on the path, eaten into holes by the birds."

"Oh, Daughter dear, now we know why the blackbirds were singing so sweetly this morning! We shall have the apples for dinner, if Brockley and Sukey will but give their consent!"

The two ladies were walking up and down the paths of a rather wild and picturesque garden. The elder, who leaned upon a staff and gazed around complacently over the

gold rims of her spectacles, was wont to delight in thinking that this was the only real garden in existence. Garlands of creepers swung from one high wall to another; luxuriant crops of fruit waxed honey-sweet in the sun year after year; and flowers, following a good deal their own sweet will, grew brilliant and tall among the trees.

Its owners considered the place a paradise, and Brockley, the gardener, was looked on as one of the wonders of the age, having constructed this beautiful confusion, out of his genius for laziness, upon an original plan of his own.

The farm was named from its exceeding great yearly crops of delicious peach-apples. Not only in the garden did the trees stand sweetening the air and enriching it with tender pinks and whites in the spring-time, and in the autumn with flashes of russet-red, but they also mustered strongly in the big moss-eaten orchard, and marched in double file down a narrow grassy alley to the river-side. It was an event in the year of the simple owners of the farm when the blackbirds had declared that the peach-apples were ripe.

The old lady was Mrs. Marjoram, mistress of the farm, a little person so small and slight that she might have been taken for the fairy godmother in a nursery tale. It was amusing to think of her as the parent of the "Daughter dear" who stood beside her, blandly surveying the marks of the riot of the blackbirds.

For Daughter was abundant in person as her mother was spare, with a particularly full-blown appearance which the style of her attire exaggerated. Her skirts were voluminous and trailed a little behind her, the points of her collar lay wide apart at the neck, her blonde hair was brushed out at the sides and looped negligently at the back of her head. Her plump homely face, with the cheeks tinged to the complexion of the favourite apples, expressed good-humour, simplicity, and a little melancholy.

Only in their speech did the mother and daughter resemble each other, in a certain soft, loose way of uttering their words and a singing intonation which threw their sentences into a kind of rhythm. Even the three old servants, Brockley, Sukey, and the cook, had acquired this trick of speech, probably out of respect for their superiors.

Sukey, the ancient housemaid, now came up the path with a foreign letter addressed to Mrs. Marjoram. Sukey, though called a maid was in reality a matron, who, having known the trouble of a bad husband in her

youth, still nursed a sort of wrathful grief and was treated by the family with great consideration on account of it. Her sallo brow and sullen black eyes were seldom lit up by a smile, yet she had a grim devotion to her employers, and to all who were in any way connected with them. In acknowledgment of this devotion was the fact that no step was taken in the household without her approbation.

"Sukey," said her mistress timidly, she broke the seal of the letter, "we are thinking of having some apples for dinner to-day."

Sukey frowned at the tree, glanced at her mistress, and looked down the path with an air of resignation.

"I shall speak to Brockley, ma'am," she said, much as a nurse might promise a child, "I shall ask your mamma to see about it."

"Oh, Daughter, the little girl from Ceylon will be here this evening," cried Mrs. Marjoram with an excited glance over the rims of her spectacles.

"Will she, Mother dear? Then, Sukey, you may tell Harry to have the brougham at the door at three. That will give us time to go to the station before dinner. And, oh, Mother, how lucky she is to be here for the first of the peach-apples!"

When Harry brought the brougham, the two ladies were waiting at the door of the farmhouse; a door curtained with rose unpruned by the sparing knife of the original genius Brockley; and Daughter remarked to Mother that the brougham had an untidy appearance.

"Hush!" whispered the venerable lady, "you forget that if we do not go for her the child will be left forlorn on the work or at least the platform. The friends who bring her are going further by the train. And Harry was winking as he drove up to the door."

When Harry was seen winking excitedly it was understood that at that particular moment he could not be interfered with. He was a man with a large head and broad shoulders, but the limbs and stature of a little boy. Harry on his feet upon the ground was ridiculous, but seated upon his box he was powerful among men. An untidy family viewed him only on his box, and respected his weaknesses. When Harry chose to bring them the brougham looking nice, there was jubilee in his mistress's hearts; but if either of those ladies were to say, "Harry, the brougham is untidy," then must the brougham remain untidy for a period of many days to come.

"Where is Milky White?" cried Daughter.

Milky White was a huge, white, villainous-looking bull-dog, greatly beloved by his owners, and as obstinate and whimsical as Harry himself. It was the part of Milky White to run half under the brougham all the way whithersoever it might travel in the course of an afternoon; and should Milky White be in a malicious humour and desert the carriage, then must the carriage follow Milky White till, his malice spent, he might consent to resume his post between the wheels.

Milky White appearing and getting into position, the brougham rolled away through the lovely ripening country, past blue openings in dense forest glades, fields dotted with red kine, and golden hay-cocks clambered over by the shouting urchins who twisted the straw ropes wherewith the farmer was binding them. A pond full of noisy ducks, under an overhanging hedge, a cluster of rosy children swinging on a wooden gate, a group of frolicsome colts in a paddock, and a long string of inquisitive goslings with a silly, long-necked, garrulous mother goose at their head, all saluted in their own way the two simple ladies as they travelled through some few miles of fair rural country in the brougham which was not as they could have wished it to be, Mother looking mildly out of one window and Daughter looking blandly out of the other, while Harry winked viciously in the sun on his box.

X— was a busy seaport town with crowded thoroughfares. As soon as the brougham entered the streets, gentle Mrs. Marjoram began to hold on with both hands to keep the vehicle steady.

"Mother dear," said Daughter, "this only tires you, and it does not make any difference really."

"Don't tell me!" said Mrs. Marjoram with mild testiness. "Only for this plan of mine Harry's love of rutty lanes would have been the death of us before now."

"Oh, Milky White! Milky White!" cried Daughter, as the animal was suddenly seen charging into the middle of a battle of curs which was raging at a corner. The brougham was immediately turned and driven after the deserter, up one street and down another, till, the dogs having been dispersed and lost sight of, Harry pulled up and paused for orders.

"Drive home immediately," cried Daughter. "He will have found the road and we shall overtake him on the way."

"Certainly," said Mother. "Were we to go on without him he would be terribly offended."

"But we may be late for little Daffodil," reflected Daughter.

"Harry must drive quickly and make up the time," said Mother.

Back went the brougham all the pleasant way to the Peach Apple Farm. No Milky White was to be seen, and at last Daughter hung anxiously out of the window, calling to a labourer on the road.

"Hi, my man! Have you seen a large white bull-dog pass this way since morning?"

The man grinned and rested upon his spade, then, stooping, glanced under the brougham.

"There he be, missus, sure enough; unless it's his twin brother you be lookin' for!"

Mother, Daughter, and Harry had all to dismount and peer under the brougham before they could persuade themselves that Milky White had been really all the time in his old place between the wheels, having withdrawn further than usual into shelter and maliciously curled up his tail out of sight. "Thank Heaven!" murmured the ladies, and with grateful hearts resumed their seats and travelled once more in the direction of X—.

As they threaded the streets a second time a bright little face gazing solitarily from the windows of a fly looked full in Daughter's eyes which were staring gently at the bustle of the town; looked, and flew past; and the carriage stopped at the station to find that the train had arrived half an hour ago, and the people who had come by it had dispersed.

Mother and Daughter gazed at each other in dismay; while Harry winked vengefully at Milky White, and flicked at him longingly with his whip.

"Perhaps she did not come," suggested Daughter.

"Could she have returned by the train, finding there was no one to meet her?" said Mother.

"Oh, Milky White! Milky White!" murmured Daughter, "what trouble you sometimes lead us into!"

One of the railway officials now pitied their bewilderment.

"Perhaps you will be glad to know," he said, "that a young lady arrived by the train who hired a fly to take her to the Peach Apple Farm."

Mother and Daughter breathed sighs of

relief. "Clever little girl!" they cried, amazed and delighted at such courage and decision; and they were soon bowling through the country once again, with Milky White running dutifully beneath them reflecting delightedly on his late waggish trick.

Said Daughter as they drove along, "I wonder if we could get a hole cut in the floor of the brougham so that we might see a little of his back as he runs."

"But his back is so light-coloured, and so is the road," objected Mother.

"As if I should not distinguish a bit of his back from a bit of the road; the back that I know so well!" cried Daughter with the slightest shade of reproach in her voice.

CHAPTER II. DAFFODIL.

SUKEY met the ladies at the door with an unwonted smile, and pointed to a trunk, and a large open cage that stood by its side in the hall.

"She's in the garden, figuring away among the flowers as if she'd been born there. And the bird is as much at home as herself."

"What bird?" asked Mrs. Marjoram.

"Oh, a bird in fancy feathers that she has brought. You will see it soon enough."

The ladies hurried to the garden and met a slim young figure coming down the path, the fair head turned away caressing a foreign bird of brilliant plumage that nestled on her shoulder. She was clothed in clinging black draperies and heavy fur jacket, but her hat had been thrown off, and a delicate head, with bright hair ruffled, had caught some falling blossoms as it brushed the blooming creepers that hung out of the trees.

"So you are little Daffodil," said the old lady, taking a small slight hand which had quivered into her own.

"Yes," said the visitor, with a quick glance from one to another of her hostesses, "and you are," she hesitated, balancing on a word like a bird on a twig, "my English friends."

"Indeed we are," said Mother heartily, having shared the girl's momentary embarrassment. Truly it was not easy to give a name to the connexion between her guest and herself, and the young stranger had gone right to the old lady's heart when she called her simply her English friend.

"We were grieved to hear of the death of your dear father," began Mrs. Marjoram, wishing to be sympathetic.

"Don't," said the girl vehemently, while

a flush of passion lit up her face momentarily, and then left it inexpressibly pale and mournful. Indeed, the changes in this young countenance caused infinite amazement to Daughter, who remained quite absorbed in watching the smiles and rose-coloured lights flying into it and out of it with supernatural swiftness, and the pale gleams and mournful shades which chased them and replaced them as they came and went. The whole face was warmed into vivid beauty of colour one moment, and the next was almost pallid in its dreamy sadness.

"You must be tired, dear," said Daughter.

"Yes," said Daffodil, "but I cannot rest till I have become used to the place. Will you take me all round your fields, and through your gardens, and over your house, and then I shall have a feeling of knowing where I am."

"I will show you all I can before dinner," said Daughter, "and then you must be content until morning."

"And—your mother?" said Daffodil, bending her graceful head towards the old lady.

"Oh, Mother will get into her great chair and rest," said Daughter, pleased at the stranger's solicitude for the little mother who was her pet; and Daffodil, glancing from one friend to another, as if interested deeply in a tender family intercourse of which she knew nothing by experience, placed her little hand on Daughter's substantial arm and followed her lightly along the path.

They walked together, two figures strongly contrasting, through fields and meadows and orchards, and down the long green alley to the river where all the russet apple-trees stood painted against the pale golden background of the evening sky, and the grassy path was a lane of shade running through ethereal light. Here two natures sprung to life in different climes had come together to enjoy almost equally an exquisite moment, yet were as different in their ways of tasting the enjoyment as in their forms and faces, which might have suggested to an observant blackbird trilling overhead, the prose and poetry of humanity travelling side by side along the high-road of life. At the foot of the alley the river lapped round mossy stones and the dying sun cast fire down among the lilies that lay so still and cool in a dark pool of the stream; and Daffodil broke loose from her guide with a cry of delight, and poised

herself on a wet stone, much as the water-fowl were accustomed to do.

"You like the place, Daffodil? You must find it very different from Ceylon."

"I loved Ceylon," said the girl, "and I was wild and angry at having to leave it. I said I should hate England; but I see this country is beautiful; and I could love it if I belonged to it. I never tasted such freshness in my life before. Ceylon is all softness and brilliance, but there is a dewiness in your world that is more delicious than I can tell you."

"England is very pretty, and the Peach Apple Farm is greatly admired," said Daughter in her homely way; yet she felt the young girl's thrill of rapture and caught some glimpse of the spirit which lived behind the changeful eyes that now glowed on her. Her manner could however be in no way influenced to any change.

"Why did you think you must hate England?"

"I said it to my guardian because I had no friend but him. I could not bear to go away from him."

"What is he like?" asked Daughter after a pause.

"I thought you knew him, as he sent me to you, being his friend."

"Oh yes!" said Daughter uneasily, "I knew him long ago. But my memory is short, and people change so much besides."

"What is he like?" repeated Daffodil. "He is like nothing but himself. I can show you his photograph; but that will not help you very much."

"You love him greatly?"

"He was always good to me, and he is all I have had to love since——"

An abrupt break, an extinction of light in the face told that the subject which could not be touched had been approached. Daughter glanced at the sables clinging round the slender figure and did not ask, "Since when?" A certain reticence on her own part helped her to understand reserve in another; and her thoughts went back to Daffodil's guardian who at one time had been no stranger to her. She had wronged herself in saying that her memory was short; but there had been truthful meaning in the words which followed that statement. She did not choose to talk about that old friend however, any more than Daffodil was willing to speak of the father who was lost to her. And Daughter's speech for the rest of the ramble was made up of trite

replies to Daffodil's novel questions as to the tintings of English landscapes and the caprices of English clouds and streams.

The drawing-room and dining-room at the Peach Apple Farm were as old-fashioned in their arrangements as if they had been shut up and not entered for fifty years. A few stiff-necked wooden-faced ancestors looked down on the dinner-table with a wan and hungry gaze, as if perishing for their share of fat capons and juicy hams. The drawing-room carpet was worn almost as bare as the back of Milky White, and bleached to nearly the same shade of colour. Ornaments of rice, upon cardboard made by Mrs. Marjoram in her youth still held their place as decorations on the mantel-piece, and an enormous scrap-book on a side-table begun rather more than a century ago now held between its bulging covers all the oddities that could be snipped out of here and there in the intervals of a hundred years. When Daffodil sat down before this extraordinary volume it pleased her almost as much in a different way as the lilies in the river had done; and over its pages she was presented to the gentlemen of the Marjoram family.

First of these came father, a mild bald old man who had spent most of his time ambling quietly from one market to another, attending meetings at X—— and feeling himself generally useful in the country. Next came his eldest son, tall, thin, elderly, with a pinched nose, fond of books, and of sitting on the banks of the river, and very handy at doing anything at all, provided it was in no way serviceable to anybody. And third and last came the second son, a middle-aged attorney of the town of X——. Marjoram and Company he was called, for as Marjoram and Company were the words on the brass plate upon his door, and as he was known to have no partner, it was generally supposed he must believe himself a plural noun. Marjoram and Company was a square man with a broad white face and tufts of red hair springing up like short flames around his forehead. When newly dressed and placid he had a sleek look, but when he was excited the flames gradually erected themselves on his head with startling effect. All three gentlemen smiled benignly on Daffodil, who, as she glanced from the gigantic scrap-book to each in turn, felt that she would like to snip them out of their places and paste them cunningly on its pages.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE

JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER XVII. TURPIN, MALGRÉ LUI.

AT last Philip Nelson knew that he was not suffering from the effects of typhoid, and that, as to the exact resemblance of Phoebe Burden to Miss Doyle, insane instinct had been right, reason and evidence had been wrong. What he was going to do, he did not know. He did not think about forming a plan. Only, as the only real friend whom Phoebe had on earth, he could not let her enemy pass by, and vanish back into the mist whence he came. He must act—thinking must come after.

So he rode up, and laid his hand on the fellow's shoulder.

"So I have you at last, Mr. Stanislas Adrianski!" he said. "I am Philip Nelson; you may remember my thrashing, if you forget my name."

He was tolerably certain that Stanislas Adrianski was a coward—a certainty of which he was not unwilling to take full advantage in getting at the root of things shortly and sharply. But Stanislas, though he started—and an honest man is more likely to start at an arrest than a thief who hourly expects one—he neither shrank nor trembled. On the contrary, he shook off Philip's hand, and fell back towards the causeway with a certain air of dignity.

"I remember," said he. "You have attacked me by night, with a stick, and I have but a guitar—now you speak, on a swift horse, to me on foot. It is like you English; you are very brave when you are strong. I have not offended you."

"Yes; I am stronger than you; and I

am mounted, as you say; so unless you like to take a leap into the marsh, you had better stay here till I have done with you."

"You have done with me? It is a pity we meet, because it makes a fuss; but there shall be none. I had business to be off, but Miss Doyle—you understand she gave them to me, out of her own hand to mine."

"Gave—them?" asked Phil, not having the least reason to connect Stanislas Adrianski with Miss Doyle's diamonds or Ralph Bassett's missing man. But his tone, coloured by general and burning indignation, might well pass, with a thief, for angry incredulity.

"In this infernal region of English fog I lose myself," said Stanislas. "And it is a pity—very great pity—because it obliges me to tell the truth, which I do not like to do. You will let me pass. I say, she gave me her rings, her bijouterie, her watch, into my hands out of hers. That is truth I do not like to tell. If a lady makes you gifts, will you go boast of your belle fortune? I will not boast. I go away."

"Go away? Not yet! You have these missing jewels then? And she—" He had begun in open wrath, but his exclamation ended in almost a groan of despair. Could it be true that Phoebe had robbed herself of her own jewels to give them to this man? Here was Stanislas hanging round the very house where she was staying; there were the jewels gone from her, and to him—and Phil's belief in their intimate relation was only too terribly sure. But then, how came she, if they were fellow-adventurers, to be staying at Cautleigh Hall, alone? How and why had she managed to pass herself off upon Sir

Charles Bassett as Miss Doyle from India, the daughter and heiress of an old friend? What—but it would be endless to suggest the vista of enigmas that opened out before him. And yet, though forced to believe worse than he could understand, he could not see this vile scoundrel standing there and, to save himself from a charge of theft, bragging of Phœbe's favours—all the less could he bear the boast, if it were true. He could not, in his heart, hope that Stanislas was lying. But, till the last atom of hope was rooted out, he could still snatch at the poor relief of saying: "That is a lie." And he did say it, with all his heart, though he felt that it was not a lie.

"Not at all," said Stanislas. "If you catch me for a thief, you will make a grand error. That is all. If you take me to the police, I shall have to say to them what I say to you."

"For Heaven's sake, are you her husband? If you are, prove that, and then——" "All must be over," he was going to say; but he could not speak the words.

"You would stick me to the death, I suppose?" asked Stanislas. "But no. I have not the honour yet to be husband of Miss Doyle. Meanwhile, we are friends. That is all. Ask her, and she shall say. But ask her yourself; not the police, monsieur. Listen, monsieur. It is not nice to be hard. I do not want policemen. I am not a brigand; I am an honest man. I see you listen, monsieur. That is just. That is well. Is it my fault that a young miss fall in love with me? I am a very good young man. It is long ago she gave me this ring, at the corner of the street—see, him who I wear now; a very good ring. Ask her if she gave me this little ring, and she will say. Some other time, to-day, she gave me her watch, because I have business to go away; and some other time, once more, she gave me some gold. I tell you, she would give me the hairs of her head and the robe of her back, and everything I ask for, if I have need. If you have a friend, a lady, you know what they will do. If I hold up the finger, she comes."

Phil's riding-switch was steadily rising in the air. But he did not yet let it fall. He felt almost paralysed by an insight into possibilities of masculine nature of which he had never dreamed. And all the while Stanislas told his story in the simplest fashion, as if the ways of women were

curious, but by no means wonderful. His behaviour would have been less revolting to every thought and feeling of Phil's had it been more like bragging. As it was, Stanislas Adrianski seemed to be to a cur what a cur is to a man. The whip rose in anger; it was compelled to fall in wondering scorn. Whips are for curs—not for Adrianskis.

"And so," continued Stanislas, all unconscious of the risk his eyes had been running, "you will not make a fuss; for there is no fuss at all. Ah, if you knew what I have suffered—what I suffer now! I have to catch a train; I start; I make the wrong turn. I am late; I ask a peasant the way to cut short; I wander all over; till I faint and starve. I fill my boots with black water, and I fatigue. Monsieur, if you believe, I want to sit down and cry." He looked up as he spoke with an expression of half-proud, half-appealing pathos; and Philip saw two real tears rise and fill the eyes of Stanislas Adrianski. "Ah," he went on, "if she had not persuaded me to go for her sake, I would not have gone. She have make me take the bijouterie, and go. It was the watch who made me lose the train, and starve, and take cold in the shoes. She did give, and I did only take, monsieur——"

"The woman—she gave me, and I did eat," said Philip sternly. It was clearly no case for impulsive anger; indeed, he felt himself growing numbed. Had Phœbe, for whom he would have died, really thrown herself away utterly on this man? And yet what had this to do with her imposture at Cautleigh Hall? "I do not believe you," he said. "I can't believe the word of a coward who, to defend himself from a charge of theft, takes away a woman's good name. Anyhow—I will not believe. I will speak to her—to Miss Burden—to Miss Doyle. I have the right; I am the only protector, the only likeness to a brother, she has in the world. If you speak the truth, and she gave you these things, she can give them to you again. If you are lying from beginning to end, as I hope with all my soul you are, she will have got back her own. Give me all her things, and be off with you—and if I find you have been lying, and dare to let her see your face or hear your name again, I will stick as little at being a murderer as I do now at being a highwayman. First of all, give me that ring."

Stanislas gave a forlorn look at the

marsh below the causeway, as if some hope of escape from his enemy might lie that way. But then a leap might land him over the ears in a slime-pit; and the fog-wall looked anything but a city of refuge.

"No," said Phil, seeing the look. "Where you can go, I can follow—and, without a horse, I to you am two to one. Give me the ring."

"A gage d'amour? No, no, no, monsieur!"

"Give it me. Don't you hear?"

"Ask her if she did not give——"

"I am going to ask her—once for all."

"She will give them back again."

"That is her affair."

"You will be a brigand—you will be hanged."

"That is my affair."

"She loves me—she will never forgive you."

"Give me that ring."

"How do I know you give it to her?"

"What should a fellow like you know about keeping one's word? Give me that ring."

A quick thought came to him that—forgetting for the moment her still unexplained personation of some perhaps non-existent Miss Doyle—he might be even yet unjust to Phoebe in suspecting her of having given her heart to so inconceivable a lover, and that Stanislas might have obtained some other sort of power over her from which she might be saved by strength of arm. Not that his mind leapt, as many might, to occult psychological theories of animal magnetism, or any such modern translations of the plain word witchcraft, in which he was no believer; but he did happen to know that there are many traps of a grosser and more palpable sort into which it is easy to fall, and from which it should be still more easy to escape, if people in traps ever dared to open their eyes. He had heard of women, afflicted with the opposite qualities of innocence and want of courage, who had been terrorised by some fancied hold over them—by some harmless letter, by some empty threat, or by somebody's knowledge of some idle and insignificant escapade, or by some other scare-crow which only wanted a straight look in the face to fall into its proper elements of shreds and straws. Perhaps the ring had been forced from her; perhaps its very possession by Stanislas was itself her fear by night and her terror by day. He knew that it is robbery to rob a thief, and that the evidence was in favour of Adrianski's

having come into possession of Phoebe's belongings by gift—that is to say by legally honest means. But he was not going to put Phoebe below the law.

He received the ring, and put it away. "And now the watch."

"I swear to you, by all what is sacred," exclaimed Stanislas, "she did give the watch—she did give it me this very day."

"Then she may give it you again to-morrow. And now give up everything else of hers you have about you—every single thing."

Something new came over Stanislas. Hitherto he had obeyed reluctantly, and as if all the while protesting his surrender to superior force. Now, however, he hurriedly threw open his coat, and, with fingers that seemed nervous with eager haste, drew from the breast-pocket a quantity of jewelled ornaments, bracelets, rings, a necklace, brooches, enough to pass for any young woman's entire stock of jewellery. He brought them out one by one; he had been either too hurried or too careless to pack them together.

"And the purse," said Phil. "And the money too—but the purse I must have; you shall keep nothing that you may be able to say was hers."

"You are hard—hard!" sighed Stanislas. "I did keep that; to keep the simple purse of her which loves me—that is not much—but all right. Never mind. Here is the purse. And—and that is all."

"No. It is not all."

That was a shot; for it seemed to Phil that Phoebe had jewels enough to stock an Arabian tale. But he took it for granted that Stanislas would try to keep back something, and the very hurry in which the fellow had given up so much made him suspect that the something would prove the most important of all.

"It is all—if you shall not take my hat, and my life, and my boots," said Stanislas, drawing back, and again glancing at the marsh behind him. "She gave me not those—they are mine. I give no more. What do you miss? Do you know?"

"I don't know. But I know you will keep back what you can. Come here. I will take your coat, and your hat, and your shoes, and search them myself if you don't instantly prove to me that you have nothing more. Come here, I am going to put my own hand into that breast-pocket of yours. You needn't try to throw me out of the saddle while I'm doing it, I'm horseman enough to be up to that trick.

and it will only waste time. Come here—and clasp your hands behind you. So. The moment you unclasp them, till I give you leave, down you go.”

Stanislas came like a bidden schoolboy, stood at Phil's stirrup, and clasped his long fingers behind him, just as he was told. He became so docile that Phil was rather taken by surprise. But the instantaneous flicker of a smile over his victim's lips led him, while making a feint towards Adrianski's breast, to seize him by the coat collar, suddenly swing him round, and cut him over the fingers sharply. Phoebe was not wrong in feeling that there was a very decided touch of the natural savage about Phi. But the sharp cut gained its end. The startled fingers fell apart, and something fell to the ground.

“Stoop!” cried Phil. “Pick that up whatever it is, and give it to me. No,” he added quickly, preventing Stanislas, by a thrust backward, from setting foot on the something that had fallen. “Keep back.” And, without looking to see what expression the Pole's face might wear, and without leaving the bridle go, dismounted, and picked up the last prize with his own hands. It was a common leather jewel-case; there was no need to see more.

Then, for the first time on record, every shred of the dignity of Count Stanislas Adrianski went to the winds.

“She gave it me—she gave it me—she gave it me!” he almost screamed. “She gave it me with her own hand. How she got it, how do I know? She gave me the watch, and the ring. She cannot say she did not give me all. If she will say so, she shall find none to believe.”

“And now,” said Phil, “I have done with you. You may go. You will have this, and all else, back again, if they are fairly yours. My part is done—so far. Be off with you.”

“Aha! You say be off, when you take all my riches, and my money, and leave me in the marsh and the vapours to drown and to starve! How shall I find the road? How shall I buy food without money—from the marsh-fires? How shall I go by the train. You are a veritable brigand—first you rob; then you kill.”

“I wish to Heaven I had killed you, months ago, but it's too late; it's no use now. No; your death will not make the Phoebe whom I once knew alive again. As to your road, keep straight along the causeway, not the way you were coming when we met—that leads straight into the fen

—but the other way; it will bring you into the main road. I can't direct you farther, but you will surely find somebody who can. As for money—here, take this; but mind, it is not her money—Miss Burden's—but mine. Go. I have done with you unless we meet again. But remember this, you no longer have to do with Phoebe Burden. You have henceforth, God willing, to do with me.”

Stanislas took the sovereigns that Phil almost tossed into his hand. He took them sullenly, but he took them, all the same. Then, without another word, he turned back towards the mist, and was quickly lost again.

“Have I done right or wrong?” Phil asked himself as soon as he was left alone again. “Well, right or wrong, there was nothing else to do. I could not let him go, with his lies—yes, his lies of Phoebe, and his proofs that they are true.” Reason took a faraway flight just then; or it might have told him that a proven truth can hardly be a lie. But honesty may be impossible for the most honest of men. Had he been honestly honest, he would have said, “I know the worst now. But, for her name's sake, the proofs of the worst must be in no hands but mine, till they return to hers,” but the faint flash of hope that even the proven worst might somehow be explained was still lingering, and his heart could not bring itself to throw even the memory of that faint flash away. It might be reasonable and right that Phoebe Burden, with the knowledge (to say the least) and while in communication with Stanislas Adrianski, should leave her home, and possess diamonds, and pass herself off for a rich heiress from India. It may be that everything which looks black is really white—it is certain that a man who loves what he hates will manage to hope that black may at any rate turn out to be grey.

But he almost shuddered when he thought of what must have happened, had not Ralph Bassett been hidden in the mist when Stanislas Adrianski appeared upon the scene. He could have found no possible excuse for highway robbery; absolutely nothing could have been said or done without making Phoebe's host a party to the whole miserable scandal. Whatever might be the nature or purpose of Phoebe's imposture, Philip Nelson must be its sole confidant, and his the hand to save her, not more from imposture than from exposure. Miss Doyle must disappear, and, if

such might be, become some sort of Phœbe Burden again, but without ceasing to be Miss Doyle to the beliefs of Cautleigh Hall. He was not given to formulate the ways of Providence, beyond the usual assumption that Heaven helps those, and none but those, who help themselves; but there did seem the hand of something more than chance in bringing about that secret meeting between him and Stanislas Adrianski. But for a marvellous combination of seeming accidents whereof none was especially likely—the fog at the right hour, Adrianski's loss of his road on the right day, Philip's ride in that particular direction, and all the chances that led to each of these chances—nothing could have been known, nothing done. And was such a network of circumstance to be spread in vain, or for a wrong end? Such a question went far to justify hope, and to vindicate the ways of Providence before eyes which sorely needed the vindication of any sort of belief in anything at all.

He had yet another hope—that Ralph Bassett would not return until Stanislas Adrianski had time to get clear away. He had no reason for identifying, every reason for not identifying, Stanislas Adrianski with the missing valet. That Phœbe should be a guest, Stanislas a servant, in the same house, would be carrying even mystery a little too far.

And this hope, at any rate, seemed in a fair way of being fulfilled. The mist did not lift; and Ralph Bassett did not return.

NEWGATE AHOY!

PASSING out of the crowded traffic of Ludgate Hill into the comparative quiet of the Old Bailey, is it only fancy that gives the place a certain chill atmosphere of its own, and a merely imaginary inference that the shadow of Newgate is half unconsciously avoided by those who have any choice in the matter? Truly nothing could be darker, nothing gloomier than that solid frowning frontage, plain and unadorned, except for a niche here and there occupied by a black funereal statue, or a porch festooned with chains and shackles. The walls of Newgate, standing out stern and menacing in the middle of the hurrying streams of life, frowning on the world of big hotels and monster shops, and on the crowded vehicles and teeming footways, are in themselves a stern memento mori, the

skeleton at the banquet that goes on so swimmingly around. The door is still there—that ponderous iron door, seemingly so purposeless, opening flush with the wall, and raised a few feet above the footway—the portal to the great wide street of death, the opening to the scaffold that yawned so often in the cruel days of old. That door is shut for ever, perhaps, but still about the place there hangs the mystery of blood.

It is, perhaps, a relief to find ourselves past the spiked iron wicket of the postern, and in the governor's office, where business is going on with the regularity of a business counting-house. There is possibly a tinge of disappointment in the governor's face when he ascertains that his visitors are of the voluntary order; people who are neither committed, nor sentenced, nor remanded must seem profoundly uninteresting to those who have to do with prisons; but he assigns us courteously a guide in the person of a hale-looking veteran warder who loses no time in preliminaries, but leads the way at once, unlocking and locking heavy grated doors, into a certain not uncomfortable room with a good fire, and in a corner a quaint water cistern, bearing the date 1781.

The warder understands all about the shadow of Newgate. He knows very well what formless presence met us at the wicket gate; followed us to the governor's office, and passed through the closely-barred doors; and now seems to hang about the closed doors of a big press which looks like a harness cupboard, with a gleam of steel about it as the doors are opened, and the sheen of polished leather. The brightly-polished steel is in the form of manacles, dainty bangles worn by travelling convicts; there are others of older fashion, heavy and cumbersome, fastened in by rivets; the bilboes in which Jack Sheppard might have clanked about.

The warder takes down one of the leathern apparatus which hang up there like so much harness, and the shadow in attendance seems to glide forward eagerly, as our guide goes on to explain how these are the pinioning straps. Yes, it is a fitting introduction to the gloomy walls of Newgate, this cabinet of curiosities.

"In former days," continues the warder in his quiet kindly voice, "when they were pinioned here, they walked along this passage"—leading the way through more grated doors into the kitchen—showing a lofty vaulted room, with coppers

or cooking, and in the middle of the wall that ugly door that opens flush with the street that we shuddered at from outside just now. And here a whole legion of shadows seem to rise and flit rapidly through the grated door, while the faint echo of the roar of the mob outside seems to buzz in the ears. The first culprit suffered here, before the walls of Newgate, and in the presence of the Old Bailey mob, in 1783; and from that date, till public executions were abolished, what a crowd of victims have passed through that ugly doorway!

One breathes more freely when the kitchen is left behind; but it is startling to be shown a machine like a pillory, only that the ankles and feet are rigidly confined as well as the wrists, and to learn that this is not some curious antiquity descended from the middle ages, but the stand for persons sentenced to be flogged, and that it will probably be in full use this very day.

After this the sight of the sky is pleasant in an open courtyard. A glance around shows that of the original buildings only the outer case remains. The rest of the interior is occupied by a new structure, built in 1858 on the modern cellular system. This new building does not detain us very long; it is just the regulation prison of to-day, with its spider-like construction of galleries and radiating corridors, with a warder here and there watching in the centre of the web, and the deadly monotony and relentless smoothness of prison discipline everywhere prevalent. An experienced criminal might be conscious of minute differences and gradations, but to the ordinary observer one prison cell is exactly like another, with its bare cold walls, the roll of hammock and bedding, the corner shelves, and nothing else to speak of in the way of furniture. But here is a little group of cells of a different pattern, which have a fearful kind of interest attached to them. Here is one with its two low grated windows looking upon blank walls, with a low bedstead and even chairs. Yes, the chairs are for the warders who sit and watch during the last hours of the condemned man, for this is the condemned cell.

Next we come to the chapel, which is just behind the governor's house, in the centre of the building, and really a quaint and rather cheerful place, with a comfortable old-fashioned Hanoverian aspect, with high pews in red cushioned baize in the

corners, where the governor sits in state, and a curtained gallery above, where the Lord Mayor and sheriffs, if they choose to come, or the visiting justices, may sit in stately retirement. There are galleries at the sides for the male prisoners, and one aloft, screened with louver boards, for the female prisoners. In front of the pulpit, a rostrum of the high old-fashioned kind, the floor is open and unencumbered except for sundry plain leather-seated chairs, and here it is that the condemned man sits on the Sunday before his death, a warder on either side of him, for somehow the condemned man occupies the greater part of our thoughts, and in this cursory view of Newgate meets us at every turn and seems to haunt the gloomy corridors and glide through the grated doorways. And yet, and the thought gives a gleam of cheerfulness to the scene, henceforth there will be no more executions at Newgate. Well, our guide thinks it won't do to be certain about that. Possibly Newgate will still be kept in use for executions, in view of the conveniences for that purpose.

The conveniences! Good Heavens! Yes, here is the shed, the very place where men are done to death; a commonplace business-like shed that might be a parcels office in a railway yard. The doors being opened you see a yawning pit, neatly cemented, with a cross beam over it and a horribly suggestive chain hanging from a moveable iron collar in the middle. "When there are more than one," explains the warder, "more chains are affixed. Last time there were two, as you may see by the marks on the beam." To our guide the sight of men strangled in this hole is a quite familiar one, and he speaks of the scene in a calm and kindly manner that makes the blood run cold. He is quite convinced on one point, that there is no agony except the mental one, and the whole fearful process is carried through so rapidly that the torture of suspense is reduced to a minimum.

There is a horrible fascination about the subject which still pursues us; from the scene of violent death we are led to the quietude of the grave. In a narrow covered way between two high and gloomy walls is the burying-ground of the scaffold. It is the passage from the gaol of Newgate to the Old Bailey courts, covered with square flagstones with no memorial of the dead beneath; the place of sepulture is kept in memory, however, by rude letters carved on the walls. The Cato Street Conspirators, in 1820, are probably the earliest, and

Herbert and Pavey, who were hanged together about a year ago, are the latest of these sinister interments.

And yet the place, despite these criminal associations—and the warder, as he runs over with the readiness of perfect knowledge the names of those who rest below, recounts a bead-roll of terrible crime and suffering—despite all this there is a quiet solemnity about the place that inspires rather regret than repugnance. Whatever their crimes may have been they have expiated them. Let them sleep there in peace at the foot of the old City wall.

For the massive wall that forms the sepulchral monument of the executed men, is acknowledged as a portion of the old fortifications of the City, and has stood there perhaps from the days of the Romans, anyhow from indefinite mediæval times, and is indeed the embryo, the originating cell of the great gloomy building which now encloses it. At some time or other, probably towards the end of the eleventh century, the citizens found it to their convenience to pierce a new gate in the north-west angle of the City walls, to give better access to the country that way than was afforded by the narrow and insufficient approaches to Ludgate. And from the very first, following its manifest destiny, the new gate with its towers and guard chambers, was used for the custody of prisoners, not only the evil-doers of the City, but also the king's own suspects and the offenders against his rule. A troublesome charge often enough, as, for instance, in the fifteenth century, when the Percies and Lord Egremond, heavily fined and sent to Newgate with their followers about some great fray in the North, broke out of prison themselves while their retainers "defended the gate a long while against the sheriffs and all their officers, insomuch that they were forced to call more aid of the citizens, whereby at last they subdued them and laid them in irons."

These turbulent doings took place not in the original Newgate, but in one not long before completed, partly, it is said, at the cost of the executors of the famed Sir Richard Whittington, and this building probably lasted to the time of the Great Fire of London in 1666, when it was destroyed. After that, we are told, it was rebuilt with greater magnificence than any of the other gateways of the City. The prints which have come down to us represent a comely, handsome structure, somewhat florid in ornament.

with a great archway for vehicles and a postern for foot-passengers. In the postern was a grating at which the white faces of debtors could be seen by the passenger, imploring his charity. The women also had a grating giving on the gate, and greeted the passers-by with similar supplications, varied by laughter, oaths, loose jests, and ribald songs. This is the building about which gathers most of the romance in the dark pages of the history of Newgate. Here the author of *Robinson Crusoe* was imprisoned in the early years of the eighteenth century, and hence Jack Sheppard made his wonderful escape, while here the strange story of Jonathan Wild begins and ends. It is the Newgate of Peachum and Captain Macheath, a huge tavern almost as much as a prison, where, as Macheath himself complains, "the fees are so many and exorbitant that few fortunes can bear the expense of getting off handsomely or of dying like a gentleman."

Here, too, were brought some seventy of the Jacobite rebels in 1716, most of them gentlemen of condition and fortune, who reached the doors of Newgate on horseback, their arms tied behind them, and each in charge of a grenadier. They had marched in this way from Highgate through lines of curious, but not unsympathising gazers. One lady of quality, struck by the looks and bearing of a young Highlander of the party, slipped twenty crowns into the hand of the grenadier who had him in charge, which the honest fellow handed over to his prisoner. And even at Newgate the prisoners were hospitably welcomed. "No sooner," says an eye-witness, "were they alighted from their horses and their names read over, but their cords were immediately cut from their arms and shoulders, and refreshments of wine brought them." Among them were Mr. Forster, the general of the Northumbrian rebels, M.P. for Northumberland, Brigadier Macintosh, Colonel Oxbrough, and many others of the north-country gentry.

And now Newgate became for a period a place of fashionable resort. Fine ladies came to visit the prisoners, officers of the guards and aristocratic sympathisers. A rough and jovial spirit dominated the prison. One day the prisoners baited a badger, and cards and dice were played freely all day long. The leading spirits boarded with the governor at the rate of about twenty guineas a week, and the after-dinner

sittings were prolonged and jovial. Mr. Forster took advantage of one of the sittings to walk out of the governor's front door, of which his servant had managed to procure a key, and got clear away to France. For this the governor, Pitts, had to stand his trial, but being acquitted, presently came back to look after his remaining prisoners, a good many having escaped meanwhile. Indeed, one night the whole body of rebel prisoners had nearly got loose, "having framed a contrivance to make their escape up a chimney and down by a rope upon a shed, where persons were ready to receive them, but imprudently holding up a candle out of the hole, they were discovered by a maid in the Old Bailey." But ere this, fifteen had escaped, of whom, however, nine were retaken. Meantime fresh prisoners had been sent to Newgate from the Tower and the Fleet, viz., Mr. Howard, brother of the Duke of Norfolk, the Master of Nairn, son of Lord Nairn, and Mr. Charles Radcliffe, brother of the hapless Earl of Derwentwater, who had just been executed on Tower Hill. Charles Radcliffe, also sentenced to death, made his escape soon after, and reached France in safety, but shared his brother's fate thirty years later, for he was taken prisoner on his way to join the Scotch rising of 1745, and was executed on his former sentence. These Radcliffes are interesting to us as the descendants of the well-known Moll Davies, whose daughter, by Charles the Second, married the Northumbrian baronet, their father.

Of the rest of the Newgate prisoners only four eventually suffered death: Oxbrough and Gascoigne, who had held commissions in the army, the Rev. William Paul, who was executed in his clerical robes, and John Hall, a justice of the peace. These last two, it is said, might have saved their lives if they had offered submission, but died with great constancy, acknowledging James the Third as king with their latest breath.

The rising of 1745 also brought a number of prisoners to Newgate, but nothing noteworthy respecting their stay has come down to us; and, indeed, the more aristocratic Tower engrosses the interest attaching to this episode. We must concern ourselves with more vulgar criminals—Jack Shepard, for instance, whose daring escapes have earned for him more fame, perhaps, than he deserves; and Jonathan Wild, that prince of thief-takers, who, had he lived in these days, might have risen to be

chief of the Criminal Investigation Department. Wild lived close by in the Old Bailey, and was long a ruling power in Newgate, although he held no official position, except that for a time he was assistant to Charles Hitchen, the City marshal. No doubt Jonathan levied black mail on both sides, but he was faithful to his wages always, and, when once his word was passed, could be trusted implicitly. And there was another excellent point about him. He was inexorable against all robbers who committed violence, and would risk his own life freely to arrest them. Jonathan suffered at Tyburn under an Act, passed chiefly on his account, making it a capital offence to take a reward for the discovery of stolen property without prosecuting the offender.

A bright spot in the dreary annals of crime is the ministry of Silas Told in Newgate—a Bristol man and an old seaman, who had seen and suffered much. It was the time when the Wesleys were moving men's hearts, and Told, who had been under religious influences in early life—he remembered wandering about the fields as a child, "with Sister Dulcybella, conversing about God and happiness"—after his cruel experiences, finds peace in John Wesley's teaching, and becomes teacher of Wesley's charity-school in the Foundry. And one day Wesley preaches from the text, "I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not," and Told remembers how at this time there are ten poor creatures now lying for death in Newgate. And from that time Silas is constantly among the prisoners, and carries comfort even into the condemned hold, where he holds prayer-meetings on the eve of execution. And Told travels with the poor wretches next day on that terrible journey to Tyburn, which is lightened of some of its horrors by the good man's love and sympathy. The most hardened are moved by his fervour, by his pictures of future bliss for those who seek their Redeemer even at the eleventh hour. And he tells how they were "all turned off," women among them, "crying for mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ." Among his penitents were the Chelmsford highwaymen, four young men of position, who robbed a farmer for a drunken frolic. One was Morgan, a naval officer, and a lover of Lady Betty, daughter of the Duke of Hamilton, and through her exertions he was reprieved at the foot of the gallows, and carried back to Newgate in Lady Betty's coach. The other three were hanged, making a very edifying end,

and Told seems to have felt doubtful of the other's good fortune when he finds him, six months later, playing cards in Newgate with some young blood of the period.

One of the last noted cases connected with Old Newgate is that of the notorious Dr. Dodd, who was hung for forgery in 1777.

Some time before this the attention of the authorities had been called to the unhealthy condition of Newgate in a very significant and terrible way. It was in the year 1750, at the time of the Old Bailey Sessions. All the prisons were crowded, for a long war had just come to an end, and numbers of disbanded soldiers, desperate and dissolute, swelled the ranks of thieves and highwaymen. Newgate was worse than any, with hundreds of prisoners awaiting trial, penned up indiscriminately in noisome dens. The fever which always lurked about the gaol flamed up all at once into a terrible contagion, carrying off at a blast Lord Mayor, judges, sheriff, and jury. After this, huge ventilators were stuck up all over the prison to let out the noisome air. But the people of the neighbourhood were in arms at this, and vowed they were being poisoned by the foul air from Newgate. All this, and the manifest unfitness of the building for a prison, brought it about that, in 1770, Old Newgate was pulled down, and the first stone of the new prison, the present Newgate, was laid by Alderman Beckford in the same year. The designs for the new gaol were drawn by George Dance, the architect also of the Mansion House.

Hardly was the prison finished when its troubles began. It was the time of the No Popery Riots, and the mob had been engaged that morning in sacking the house of some obnoxious judge, and were getting well through with it, when one of their leaders, Jackson, a sailor, apparently on the impulse of the moment, shouted out "Newgate ahoy!" and towards Newgate the mob filed off in perfect security. An advanced guard reached the governor's house—a stern and sober mansion occupying the centre of the façade with round-headed windows, five in a row, and a big door with a circular fanlight, well protected with spikes and rails—an advanced guard in the shape of an ill-looking man, who banged rudely at the governor's door, and, not being admitted, smashed in the fanlight with a stone. After that the stones seemed to rise of themselves, and hurl themselves against the windows. The governor was equal to the emergency,

and quickly had the shutters up, but by this time the main body of the rioters had come up, a mob perfectly organised—if such a thing can be—and led by thirty men walking three abreast, while thirty more carried crowbars, mattocks, chisels. A scaffold-pole was picked up and used as a battering-ram, and presently the governor's door gave way, the mob rushed in, and soon made a clean sweep of the furniture into the Old Bailey. But the prison itself, cut off from the governor's house by heavy iron doors, was still intact. The mob piled the furniture from the governor's house against the principal gate, and set fire to it. A negro and a mad waiter from a tavern were among the ringleaders, a frenzied Quaker, and one George the tripe-man, well known in the neighbourhood. Presently the gates were burnt through, and gave way, and the mob swarmed in. The prisoners were released with triumphant shouts. It was a Tuesday, and three of them were to have been hanged on the Friday following. And then the place was fired, and people ran about like demons among the flames. Crabbe, the poet, was there as spectator, and has left a description of it. Lord George Gordon drove past in an open carriage, waved his hand to the excited mob, and smiled encouragingly. Johnson—the great Samuel—visiting the place later on, found Newgate in ruins, with the fire still glowing.

But Newgate soon rose from its ashes, and, indeed, the shell of the prison must have remained nearly intact, for it was soon restored and in use again, and from this period we have only the ordinary annals of crime till the year 1802, when we come to Governor Wall, hanged before Newgate for gross cruelties in his government of Goree committed twenty years before. Five years afterwards occurred a terrible scene before Newgate at the execution of Hoggarty and Holloway; a panic arose among the thickly-packed crowd, and numbers of people were trampled underfoot and crushed to death. Bellingham, a man of doubtful sanity, suffered in 1812 for the murder of Mr. Percival in the lobby of the House of Commons.

And now we have brought the chronicle of Newgate down to the time at which this gloomy corridor takes up the record in its own sinister characters. Here lie the Cato Street Conspirators, wild fellows who felt in some half-crazed way the prevalent discontent of the times. We can hardly take their plot as thoroughly

serious, but the end was the same for them, and they met their fate with the courage of men. Fauntleroy the banker was more fortunate in his burial-place. His body was claimed by his friends; he has no place with the murderers, naturally. His story must be familiar to most of the readers of these pages. He was hanged in 1824, the last victim but two to the cruel laws against forgery abrogated in 1837. The legend once current about Dr. Dodd was revived in Fauntleroy's case by popular credulity. A silver tube, it was said, had been secretly introduced into his throat, and he was resuscitated after the execution and lived for years afterwards on the Continent in retirement. If people were sceptical on the point they were asked: "Where is he buried then?"

There are still remaining several of the old wards of Newgate, where prisoners were confined in companionship, sleeping at night in bunks against the walls, and it was in such wards as these, crammed with women of all characters and all ages, promiscuously herded together, that Mrs. Fry began her excellent work among English prisons. The remembrance of such good people as Mrs. Fry and Silas Told may serve like the rue that was formerly sprinkled on the desks of the judges and bar, and ward off the ill impressions and morbid imaginings induced by mental contact with all this misery and crime.

And now we may think we are fairly rid of the shadows of condemned men; but hardly just yet. Our conductor has another sight for us, and that is ranged on shelves in the ante-room of the governor's office, a singular collection of casts—the heads of all the murderers taken after death—a curious, saddening sight, and yet not without its encouraging side. These poor wretches, most of them were clearly abnormal creatures, reversions to an earlier type of animal cruelty and ferocity. They are not like the people we meet with in the streets, and travel with in railway-carriages; and we may fairly hope that science one day will know how to deal with such propensities, mercifully but firmly, and without the dreadful pit and gallows.

And so we breathe more freely, being out in the street once more, and away from the shadow of Newgate; and wonder, too, not a little what will be the ultimate fate of its gloomy walls. It can hardly be that this noble site will be occupied merely as

a lock-up for prisoners during sessions. Sooner or later the ramping lion of commerce will roar out "Newgate ahoy!" and its walls will fall at the sound, and shops and warehouses will rise, and women will cheapen ribbons where once the hangman did his cruel work.

RICHARD BUTLER'S REVENGE.

A STORY OF IRISH JUSTICE.

"NOT guilty."

"The prisoner is discharged," said the judge curtly, and accordingly the man whose fate had been hanging in the balance was released and quitted the dock, casting as he did so a look of malicious triumph at Richard Butler, for the murder of whose brother he had just been tried and acquitted.

A cheer rang through the court-house, and was taken up by the mob outside, as James Reynolds (better known amongst his associates as Red Jem) came forth to be escorted in triumph to his house. True the evidence against him had been clear enough to have convicted him almost anywhere else; true that not a man on the jury believed him innocent; true that the cheering mob rejoiced, not so much at his acquittal, as because he was in their belief most certainly guilty. Had they thought him innocent, they would not have cared very much whether he were acquitted or not. As it was, the jury dared not convict him, and the mob exulted in his release because he had shot his landlord. What did they care that Reynolds was idle, ignorant, and drunken; that he had again and again broken the conditions under which he held his farm; that he had paid no rent for three years; and that the land was fast becoming worthless? His landlord had evicted him, and that in their eyes was sufficient to justify the murder.

Richard Butler returned the murderer's glance with a look of such relentless hate and stern determination that the ruffian quailed before it, and did not feel quite at ease until he found himself surrounded by his shouting friends; nor did he think it advisable to remain much longer in the neighbourhood. There was, of course, no chance of his being reinstated in the farm he had held on the Butlers' estate; no other landlord in the vicinity cared to take him as a tenant; and for a time he vanished, regretted, it must be acknowledged, by few.

Richard Butler reigned in his brother's stead, and, undeterred by the warning con-

veyed by his predecessor's fate, reigned as his brother had done, justly and liberally, although neither justice nor liberality gained for him popularity. An excellent practical farmer, having learned the business in Scotland, he laid down rules—and moreover insisted on their observance—the undoubted benefits of which an ignorant and prejudiced tenantry were unable to appreciate. Almost every improvement which he caused to be carried out, even though paid for by himself, was looked upon as a vexatious interference with the customs of the people, who, before the Butlers came into possession of the property, had lived under the rule of one of the good old-fashioned squires, who ruined himself and half his property by allowing everybody to do exactly as they pleased so long as they paid a certain amount of rent; and hard indeed was thought the case of the unfortunate tenant who was expected to pay additional rent because his landlord chose to build him a decent house to live in, in lieu of a tumble-down cabin hardly fit to shelter the cow which stood in the corner.

“Shure the ould cabin was good enough for my father and my grandfather before me, and it would have lasted out my time.”

However, the landlord went on his way, caring rather too little, perhaps, for the prejudices of his tenants, feeling confident that in the long run they would discover the benefits arising from the changes which they disliked so much, and, had no outside influences been at work, it is very possible that his hopes might before long have been fulfilled. He was, however, an active and energetic magistrate, in which capacity he had, naturally enough, made himself exceedingly obnoxious to the members of those secret societies which at that time (for I am writing of a period many years ago) did, and unfortunately in the present day still continue to do, so much mischief in Ireland. He was in consequence a marked man, the greatest pains were taken to infuse discontent amongst his tenantry, and only a favourable opportunity was awaited to deal out to him his brother's doom.

About three years after Reynolds's acquittal that worthy reappeared in the village. He had no apparent means of livelihood nor did he seek any, but was nevertheless well dressed, lived quietly and comfortably at the inn, and was always fairly well supplied with money. In fact, he was there as the emissary of a Riband society, his mission being to obtain recruits

from amongst Butler's tenants, and to put that gentleman out of the way on the first convenient occasion. Of course he did not parade his errand about the place, for though brutal and ignorant he did not want for shrewdness.

He knew most of the people on the estate, for there had not been many changes during his absence, yet he had been hanging about for nearly a month, carefully keeping out of Mr. Butler's way, before anyone knew what his business there was.

His first recruit was a man named Tom Horan, one of those semi-savage beings who are to be found in all communities, almost devoid of moral sense, ready to carry out with absolute fidelity the orders he might receive from anyone who would provide him with a living without requiring him to work for it, yet sufficiently cunning to hold his tongue, even when drunk, as to anything which might tend to get either himself or his employers into danger. One or two others, more or less of the same stamp, were enlisted, but Reynolds wanted to get hold of some of the better class, as his superiors showed dissatisfaction with the stamp of his recruits, and fortune at last gave him the desired chance.

A fine smart young fellow named Edward Connor applied to Mr. Butler for permission to hold as sub-tenant part of a farm held by a widow and her two sons, giving as a reason that one of the sons was about to emigrate and that he, Ned Connor, wanted to marry the widow's only daughter, a pretty bright-eyed girl of eighteen. But the landlord steadily refused. In the first place Dan O'Donnell had fixed no definite time for his departure, and in the second his reason for leaving was that he did not think the farm sufficiently large to keep the four of them comfortably. Connor was told that he should have the first vacant holding, and that neither he nor Alice would be any the worse for waiting a little longer, but when is a man in love accessible to reason? He pressed his suit until Mr. Butler grew impatient and closed the discussion somewhat abruptly, so Ned “turned and went away in a rage,” not very well knowing what to do with himself, as he had, rashly enough, given up a good situation on a neighbouring estate before making sure of his new position.

In this mood, unluckily enough, he met Reynolds, who was not long in finding out his grievance, and artfully fanned his irritation until the young fellow felt rather as if he had been turned out of a good farm than

refused permission to take part of an indifferent holding, and as if it must certainly be Mr. Butler's fault that he had lost his employment. The conspirator played his part well, plied his victim with whisky, and having succeeded in getting him to an out-of-the-way blacksmith's shop where the Ribandmen held their meetings, swore him in as a member of the society, almost before Connor, who was more than half intoxicated, comprehended what he was about.

The new recruit seemed at first likely to be rather troublesome; the morning brought reflection and Connor would willingly have undone the work of the previous night and renounced his connexion with the Ribandmen, but Reynolds knew better than to give him a chance, working in turns upon his fears by assuring him of the terrible vengeance which would certainly overtake him should he attempt to draw back; upon his sense of honour by dwelling forcibly upon his duty to those who, by admitting him to their fellowship, had placed themselves in his power; and upon his religious feelings by pointing out the solemn and awful nature of the oath he had taken. By these means Red Jem kept his prey still in the toils, secretly resolving that Ned should at the very first opportunity be engaged in some enterprise which should involve him so deeply that extrication would be impossible.

Affairs were in this position when two strangers took up their abode in the village inn where Reynolds lodged. They had the appearance of decent small farmers, and spent their time in walking about the country and apparently examining the farms. Two days later the head constable in charge of the nearest station called upon Mr. Butler and was closeted with him for some time, and the same night a strong force of police surrounded the blacksmith's shop, searched it from floor to roof, carried off the smith with another man whom they found there, and lodged them in gaol on a charge of Ribandism. Next day the two strangers, who gave their names as Doyle and O'Neill, had a long conference with Reynolds, the result of which was that a close watch was set upon Richard Butler's movements. A week, however, passed uneventfully, notwithstanding which most of the people felt that "something" was about to happen; nor were they in the wrong.

Ned Connor sauntering one forenoon through the village street, met Reynolds walking hastily in the opposite direction.

As they passed each other the latter slightly slackened his pace, saying as he did so:

"Meet me at The Gangers' Copee at four o'clock," turning into the village inn, which was close at hand, before Connor had time to reply.

The place named by Reynolds (which derived its name from the fact of an unfortunate exciseman having been murdered there, whose ghost was said to haunt the place) was a lonely spot between three and four miles from the village, and was situated near the edge of a stretch of bog across which ran a path, practicable for a pedestrian, but absolutely impassable by horse or carriage. This path formed a short cut to the town of C—, to which place Butler had that morning driven by the road which ran round the bog and did not pass within a mile or more of the haunted coppee; but a Riband spy had come across the bog with the news that Butler had met with an accident to his trap in the town, and, as it would take some time to repair, had been heard to say that he should probably walk home across the bog, for he was a first-rate pedestrian and fond of the exercise.

A quarter of a mile from the copee Connor overtook Horan, who was slowly walking in the same direction.

"And what brings ye here, Tom Horan?"

"Red Jem Reynolds tould me to be here at four. It's meself that doesn't like the place; but 'tis no use complaining, we've got to obey our orders."

"And what is it he wants us to do?"

"Shure you must ask that question of himself, Ned, for I know no more than yourself."

A short distance farther on they encountered Reynolds, who beckoned to them to follow him, and the three men entered the little wood, Connor and Horan following their leader until they arrived at that angle of the copse nearest to the bog, from which it was separated by a rough cart track. A deep wide drain divided the track from the bog, crossed, nearly opposite the spot where the men stood, by a plank bridge. The cart track turned down by the side of the copse and was from thence the nearest road to the village.

Without saying a word Reynolds drew from beneath some bushes a long bundle carefully enveloped in waterproof, which when opened proved to contain two guns. Still in silence he loaded and capped the weapons, gave one to Horan, the other to Connor, placed the former in ambush close

to the corner where the road turned round by the side of the wood, and the latter some three or four yards lower down, both however being so placed that, whilst well concealed themselves, they had a good view of the bridge. Taking a dead branch from the ground he laid it on the track some eight or ten yards from Horan's post, and then for the first time broke silence.

"Him we are waiting for will come over the bog and across the bridge. When his foot passes that branch you, Tom Horan, will fire. You, Connor, will wait and not fire unless Horan misses."

Opening his coat he produced a brace of pistols which he carefully recharged, replaced them in his belt, and, rebuttoning his coat over them, continued:

"After 'tis over you, Horan, will walk across the bog to C——, but don't get there until after dark; if any one asks you which way you came, say by the road, and wait at Donovan's till you hear from me. Ned, you will go back to the village, but not by the way you came; I shall—— By——, we were none too soon! Be ready, boys; here he comes!"

In a very short time Connor, whose pulses were throbbing as if the veins would burst, and who would have given anything and everything he possessed to have been anywhere else, saw the tall active figure of Richard Butler coming across the bog towards the fatal spot.

Some two hours later Doyle and O'Neill were strolling together along the road just outside the village; for awhile they paced up and down without speaking, at last Doyle, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, remarked:

"'Tis about time we had some news."

"He's maybe a bit late."

"Sure he can't be much later, for he would never cross the bog after dark."

"There's an hour's daylight yet, and more," said O'Neill. "Still, the report was that he would leave C—— at three. 'Tis but a short hour's walk across the bog and now it's past six. Suppose we walk along the road a bit? There's nobody will think anything of it, for none of them went this way."

Doyle nodded assent, and the two Ribandmen (for such they were) started, slowly at first, but, as if by mutual agreement, no sooner was the last house out of sight than their pace materially quickened, and in considerably less than an hour they reached the copse and stood close to the

drain, gazing across the dreary expanse of bog. Not a living thing was to be seen, the hoarse croak of a raven sailing slowly overhead was the only sound which met their ears, except the sighing of the breeze amongst the trees. Stealthily they peered into the deep black drain as if expecting to find some tidings there, then in a low voice O'Neill said, nodding towards the copse as he spoke: "They can't be waiting there still."

"Divil a bit," replied Doyle, "Jem would have seen us pass and given the signal."

"I can't make it out at all at all," rejoined the other; "we had better get back. I am afraid things have gone wrong somehow, Jem or Connor must be back by this time."

And, breaking in their eagerness and anxiety into a trot, the two worthies soon regained the village, but to receive no tidings. Neither Reynolds nor Connor had made their appearance; on the other hand, nothing had been heard of Richard Butler, whose wife sent down into the village, from which their house was half a mile distant, to ask if he had been seen there.

To O'Neill and Doyle the mystery was inexplicable. That Butler had left C—— as he had arranged, they learned from the driver of the mail-cart, which in its rather roundabout course reached the village at eight o'clock that evening. The man had wished him good-afternoon and seen him turn off the high road towards the bog, yet he seemed to have utterly disappeared; moreover, a messenger despatched during the night to C—— returned with the news that Horan had not made his appearance there, so that not only Butler but Reynolds and both of his comrades remained unaccounted for.

The following morning brought no elucidation of the mystery. No further enquiries had been made from the house, but it had been carefully watched all night, and its master had certainly not returned. The non-appearance of the three missing Ribandmen might, under ordinary circumstances have occasioned little remark, but somehow or other, nobody could exactly say how, strange rumours got afloat. Horan's wife, a fiery excitable woman, who hated the Ribandmen for taking her husband away from her so often, openly attacked Doyle, insisting upon being told where her husband was, threatening to give information to the police, and in fact making such a disturbance that at last (forgetting Reynolds's arrange-

ment, for every detail of the plot had been carefully settled between them beforehand, that Horan should go to C——) he angrily told her that she had better go and look for him in The Gangers' Copse, as the last time he had seen Tom, he was walking in that direction.

The words were no sooner out of his mouth than he regretted them, as they betrayed what he was anxious to keep out of sight, some knowledge of Horan's movements on the previous day, and O'Neill who happened to come up at the moment looked as black as thunder, exclaiming in an undertone :

"Arrah ! How could you be such a born idiot ! Don't you know the guns are there ! Come along, quick ! If these fools are going we had better be the first !"

And accordingly off they started, for by this time Mrs. Horan, accompanied and followed by a score or more of curious and anxious neighbours, amongst the latter being pretty Alice O'Donnell, Ned Connor's betrothed, was in full march for the haunted wood.

As they hurried forward to reach the head of the rude procession Doyle asked his companion :

"Do ye know whereabouts the guns are hidden ?"

"Yes ! I chose the place with Jem myself a week ago, and if any of these omadhauns find them, the police will hear of it and get hold of them for certain. Come along !"

With all their haste, however, they only reached the copse some fifty or sixty yards in advance of the main body, who, pressing eagerly after them, broke in amongst the trees, searching in every direction. The two confederates, however, knowing exactly the spot they wished to reach, hastened along the road until they reached the corner of the copse, when O'Neill, who was ahead, pushed through the bushes, saying :

"'Tis only a few yards from this." Then with a start of terror, "Oh, my God ! look there !"

Doyle, who was close behind him, looked in the direction indicated by his companion, and then starting back a pace both men stood for a moment as if petrified. Not three yards from them, on his back, with his gun still firmly grasped in his hand as if he had been about to use it clubbed, lay Horan, stone dead, with a bullet through his heart.

"Where are the others ?" said Doyle in a hoarse voice, and the question was partly

answered almost immediately, as looking fearfully round they saw, not ten feet from Horan's corpse, another prostrate form. With trembling steps they drew near and simultaneously recognised Reynolds. He lay face downwards, a dark pool of blood staining the ground about his head and his discharged pistols lying close to him ; he had been shot through the brain, the bullet having passed completely through his head.

A minute later the foremost of the other searchers made their appearance, and the wood rang with the wild cries of the women, whilst Mary Horan, kneeling beside her husband's body, poured forth the most terrible imprecations upon the heads of those who had enticed him to his death. After the first excitement had a little subsided the same thought flashed at once across both O'Neill and Doyle, "Where was Connor ?" Of all the party they alone knew that he had been with the wretched men who now lay dead before them, and of course they said no word of this to any of their companions, one of whom presently stumbled over a gun amongst some ferns a short distance from the spot where Reynolds lay. It was empty, and the Ribandmen knew that it must be that which had been provided for Connor's use, but beyond this there was no sign or trace of him whatever, and with heavy hearts the comrades left the wood and hurried away, leaving the rest to follow with their diabolical burdens.

A hurriedly summoned meeting of the Riband lodge was held that night. They had, after the raid upon the blacksmith's shed, shifted their quarters to a deserted hut upon a hillside some little distance from the village. A trusted scout was placed outside to watch, and Doyle was in the act of proposing that operations should be suspended until some news could be obtained of Connor, when with a tremendous crash the door was burst open, and on the threshold, pistol in hand, appeared the tall figure and stern features of Richard Butler, a dragoon officer with drawn sword by his side. The conspirators were all armed, but the surprise was too complete. Before one of them had time to handle his weapons the room was crowded with soldiers, whose ready carbines prevented any idea of resistance, and in a very few minutes the whole party were mounted upon a couple of cars and proceeding under a strong escort to the nearest jail ; their trusted scout alone excepted, for he, alas ! had sold them.

They were tried at the following assizes, and (excepting one or two who

turned king's evidence) it was many a long year before any of them revisited their native haunts. The mystery of the deaths of Horan and Reynolds remained unrevealed. An enquiry was of course held, and the haunted copse, which from that day bore a worse name than ever, was most thoroughly searched, but nothing was discovered to throw any light upon the matter. The ball which killed Horan was found, it is true, to fit Reynolds's pistols, but the size was a very common one, and a blood-stained bullet cut out of a tree a few feet from where Reynolds fell was found to fit the same bore. One theory was that the men had quarrelled, and that Horan having fired at Reynolds, the latter had shot him and then committed suicide. This, however, did not account for the second gun. Connor's disappearance created some remark, and a search was made for him, but without result; moreover, there was not a shadow of evidence against him, and finally the jury returned an open verdict. Mr. Butler had, it appeared, after all passed the night at C—. He started indeed on his road across the bog, but after proceeding some distance had, he stated, changed his mind and returned, passing the night at the house of a brother magistrate in the neighbourhood, which he only left on the following day in time to reach the rendezvous and accompany the soldiers on their errand, the traitor having no sooner received his summons to the meeting than he had hastened to send warning both to the magistrates and the military.

Alice O'Donnell could indeed have thrown some light upon her lover's absence. A fortnight after his disappearance a pedlar passing through the village stopped at O'Donnell's farm, and, whilst extolling his wares, contrived to pass a letter into Alice's hand unseen. It was from Ned himself. Having resolved to renounce the riband conspiracy and fearing for his life should his purpose become known, he had fled the country and made his way to England. He was resolved, he said, to go to the United States, and would send for Alice as soon as he was settled; meanwhile he would write again before long, and the letter ended with a most earnest injunction to her to preserve the strictest secrecy, which Alice faithfully obeyed, although months passed before she heard from him again.

Many a long year elapsed before the full history of the events of that night when Reynolds and Horan met their deaths became known. and then it was but to few

that the facts as I now proceed to relate them were revealed.

Connor's feelings as he saw Butler coming across the bridge were most unenviable. He had joined the riband lodge whilst smarting under a sense of disappointment and fancied injury, besides being under the potent influence of whisky. Want of courage had alone prevented him from breaking the connexion, and now that he knew the cowardly and murderous task in which he was expected to assist, his soul revolted from it, his bitter feelings towards Butler had passed away, and his impulse as he watched him advancing towards what appeared to be certain death was to shout a warning, regardless of consequences to himself. Whilst he yet hesitated Butler reached the fatal spot. As he did so he turned his face towards the wood, started, and sprang aside as Horan fired and missed! Connor instantly discharged his gun at random, and the next moment with a spring like a tiger at bay, Butler dashed amongst the bushes with a loaded pistol in either hand. Clubbing his gun Horan swung it over his head, but before he could strike a blow Butler shot him dead and turned upon Reynolds, who stood between his confederates. Seeing him apparently unarmed, for Reynolds, never expecting to be attacked, had left his pistols in his belt, Butler struck him a blow on the forehead with the butt-end of the pistol which laid him senseless at his feet, and stood confronting Connor. So fierce and sudden had been the attack that the latter stood as if paralysed. His opponent recognised him instantly and sternly said:

"Throw away that gun."

The young man mechanically obeyed, and for a second or two they regarded each other in silence, then Butler spoke again:

"A pretty trade for your father's son, Ned Connor!"

Ned made a step forward impulsively, and stretching out both his hands exclaimed:

"May I never see glory if I knew what they brought me here for this day, and my bitter curse on them that led me to it! Sure I never tried to hit your honour at all at all!"

A grim smile crossed the other's face as he answered:

"I'll be bound that other fellow tried though, and he missed me as well as you. You should curse your own folly, for that is what you have really to thank for this job."

"Sure you won't hang me, sir?"

Butler glanced for a moment at Reynolds's prostrate form, and in that instant for the first time recognised his brother's murderer.

A strange look passed over his face, and stooping down he satisfied himself that the man was still insensible before he spoke again :

"Listen to me, Ned Connor," he said impressively : "I would be sorry to see you come to the gallows, as sure enough you will unless you quit this game. I have known you and yours for many years as quiet decent people, and I am inclined to believe that what you said just now is true. Do as I tell you. Leave this place and go abroad. I will find the means, but you must quit this at once, and give me your sacred word never to return, for if ever I see you or hear of your being seen in the village or in Ireland itself, I will hunt you down and hand you over to justice."

"But Alice ! Oh, your honour, let me bid her good-bye !"

"Would Alice marry a murderer ?" exclaimed Butler impatiently. "You may write to her after you have left the country ; tell her that you have gone abroad to escape from the Ribandmen and that you will send for her as soon as you can ; she will be glad indeed to hear it."

Drawing out his purse he placed twelve pounds in Connor's hand and continued :

"Now go ! It is only fifteen miles to L—, and you can reach there easily to-night. Take a passage to Bristol, and from thence to the United States or Canada. You can write to Alice from Bristol, but as you value your neck get out of Ireland as fast as you can, and never breathe to a living soul a word about this day's work. Remember that your precious friends will not forget or forgive you for leaving them."

Completely overmastered by the stronger nature, Connor took the money, and swore earnestly to obey his benefactor's commands. One moment more he lingered, cast a look at Reynolds and ventured to say :

"What will you do with him, sir ? Is he dead ?"

"Go !" thundered Butler, "and leave him to me !"

Venturing no further delay Connor started off at his beat pace, reached L— that night, and started next morning for Bristol. Here he wrote to Alice, but feared to send his letter by post, for he knew that had it come by that means every one in the village would hear of it, and his dread lest the Ribandmen should trace him amounted almost to panic. Luckily he encountered the pedlar, who promised, and, as I have told, kept his promise, to deliver the missive into Alice's own hands ; but Ned was far away

on his voyage to America before it reached her. To conclude Connor's story, I may say here that he thrived and prospered in his exile, but four years passed away, during which time he only wrote twice, before he so far overcame his dread of being discovered as to venture to disclose his place of abode to his sweetheart and to send the money for her passage. Alice had however remained true to her old lover ; within six months she had joined him, and Ned never had cause to regret that he had obeyed his orders.

To return to Richard Butler. For a minute he stood gazing at his senseless enemy, then, stooping down, unfastened his coat, drew the pistols from his belt, and, having discharged them in the air, flung them on the ground. The reports seemed to arouse Reynolds. Opening his eyes he gazed vacantly upwards, then pressing his hand to his aching head struggled into a sitting attitude. As he did so he saw and recognised Butler's hard set face, and every vestige of colour left his own, his very lips grew livid with terror. His foeman neither spoke nor moved, but with his hands behind his back stood sternly regarding him. He looked eagerly round for his comrades, and Horan's dead body met his eyes. Connor was nowhere to be seen ; Red Jem was alone with the dead and his deadly enemy. Still Butler stood like a living statue, and gradually the Ribandman's natural audacity somewhat revived. Had Butler intended to take his life he thought that he would have done it at first ; probably he meant to give him up to the police ; but after all it was only man to man, and he felt assured that it was more than Richard Butler could do to drag him by main force to the station ; but the ominous silence grew oppressive at last, and Reynolds broke it.

"Where's Connor ?"

"Gone."

"My curse on the cowardly hound ! He shall be well paid for desarting me !"

"Not by you or by your means."

"There's more than him to be paid yet for this, by — !"

"True."

Despite all his hardihood, real or assumed, Reynolds's heart was sinking ; he did not like those stern curt replies, but, mustering up the last remains of his courage, he made one more effort to find out Butler's purpose, and succeeded.

"And now I suppose you'd like me to walk with you to the station ?" he said with an attempt at a sneer.

"No, James Reynolds, you will never see the station; you escaped me once, and I swore that should the opportunity ever come you should not get off again. It has come, and by the heavens above us and the hell which waits for you, I'll keep my oath, and, when I quit this place, I'll leave your coward carcass behind me!"

With a yell of rage, terror, and despair the Ribandman sprang to his feet. It was the last sound he ever uttered. Stepping coolly back a pace Butler shot him through the head with as little pity as he would have felt towards a mad dog, and Reynolds fell face downwards, dead at his feet. After reloading his pistols Butler stood for a minute or two in deep thought, gazing the while with a stern countenance upon his dread handiwork, then, scarcely casting a glance at Horan's body as he stepped over it, he left the corpse and without the slightest hesitation retraced his steps across the bog to C—. Calling at the carriage-builder's where he had left his dog-cart to be repaired, he told the man that he had changed his mind and should stop for the night at Mr. Beresford's house, which accordingly he did. The rest of the story the reader knows.

It was not until after Richard Butler's death, which did not take place until nearly thirty years after the events I have narrated, that the mystery was revealed. Amongst his papers was found a full account of his own share in the events of that memorable day; the deliberate shooting of Reynolds he looked upon as a just and necessary act, but expressed a regret that he had not done so at the first onset, and so spared himself the necessity of killing him in cold blood. Connor he did not mention by name, merely stating that he had allowed a third man to escape. The contents of the paper were communicated to the authorities, who, however, considering the whole circumstances and the length of time that had elapsed, did not think it advisable to reopen the enquiry into the deaths of the two Ribandmen. The matter consequently gained no publicity, as Butler's relatives naturally kept his confession a secret, for the act, though it might be excused, could scarcely be justified.

SNAKE-EATERS.

MUCH has been said and written lately about the morality of allowing snakes in captivity to kill and feed on live animals. Let us glance at the converse side of the

question for a few minutes, and consider what are the natural enemies of the reptile in its wild state.

With the exception of man, the term "natural enemies" implies those creatures which seek out snakes for food. That anybody or anything should deliberately eat snakes appears to us most horrible at the first suggestion. Nevertheless, we find that they are sometimes sought after for their own merits, and are indeed highly popular as articles of diet with certain animals.

Birds are perhaps the greatest snake destroyers, especially certain families of them. Even small insectivorous birds will devour a tiny serpent as readily as a worm when they find one, and storks, falcons, pelicans, cranes, and some vultures are always on the look-out for this special delicacy. The secretary bird, *Serpentarius reptilivorus*, owes its scientific name to this habit; the cassowary and sun-bittern are said to entertain a similar partiality; while peacocks are so fond of snakes that they will actually desert the home where they are fed in a district where these reptiles are plentiful. A well-known London banker purchased a small island on the west coast of Scotland some time ago; no attempt at cultivation had been made there and it was uninhabited, save by sea-birds and vipers. That the latter should have swarmed in such abundance in a situation so far north and isolated from the mainland is certainly remarkable; but there they were in force so strong that the banker found his newly-acquired territory quite unavailable for the purpose he had intended it—a shooting and fishing station in summer. Acting under advice, he procured six pairs of pea-fowl and turned them loose on the island, which they very soon cleared of its unwelcome tenants, or at any rate reduced their numbers to such an extent that the remainder could be evicted without much danger or difficulty. Almost any bird will attack a snake of suitable size (of course it is not to be expected that a lark will swallow a boa-constrictor); and it is a curious thing that they eat venomous or non-venomous species indiscriminately. They appear to first disable it by a sharp blow with the beak on the spine, then kill it by successive pecks and shakings which dislocate the vertebræ, and finally transfix the head; then gobble it down. The presence of the venom in the bird's uninjured stomach would do it no harm, but one would have supposed that the sharp

fangs or broken bones projecting through the mangled skin in its passage down, must sometimes cause excoriations of the mucous membrane, and thus provide a means of inoculation, even if the aggressor did not get bitten in the combat. Neither accident, however, has been observed to occur by those who have repeatedly watched the operations.

Pigs are tremendous fellows for snakes, too. They, as well as peacocks, have done good service in ridding entire islands of these dangerous pests; and it is said that Mauritius was cleared of poisonous reptiles by the wild hogs which were imported there in the first instance, and have now spread over the island. A little tame silver fox, belonging to the writer, got hold of a dead whip-snake which was hung up in the shade of the verandah awaiting dissection; it was about eight feet long, but no thicker than an ordinary lead-pencil, and the brushy little gourmand was meditatively absorbing it lengthwise, like an Italian sgherro swallowing his string of macaroni. This fox had been brought up on farinaceous diet and bread-fruit, of which he was very fond, and this experiment of his in ophiophagy was seized upon as a proof of the hereditary instinctive cravings of his carnivorous nature for the animal food he had never known; a theory which was abandoned shortly afterwards when it was discovered that he had been in the habit of stealing chickens from his birth. The mongoose is a noted serpenticide, and effects its purpose solely by the agility it displays in rushing in and gripping its adversary by the neck while dexterously avoiding the blow, not by any immunity from the consequences of a venomous bite which it has been supposed to enjoy, nor from the antidotal results of eating a herb or root of its own seeking, which the popular preference of mysticism to a commonplace explanation has decided ought to be—and therefore is—the case. Mongooses have been subjected to the fangs of a serpent and have died with precisely the same unromantic train of symptoms that would manifest themselves in other animals; and have more than once been killed, while under observation in the course of a fight with a deadly snake, in their wild state and surrounded by the vegetation amongst which they exist.

Not only the ichneumon, but the civet, paradoxure, genet, grison, weasel, stoat, and other Viverridæ and Mustelidæ will destroy reptiles of all sorts. The common rat has acquired an honourable reputation for

effecting the same good work, but its credit seems to rest on no very good foundation. Rats when hungry will attack snakes for food, as they will attack anything that comes in their way at such times; and if the snake be dormant or inactive it may not retaliate, but actually allow itself to be eaten to death—witness the big pythons, rattle-snakes, and cobras which have been killed in menageries by these animals which have been tendered to them to eat, and inadvertently left in their cages when they were not disposed to feed. Occasionally, too, a rat seized by a snake has been able to inflict great injury on its antagonist in its efforts to escape, even though mortally wounded itself. Cats attached to farm-houses, which generally lead a half-wild predatory existence, sometimes pick up snakes and play with them, but I don't think they eat them. In Somersetshire there is a superstition, that all the cats born in the month of May are somewhat mentally deranged and betray a peculiar liking for reptiles and other creeping things—a May cat being something equivalent to a March hare in that county. I remember a fine disturbance in a country-house near Taunton one evening, where a cat had been seen to jump over the garden wall with "something" in its mouth; it was a May cat, of course, and though not belonging to the house had formed an engaging habit of bringing in toads, snakes, dead fish, and other chance game, and depositing the same on sofas and carpets without any ostentation whatever. What the something was on this occasion was never determined, for loaded guns were brought out and pitch-forks flourished; so pussy, hearing the uproar, wisely decamped, taking her quarry with her.

A very nice little snake-story appeared some time ago in a paper which devotes a large portion of its space to popular natural history, and was headed, "Extraordinary Sagacity in Spiders." Three of those sapient insects, it appears, came across a snake and resolved to eat him. But first—and this is where the sagacity comes in—they artfully spun threads round his mouth and so tied it up to prevent his biting; and then, having him quite helpless and at their mercy, they sagaciously devoured his body at their leisure. Ants, however, have been known to cluster in myriads on a serpent which has incautiously strayed into their nest and to destroy it, the reptile being unable to shake them off; but it frequently happens that ants and other insects or parasites attack a snake's eyes and positively eat them, those

organs being undefended by eyelids and therefore always open. The outer layer of the conjunctival membrane is continuous with the cuticle of the whole body, and is desquamated with it when the creature "sheds its skin;" ordinary impurities or particles of foreign matter are got rid of in this way, but if the transparent plate covering the cornea be perforated, as it is by the ravages of these insects, the snake's sight is permanently destroyed. This accident has frequently happened, in spite of every care, in the reptile-house at the Zoological Gardens, where the cages are very old and the woodwork semi-rotten, affording abundant harbour to these pests; in the new Reptilium, now in course of construction, Portland cement and zinc will replace the use of wood as far as possible. A jack has been seen to catch and devour a grass-snake, swimming across a river; certain lizards (notably, *Teius Teguexin* and the Monitors) attack them readily; and a man named Swan—Captain James Swan—who performs in a glass tank of water with various reptiles at theatres and music-halls, told me that his alligator-tortoise (a splendid specimen) bit a fine glass-snake in two and swallowed half of it.

Cannibalism is not unknown among snakes, certain species living exclusively on their own kind. This is especially the case among the Elapidæ, of which the hamadryad (*Ophiophagus bungarus*) in the Zoo is a magnificent example; this reptile was added to the collection six years and a half ago, since when it has eaten nothing (save on one occasion) but snakes. Common English grass-snakes, being the cheapest procurable, are supplied to it as a rule; in the winter, when these cannot be obtained, he is regaled on Moccassin (*Tropidonotus fasciatus*) and seven-banded (*T. leberis*) snakes which are bred there in considerable numbers. One Christmas Day the poor hamadryad was so hungry that he greedily swallowed a little dead boa of my own. The exceptional occasion to which I have alluded was brought about in this way: A grass-snake which had recently bolted a frog was given him, which he immediately seized; the pressure of his teeth on its body caused—not to enter into details—the batrachian to reappear, and when the grass-snake was finished the hamadryad turned to and took the frog like a pill. This is quite unaccountable, for every effort had been made, as may be imagined, to induce him to accept other food in lieu of snakes; eels and other fish, frogs,

lizards, birds, rats, guinea-pigs, and rabbits had been tendered to him without success. All the Elapidæ are very venomous; the hamadryad is perhaps the most deadly of all serpents, and the cobra, haje, and Australian death-adders also belong to this group. Another member of the same family, the exquisitely beautiful coral-snake (*Elaps lemniscatus*) of Brazil, ringed with symmetrical vermilion, black, and white bands—whence its proper name, "corral," a ring or circle in Spanish—also preys on its relations. All seems to be fish which comes into their net, in an ophidian way. A very plump little lemniscatus was brought to me in a bottle some time ago at Pernambuco, which next morning, being sea-sick perhaps from the previous day's shaking, disgorged an amphiscœna or earth-snake bigger than itself. In the British Museum there is another *Elaps* (*E. fulvius*) from Mexico, which formerly belonged to Mr. Hugo Finck's collection. This creature was taken in the act of swallowing a harmless snake one inch longer than itself, and, curiously enough, this half-swallowed snake is of so rare a species (*Homalocranium semicinctum*) that this is the only specimen contained in the museum. The smooth snake (*Coronella lævis*), occasionally found in this country but common on the Continent, whose ordinary diet consists exclusively of lizards, will devour slow-worms of nearly its own size when it cannot obtain four-footed varieties; slow-worms, in spite of their snake-like form, being really legless lizards.

Serpents in confinement often swallow each other accidentally while feeding, without any apparent malice aforethought. Two will seize the same rat or bird, and the one that has the better or outside grip (usually the one that catches hold last) will take in bird, and snake too, the latter holding on literally to the death. A valuable ring-hals (*Serpodon homachates*) was recently sacrificed to its companion's voracity in this way at the Zoological Gardens; while frog-eaters, more especially moccassin-snakes and other *Tropidonoti*, require to be pulled apart nearly every time they are fed, and a cage full of them, if left to dine unmolested, would probably be represented at the conclusion of the meal by one or two survivors only, on the Kilkenny cat principle. The same thing happens at times with boas and many other serpents, but is looked upon by keepers as a mere accident.

Whether the viper actually swallows

its young to afford them a temporary refuge from danger or not is still a vexed question. This reptile is difficult to rear and feed in captivity, or the matter might have been set at rest before now by observation in menageries. In the absence of better testimony than the mass of rather desultory evidence at present brought forward, it is hard to believe that it does so, partly because we have no analogy for it elsewhere, partly because a snake shows no maternal care for its young, and partly because no such case has ever come under the immediate notice of any scientific observer of these creatures and their habits.

Lastly, man is casually ophiophagous. If he were bold who first swallowed an oyster, surely the pioneer of snake-cookery was bolder, though to my thinking there is nothing in the whole range of edible things so absolutely repulsive in its appearance, habits, and associations as that hideous spidery crustacean, the crab—very delicious it is, nevertheless. The Kaffir and Hottentot eat snakes of all kinds, even the deadly puff-adder, while the Bushman not only regards their flesh as a delicacy, but consumes without hesitation the animals which he brings down with his arrows tipped with the adder's venom. On the banks of the Mississippi, "Musical Jack" means stewed rattlesnakes, a favourite dish, and one for which ingredients are never lacking in that infested region. Sir T. Mitchell tells us that the Australian aborigines are snake-eaters, and in some parts of France a tisane or broth of vipers is highly esteemed for gout and scrofulous affections, the big viper (*Vipera aspis*), and not our own *Pélias berus*, being the reptile used for its concoction. The late Mr. Frank Buckland states that he has tasted boa constrictor and found it to resemble veal somewhat, and gives an amusing account in his *Curiosities of Natural History* of his little girl appropriating some snakes' eggs and eating them, under the impression that they were big sugar-plums.

I myself have eaten anaconda and viper, but cannot recommend either; and it must be confessed that though frogs, turtle, tortoise, igeiana, tejuassú, and even alligator are highly esteemed in various parts of the world, snakes have never risen into high favour as adjuncts to the table with white men, at any rate, nor do they seem ever likely to supersede butcher's meat in popular estimation.

DAFFODIL.

CHAPTER III. DAUGHTER'S ROMANCE.

SUKEY attended at dinner in a primly starched gown and cap, and pressed the diners to eat as if she fancied the meal was a banquet of her own giving; and Daffodil's young appetite was not impaired by the hungry looks the dead Marjorams cast from the wall upon her plate. Each of the three gentlemen recommended his favourite dish to the little guest, and all their eyes were frequently turned upon the slight black-robed figure with the strange bright brown eyes. The Marjorams had for years lived much by themselves, visitors to the farm being infrequent. Occasionally a client of Marjoram and Company would come with his dowdy wife and eat with them, or a fellow board or committee man would ride out with Father to dine with the family and smoke in the garden; but the young ladies around X—did not dream of paying visits at the old-fashioned farm, and a fair young girl was an unusual sight at its table. Daffodil was as great a rarity in the company in which she found herself, as was the bird she had brought from afar among the sparrows and tomtits in the holes of the hoary walls and on the untrimmed bushes in the garden.

As soon as the twilight had hidden green lawns, orchards, and purple woods outside, reading lamps were brought into the drawing room and placed upon various tables as the family grouped themselves. Father and Mother played backgammon at one table, Daughter arranged herself at another with a footstool and a deep basketful of accumulated tating at her feet, and with a mass of progressive tating in her hands. The eldest son, the dreamy fisherman, took the other side of her table, and, producing a book of wonderful flies, proceeded to construct some ingenious imitations of the same.

He sat with his knees crossed and his right toe pointed, his head to one side, and his nose following the angle of the pointing toe. Before giving the most artistic touches to his work he would carefully polish, and seem to sharpen, the end of his nose against the folds of his silk handkerchief; and then nose and toe being set at their acutest angle, he would with long and nimble fingers perform some quick decisive movements which gave a finished perfection to his work. Across the background of his thoughts meanwhile lay flowing rivers and tender pastures, and moving upon the background were certain poetic ideas, a

little mildewed perhaps, but none the less genuine and bewitching for that. The eldest son had once hoped to be actor in some noble strife, but, looking round the world, he had seen no cause that seemed great enough for the arrogance and laziness of his youth. Disliking ordinary labour, he had held himself aloof, in readiness for action when the glorious hour should arrive. The moment never came, and Giles began to feel that his was a spirit too lofty to find development in this century.

Putting his hand to the plough, and invariably drawing it back again, he had long since worn out the hopes, if not the patience of the good old couple who had brought him into a world to which he knew not how to fit himself. When he spoke of heroic deeds they listened and were silent.

When Father, trotting his horse along the roads, caught a glimpse of his elderly useless son sitting wrapped in a reverie on the banks of the river, the thin drooping figure and dreaming face touched the old man's heart with an indescribable pity.

"Poor lad!" he would murmur, "it is well there is something that amuses him!" Latterly Giles had retired further and further into the fortified castles and laurel-hung palaces of his imagination. His only studies were a little mediæval history and romance, and as he sat, a patient angler, on the grassy margin of his favourite stream, his thoughts made him a harmless and half melancholy delight.

At a third table Marjoram and Company was teaching chess to Daffodil, a game for long heads which he liked, and, though a good player himself, he found pleasure in sweeping away Daffodil's little daring pawns and tripping up her reckless queen. Marjoram and Company would not have liked the young girl so well had she been a better chess-player, for he loved having things his own way. He had set out in life resolved to be practical and money-making, and in this he had succeeded, much to his own self-reverential admiration. For the last twenty years he had been telling himself that by-and-by he would begin to build a house which should outshine all the dwellings of the neighbourhood of X—. In this sumptuous home, yet unbuilt, he had placed in imagination, as mistress, every handsome young lady who had passed before his eyes, blooming and fading, since the days of his youth, yet his choice was still uncertain, though, according to his own estimation, quite unlimited save by his own fastidious taste. Latterly, as he grew

richer, he had been telling himself that it was time enough to think about building the house, and regarded every pretty girl who looked on him by chance as an enemy laying plots to destroy his peace of mind. And as Daffodil, when subject for some time to the benefits of his society, and when properly enlightened as to the glories of the future house, would certainly take her place in the ranks of those from whom he might choose, so Marjoram and Company was willing to teach her humility beforehand, were it only through his superiority in the matter of a game of chess.

At ten o'clock Daughter led Daffodil to her room. The Peach Apple Farm had in olden times been a convent, where the good nuns had brewed their own cider, and looked after their poor, and the room now given to the guest had in those past days been the oratory of the nuns; witness the windows of stained glass which let in the moonlight in faintly-tinted spots upon the floor, and towards which a tree leaned heavily, occasionally tapping with ghostly finger on the pane, and harbouring an ancient owl, said to have hooted, then as now, in the days of bell-ringing and prayers upon the farm.

Daughter placed her lamp upon a bracket where its soft light did not extinguish the moonlight at the upper end of the room, and stood by smiling as Daffodil went on her knees before a trunk out of which came wonderful glories of sparkle and colour, quivering fans and gorgeous feathers, curious life-like glowing birds, glittering trinkets, and polished shells and stones; and last of all, a picture in a case which the young girl put into Daughter's already overflowing hands, saying:

"That is the likeness of my guardian which I promised you. It is as like him as anything that does not give his voice and smile can be."

The brilliant feathers trembled a little in Daughter's well-laden arms.

"You must place a pair of fans on your mantelpiece," said Daffodil as Daughter laid the treasures aside upon a table. "Now I am tired, and I am going to bed. I shall know a great deal about the place when I awake in the morning."

Daughter's room was at the end of a long passage, up and down which the nuns used to walk telling their beads; yet so fair had been their fame and so goodly their labours that no black-robed figure, clanking chains, had ever been met with here at midnight, bringing to the living horror of the

unrest of the dead. The nuns slept well, and the only suggestion that they might possibly, in the midst of heavenly contentment, bear their old home in mind, lurked in a tradition that at certain periods of the summer season a fair-faced novice in a gleaming veil did visit the rambling garden at the hour of the kindling dawn. In her early days Daughter had often lingered at her window, watching to see the silvery maid coming gliding through the roses, scattering dews and benedictions from Paradise; more than once had the lilies in their tall whiteness deceived her, but she had long since given up all wish to surprise the unearthly messenger at her task. Youth with its struggles had gone, placing at its departure shadows between the woman and all such ethereal dreams. As Daughter peered from her window now on a moonlight night, the only phantom she looked for had the features and footsteps she herself had owned in the past. The novice was never among the lilies; but Ursula Marjoram, aged eighteen, was tending the overflowing roses in her place.

Mechanically Ursula put the brilliant feather-fans in position on the mantelpiece, strange bright things plucked from glowing creatures that lived in forests of that unknown spot of the earth which had been often visited by her thoughts through the years of her most placid and monotonous life. Above and between the new and fantastic ornaments, so rich and vivid in themselves and their associations, hung, where it had hung for years, a somewhat faded likeness of a man; a very youthful face, smiling, with curling locks and open, eager glance. This was the portrait of the lover of Ursula in her youth.

Holding in her hand the unopened case given her by Daffodil, she stood gazing at this young countenance, which she had studied daily through so many years, and experienced a feeling often noted painfully, a consciousness that the eyes were never looking to meet hers, but gazing over and beyond her, seeing something she could never see. So much for what was old and familiar. Now she was going to see all that remained of him after the drowsy lapse of time. She touched the spring and the case lay open in her hand.

Well, this was no one of whom she had any recollection. It was not that other face aged or even matured; but a new face altogether, with new features and colouring, new meanings and purposes. Was this Laurence Dartfield, whose existence

must be but the continuation of the same life which sparkled in those other eyes gazing so smilingly into futurity from out the little frame on the wall? She turned from the older portrait, and sat at the table with the new one in her hands. What a warmth and vigour, what a nobleness and earnestness were here! Calmly the eyes of the portrait met her troubled glance, not overlooking her as the other did, but gravely questioning her, as if seeking assurance of the tender constancy of the sweetheart of his boyhood.

"I am older than he, and he is not young," said Daughter to herself sadly. "How could it matter to him whether I remember him or not? Yonder boy on the wall might now be my son. Perhaps this man could look on me almost as a mother."

She got up and gazed in the glass, holding her lamp above her head. The face she saw was hardly a pendant for the portrait in her hand.

"I never was a beauty," she reflected sorrowfully, "yet indeed I was comelier than I am now. My face was very white and pink, like the hawthorn, somebody said; and my eyes had an honest look in them. Father used to say it was bonny."

Surveying herself minutely, with a pathetic look of pain she took heed of her darkened complexion, the homely broadening of her features, the tightening of the lines about her kindly eyes and mouth. Her hair had none of the shining lustre that had made it the ornament of her youth, and her figure in growing larger had lost most of its graceful lines. Daughter saw herself with truth-telling eyes, and yet she did not see herself exactly as she was. Youth had lent her a refinement that had been stolen from her in the passage of many commonplace events, the tone of her voice was peculiarly monotonous, and her manner of expressing herself homely and matter-of-fact. She had a growing incapacity for showing emotion of any kind gracefully, and even her walk, and a certain inartistic arrangement of her attire, were points which would strike a stranger unfavourably, but were quite unmarked by herself.

Daughter was depressed by her unwonted contemplation of her own face. She had heard of women of her age who could charm by a certain chastened expression, or who were even possessed of a beauty which gave them power; and she felt bitterly that her personal homeliness had come to her as a heritage. She was

the living likeness of a deceased paternal aunt, whose most lofty ideas had been on the subject of bacon-curing and butter-making.

"I have been told I should grow more like her in the course of years," sighed Ursula; "I had quite forgotten, but now I am sure it is true. Oh, Aunt Joan, Aunt Joan! what a terrible wrong you have done me!"

A knock at her door interrupted these reflections, and the next moment a white trembling figure crept into the room.

"There is someone knocking and crying at my window," whispered Daffodil.

Daughter had forgotten to tell her of the tapping tree with its owl. Even when informed the child still trembled and begged to be allowed to creep into Ursula's bed; where she lay throbbing and thinking through many wakeful hours. But Ursula, having put the portrait away, slept soundly until the morning's light.

CHAPTER IV. TRANSPLANTED.

DAFFODIL dropped into her place in the household as naturally as the rose into her own hand, when she stood on tiptoe to gather it from the garden wall. She brought bloom, freshness, romance into the dulness, primness, monotony of the old farmhouse. The tap of her little foot, the flutter of her dress, the ripple of her laughter became to those inner chambers what stirring breeze, waving blossom, and song of blackbird had been since the beginning to the garden, fields, and orchards without.

To Ursula she brought a strange recalling and revivifying of old thoughts and sensations. Something of a renewal of youth in veins which had been chilled early in life; and yet Daughter had never felt so aged as when this new current stirred the sluggish flow of her existence. Had the new inmate been a hoydenish or coquettish maiden, Ursula's dead self had not turned in its grave at the tread of her footstep; but Daffodil's earnest simplicity and a certain staidness of demeanour, which was a characteristic of hers when not in a fantastic humour, troubled the elder woman with a sense of mingled sympathy and contrast. Had the sympathy been less, the contrast had not been distressingly felt. Daughter had not realised how old she had become till this thoughtful yet child-like girl had appeared flitting along life's pathway by her side. Daffodil was conscious of neither sympathy nor contrast, looking

on Ursula as merely a woman of an earlier generation whose ways were a little peculiar, but whose actions and looks were invariably kind.

With the old master and mistress of the farmhouse Daffodil assumed the place of a grandchild.

"Oh, Father!" whispered Mother, waking out of an after-dinner nap, and seeing the old man in his armchair opposite gazing through the open window into the garden, where Daffodil's fair head was moving among the rose-bushes, her little hands picking and stealing, her spoils gathered in her drapery, and her face uplifted, gazing, admiring, inhaling; enjoying with a silent passion of enjoyment. "Oh, Father, do you remember our Marian's little baby?"

"Yes," said Father, with a tender look at his old wife; and so the young stranger found a home in their unforgetting hearts. They made believe to each other that she was the dead babe restored to them in the bloom of girlhood. So unreasonable a fancy could be ill translated into words; but there is little need of explanations between a pair who have clasped hands happily upon their golden wedding-day.

Daffodil fed the old lady's fowls; arrogant peacock, shrieking guinea-hens, cooing house-pigeons, all took their meals from her hand. Daughter imposed harder tasks upon her, long seams of flannel garments for the poor, the "casting on" of knitted stockings, and sometimes the interviewing of certain weird ancient women, who gathered into the porch by invitation on a certain day of the week, and who were acquainted with the contents of Ursula's store-closet, and with the stuffings of a work-basket which was always full.

"I am sure they are witches," said Daffodil, toiling along "herring-bone seam." "Let us buy them some broomsticks, and send them scudding over the trees!"

Daughter stared mildly, and then a smile gleamed in those somewhat dimmed and narrowed eyes which had once been so very blue and debonaire.

"Are you longing to fly off on a broomstick yourself, little Daffodil?" she said.

"I feel my feet very firmly rooted on this English ground," said Daffodil with a sigh and a finger-prick; and her eyes filled with quick tears through which she instantly saw visions of another world, whose glowing scenes and—for her—one inhabitant obliterated Daughter and her cool-tinted landscape.

Cake, and butter-making, and the mysteries of clotted cream rather charmed her as novelties than furnished occupation for her daily life. Long-enduring indoor undertakings were distasteful to her, because Nature was always beckoning her out hither and thither wherever there were happy secrets to be pryed into in wood or on hillside, or sweets to be sipped whether in sunshine or in shade. The vagaries of English weather surprised and charmed her with their airiness, their delicate changes, and she rejoiced in the hardy spirit that breathed through even the tenderest of them. Loitering by the river, or seated in the old swing, new roped for her by Father, she drank in the bracing northern air, and made herself at home among the fresh dews and clouds into which Providence had ordered her.

Not so pleasant were the hours she spent driving in the brougham, especially when Harry had a winking fit, nor those employed under the superintendence of Marjoram and Company. The second son continued to teach her chess until she began to play well, but, finding her grow a match for himself, he relaxed his interest in the game, just as that of his pupil sprang into existence. He next undertook to give her lessons in riding, but as soon as she was able to gallop alone Daffodil would sometimes ride on in advance of her master, who was a clumsy horseman, leaving him rather repentant of his over-zeal for her education. And so it went on through a round of instructions, the attorney excusing himself for his folly by the reflection that as Daffodil might ultimately insist on becoming mistress of that sumptuous dwelling which had yet to be built, so it was well for him to do his best towards making her worthy of a situation, which, in spite of his better judgment, she might possibly live to fill. His desire to cultivate her talents, and his determination to be her leader in all newly-acquired arts, were often found to clash, since the master's ardour was pretty sure to cool so soon as the pupil ceased to take odds in a race.

With all his regard for her culture, the lawyer was anxiously careful to keep down presumptuous expectation in the young girl's mind. So lively an imagination must not be allowed to run away with his future.

"What a pretty spot for a home!" cried Daffodil—who had of course never heard of the house hobby—pointing with her whip

to a fair green slope opening out of the woodland.

"A man must be a fool to invest his money in bricks and mortar," replied the startled attorney, feeling the shock of one who suddenly finds the finger of a thief in his pocket.

"Yet I could enjoy building a house for myself," said Daffodil; "unless, indeed, could live like the gipsies, under the trees."

This alarming announcement sent Marjoram and Company into his office quarters in the town in rather a hurry; yet before a week had passed the young offender's fair unconscious face had drawn him back again to the sweet pastures of the Peach Apple Farm.

There were times when, even on Harry's winking days, Daffodil would consent to take a drive in the brougham to escape from the instructions of Marjoram and Company; but it was only in moments of severe distress that she was thus tempted; for Harry loved to drive through narrow lanes with ruts in them, and one day the brougham remained in the ruts and its occupants had all to walk home. When they went into X—for shopping, they were almost sure to be late for dinner, for Harry could not pass by the hospital where his daughter had been once nearly dying, and the hospital stood at the nearest outlet from the town.

"Could we not drive home by the shortest way for once?" asked Daffodil one day when Mother was bewailing the spoiling of the dinner, especially Father's favourite dish.

"No, my dear, no. Harry has feelings, and they must be considered," said the old lady solemnly; and the hospital was avoided, and the dinner eaten in its spoiled condition. No one understood feelings better than the good old mother herself, who was so distressed by the lean condition of the hack horses on the quay that she brought hay for them in the brougham, and fed them with handfuls out of the window, as Harry drew her slowly and cautiously through the midst of them. Doubtless the jaded brutes kept an open eager eye for the gleam of that white and withered hand. This was the one indulgence which Harry permitted his mistress while in his charge. Perhaps he winked at the folly, or rather forbore to wink at it, in order that all the remaining absurdities of the drive might invariably be left to himself.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JACK DOYLE'S DAUGHTER.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

PART III. MISS DOYLE.

CHAPTER XVIII. THE MIST.

'THE fog, which had played upon Ralph so unpleasant, upon Philip so lucky a trick, did not turn out to be the monopoly of the Holms that day. It was no mere common mist, no mere ghost of a forgotten sea, that spread in capricious masses over the whole country between the Holms and the Hall.

Philip might suspect the hand of Providence in this opportune transformation of day into night; but Stanislas was equally justified in feeling that some very special Providence, though unable to guard his jewels, must have been at work to keep him from losing his life among the marshes, as well as his way. That fog, in effect, grew and rolled out, like the Genii whom the fisherman released from the bottle, till, without leaving its birthplace in the Holms, it reached Cautleigh Hall itself, and folded the whole house round with grey.

It was more than merely lucky that the guests in general had their theatrical rehearsal on hand. They could not keep talking about the lost diamonds all day long, considering that the loss was none of theirs. Sir Charles, keeping to his own company in the library, had said nothing about having sent any message to the police—probably not, for the thickness of the fog was more than an excuse for not having done so; it was a reason. For himself, he needed time to consider, and, luckily for him, scraps of good luck were floating about as capriciously as the fog that day, and almost as darkly—Ralph, who would certainly have demanded haste and

the most energetic measures, was out of the way. Why had Rayner Bassett's daughter given her money and her trinkets to his son's servant? That she had done so, he was sure. He had only to run over the whole story in his mind, which, save for this one particular absence of motive, was a plain one. Adrianski was certainly a fellow-conspirator. He had certainly been in the habit of calling at the house of the man who called himself Doyle before, and very shortly before, entering Ralph's service as valet. He had entered that service at the very time when Rayner Bassett's daughter came as a guest to Cautleigh Hall, and both he and she had been, while living in the same house under such opposite conditions, in secret communication. Nor did Sir Charles forget that Ralph had taken the fellow, practically without a character, straight from the back slums of the stage. It was altogether terribly perplexing. Rayner Bassett's daughter had given him those things, and had not intended the gift or the trust to be known; nor would it have been betrayed but for Mrs. Hassock's honest and ill-timed zeal. Of course the range of guess-work was wide and easy. Perhaps the reputed wealth of these adventurers was a sham, and she had, at her father's bidding, given her agent the things to pledge or sell, so as to carry on the campaign. Perhaps they had been lent or hired, and had been reclaimed. But all this was mere guess-work; the fact remained that Phoebe Doyle's conduct being, in this respect, inexplicable, was therefore doubly threatening—*omne ignotum pro terribili*.

Nor could Phoebe reach to the bottom of her missing jewellery. She knew she had not given anything but the watch, just as well as Sir Charles knew that she had

given everything, and even better. She was almost tempted once or twice to suspect Mrs. Hassock herself; but so groundless a suspicion could not endure for more than a moment at a time. Besides, she had no real thoughts to waste upon such a matter, when Stanislas himself might even now be in chains. And presently the mist had its influence over her also. There was no use in sitting behind her window curtain and looking out, no longer over the range of the park, but at a thick grey wall. Indeed, there had been no use in her watch before; but now there was not even the miserable hope that her eyes might be the first to see the approach of the evil that was hanging over her. At last she left, not only her window, but her room. Any sort of companionship would serve to blunt her suspense a little; and besides, what might not happen in the house without her knowledge, now that she could no longer be the first to know? And what might not be said, without her being by to hear? So she put her headache away, and went downstairs. And she was drawn to the drawing-room, because that seemed to be the immediate centre of life for that afternoon.

Everybody indeed seemed to be there; and then she remembered that it was the afternoon that had been fixed upon for a general rehearsal of the play, which had kept so many of Sir Charles Bassett's guests together for so long. The room, thanks to the weather without, was as bright and lively as if it were evening, and an air of bustle and of business was about which made it brighter and more lively still. It was all the better for Phœbe, because she and her jewels would be shelved for a few hours; otherwise, it had seemed to her as if her concerns must needs be as all pervading as the mist itself. For that matter, her presence would be less noticed than her absence; and she was glad she had come down.

The drawing-room was very large and wide, with two blazing fires on one side, and with a small separate room at one end generally used for cards. It was not being used at all now, and the company was gathered round the further fire, listening to Lawrence, who was posing as manager. Phœbe, not to be remarkable in her solitude, went among them and sat down. But she heard nothing of what Lawrence was saying. Since her eyes were now kept indoors, her ears were all the more strained to catch any sound that might find its way in.

If she had had ears for what was about her, she would have noticed that the topic under discussion was one of the most serious that could be imagined—far more serious than the loss, by somebody else, of the Koh-i-noor. Not only had Ralph Bassett taken it into his head to play truant, but Lady Mildred Vincent, who was a neighbour and not a guest, and had to drive some seven miles to Cautleigh, had not arrived; and, in the face of the fog, no wonder. Ralph's behaviour was inexcusable; but it was felt that, in the lady's case, such a fog covered a multitude of sins. But it was desperately unlucky, for it was a desperately hard business for Lawrence to get his company together at any time, and—

"Now I've got the whole sky under my hand," he was saying, "except the stars. What's to be done?"

"Fine them both," said somebody, "and make Bassett pay for both."

"Come—this is a serious affair."

"Put it off, then—till to-morrow."

"And have the same bother to get everybody together all over again. To-morrow! No. We'll begin, now we're here. Perhaps Bassett may turn up in time for his cue. Lady Mildred may have faced the fog after all, and be on her way. I beg your pardon—you were going to say something, Miss Doyle?"

Phœbe had not been going to say anything. But she had started, and had made some exclamation without knowing it, for her ears, strained to the utmost and quick by nature, had heard, though muffled by the mist, the sound of carriage-wheels on the terrace below.

Her heart beat quickly. "Yes—no—nothing——"

But her confusion was covered, while it was increased, by the clatter of the hall bell.

"Mildred Vincent at last!" Lawrence left the room; but presently returned, alone. Phœbe's heart beat faster still. She was falling into such a panic as to have almost forgotten what it was she feared. "No," said he; "I don't know who it is, but it's not Lady Mildred; it's not even Bassett. If it's the chief constable, he'll be no use to us, whatever he may be to Miss Doyle. But anyhow, we'll begin."

Nobody spoke in opposition, because nobody had anything else to do. The actors settled themselves comfortably with their written parts, while Phœbe began to wish that she had not come among them,

after all. She was the whole of the audience, and what with this accidental solitude; and with her excited anxiety; and with her growing fancy that she was becoming an object of mystery among them all, and not without cause; she felt cut off from the life about her. So should a heroine always feel, and so should she find the comfort vouchsafed to superior souls; but Phœbe neither felt nor found anything of the kind.

"If something would only break and burst!" was what she felt; and so, finding the large room too small for her present mood, crept off into the small room at the end. Could it really be that the life of a hero, the cause of a country, and Heaven knew what besides, were hanging upon the chances of every moment that came and passed by, and that she alone knew? Could such a fearful romance as this be more than a dream? But no. It was no dream. There was Phil.

She could hear nothing more park-wards, for the card-room was on the other side of the house, and the voices of the actors, reading a little, laughing a little, and talking a great deal, were between her and the window. Now the solitude of the card-room became intolerable, and she returned to the drawing-room and sat down by the fire-place farthest from the business of the room. Those carriage-wheels could not have meant anything at all—she must have known by now if the supposed robber of her jewel-case had been captured and brought home. Should she go back to her room and her headache again? But she could not go away and leave things to themselves. She was becoming fascinated by her own fear.

For the most part, she looked straight into the fire. But she saw nothing: not even the pictures that some people can persuade cinders to make for them. Before she had become a real heroine, she had been able to weave whole dramas out of dead sticks and clothes' lines; now not even the red-hot coals could conjure up the sorriest ghost of a fancy. Those were the better times after all, before she had become the rich Miss Doyle, with a mysterious nabob for a father, and a wicked baronet for a gaoler, and a proscribed and persecuted count for a hero and lover. So the only effect of the glow was to make her eyes ache. She looked up, and saw that terrible reality, Philip Nelson himself, standing in the door of the card-room.

Of course he had simply entered from

the card-room door that opened upon the staircase, but his presence seemed to have been conjured up by her fears. She felt herself turn pale before the enemy whom she had once—before she was a heroine—been bold enough to scorn. For his part, he was regarding her with what appeared to her to be an air of triumphant revenge; for is not that the look which the villain of every tragedy is bound to wear?

So soon as their eyes had met, he came forward, and said, in a voice low enough to avoid disturbing the rest of the room:

"Phœbe, I must speak to you. Come into the card-room. I must speak; and we must be alone, and must not be heard."

So it had come at last, whatever it might be. She rose, and followed him. If she, judging by her lights, read nothing in his face but the most evil of passions, he, judging by his, could gather nothing but guilty shame from hers. How could she guess that he was her champion, even yet? How could he tell that she was nothing worse than what she called a heroine, and he would have called a fool?

So they stood facing one another, for a longer while than Phil had intended, but he found it as hard to speak as he had thought to find it easy. But he knew what he had to say; and so, when he spoke at last, he went straight to the core.

"I can't forget that I am—that I have been, your—your brother," said he. "I cannot feel like the others do: that you are lost, and there is an end. I have seen him; you know whom I mean. He says—he says, Phœbe, that you love him; and that you are not his wife. Which is the lie?"

He saw her turn crimson, as she felt that Stanislas was now at Philip's mercy, and as if her romance were being taken out of her flesh, all raw and quivering.

"I—I am not his wife," said she. The question indeed was without meaning to her; for, be it said in favour of her style of reading, it is pure to the pure. Yet she did not add, "And I do love him, with all my heart and with all my pride," as one of her heroines would have spoken. The words did not come.

"And yet you are here—and with him. He says——"

"Is he here?"

"No. He says that you gave him——"

"You—have seen him; and he is not here?"

"I have told you. No."

One thing even Phœbe knew of Phil, that, villain as he was, he never lied. Or rather without knowing it, she felt it by the instinct which goes beyond knowledge. "And not in prison?" asked she.

"In prison? Why should he be in prison? I wish to Heaven he were. He says——"

"Thank God!" sighed Phœbe, though how he should have been in Philip's hands, and have escaped them, she did not comprehend.

"That you gave him——"

"The watch? He said so? He told you so? Yes."

"Phœbe. Don't be afraid. I ask you nothing more. I have only to give you back your own; you may do what you will with your own. Phœbe, I don't think—I ask you nothing; neither how you have jewels, nor how I find you here under a name that is not yours. Nor—— But I tell you this. You will not stay here another day. You will come home with me. Since you—care for this—this Adrianski, marry him. But it must be marriage; and if the blackguard, the scoundrel, the coward, dares to speak to you before he has the right, not even your care for him shall save him. No; I know I have no right: I am not even your real brother. Well, right be hanged. You will come home with me."

He had thus far taken up his usual position before the fire; now he paced up and down hotly, and without sufficient care whether his words might reach the larger room.

"My father," began Phœbe falteringly.

"My father, you mean? Oh, never mind him. He will take you back if I pay. I take this matter into my own hands. I am not going to preach. I must do. Till you are that foreign blackguard's wife, you are in my hands. He will do nothing; he will understand. And, to begin with, here, an adventuress under a false name, you shall not stay."

His heart was still half-maddened, but his head was clear, and he mistook it for his heart, and knew his purpose perfectly well. He could trust his strength so far as to believe that he could control a girl and a coward, and, for the rest, was perfectly indifferent as to how he used his strength so long as he gained his end. Phœbe should not suffer for her follies; she must go home, and be kept from further follies, that was all. As for himself, he had ceased

to care at all. Phœbe was lost to him. But she should not be lost to herself so long as he had a breath to draw.

If he had looked at her face just then, he might have learned something. But the eyes of this Phœbe were still the eyes of the lost Phœbe, and he did not dare.

Yet one thing more he did not dare to do. How could she, and the rascal with whom she had left her home, be possessed of gold and jewels, and be able to pass her off for a fine lady? Of course she must be Adrianski's tool and slave; but to what a depth of slavery must she have fallen! He dared not ask, because her answer, or her silence worse than an answer, might compel him to see that she, the woman whom he had loved, might need saving not only from a scoundrel, but from the end of scoundrels—the gaol. "And not in prison?" she had asked, and the question, at the time scarcely comprehended, came upon him with a force now that literally made him turn pale. Why should she surmise that a prison was the natural place for the man? Whence had those miserable gewgaws come?

Of course she could not imagine that any member of her former family could be ignorant of the discovery of her father. There was no common misunderstanding between these two, such as could be dispelled by a word—much less by a word that could be spoken where there was absolutely no common standing ground. The whole story must be written backwards to make the simplest words of one bear their plainest and simplest meaning to the other. If Phil had not ground his teeth into his purpose, like a fighting bull-dog, he must have broken down before the long vista of shame that seemed so persistently unrolling itself before his eyes.

Why, she must love the fellow like a slave—no; not like a slave, for slaves do not love their masters—like a dog, rather. He despised Stanislas; but he could not feel towards the man who could call Phœbe with a whistle, and brag of it, any common scorn. One scorns worms; not snakes and tigers. There was nothing more to say.

But Phœbe—could she hear her hero reviled, and called all manner of evil falsely, without breaking out in his defence with the best tongue that a woman owns; the tongue that speaks out for her hero, whether husband or lover, hero or son? Her one great thought was that, by skill or good luck, Stanislas was still safe and free; for Phil never lied. Her second, that she was not

likely to see him very soon again. Her third (which some people say is the best by nature), that she was bound to proclaim his honour and her love by all the laws of that ideal world to which she belonged, and which parted her from Phil by an ocean broader than any in the world. But the first thought—and yet more the second, were each so full and large that the third took an excessively long time to grow. Indeed, before it was grown up, almost before it was born, her tongue, which should have been so brave, faltered out:

"Yes—I will. I will go home."

And then she could have bitten it out for shame.

"Miss Doyle," said Lawrence, coming to the edge of the doorway, "I'm sorry to disturb any sort of conversation—I am indeed. But we want an angel—and somebody, I have an idea it was myself, suggested Miss Doyle. In short—you don't act, I know—but would you mind just reading Mildred Vincent's part? Just for the cue, you know. You've only got to say the words."

Philip stopped pacing up and down. Phoebe was only too glad to escape from a scene which had been omitted from every one of the histories whence she had drawn her knowledge of the world. Stanislas was safe: Stanislas was gone away. She followed Lawrence, and, midway between the two fire-places, found Sir Charles, talking to a lean man with a hawk's nose, whom she had not yet seen at Cautleigh Hall, and who therefore no doubt accounted for the now forgotten grinding of carriage-wheels beneath the front window. Philip, forgetting in his overwrought humour to fear lest any part of his talk with Phoebe had been overheard, laid a hard mental grip upon himself, and strolled, with a fairly successful affectation of carelessness, into the drawing-room. Nor had he any need to be afraid. Nobody had heard a word.

"Don't be in such a hurry, Miss Doyle," said Sir Charles Bassett. "Keep them waiting. No, Mr. Nelson, Ralph isn't come back yet. But I'm not going to have the Holms dragged yet. As if he hadn't been caught in one of our own very particular fogs fifty times! He'll turn up, but I wish it hadn't happened to-day. You'll be writing in your report, 'Fogs so thick that an old snipe-shooter may be lost for hours,' and I shall have to pay. You were quite right to come back alone. Ralph will, he knows the Holms." He spoke lightly, and his confidence in Ralph's local knowledge seemed

real; and yet there was more lightness in his tone than if he had been wholly free from anxiety. "He'll be in time, I dare say, for his next cue. So, Mr. Nelson, I'll wait another five minutes, at least, before I send out the hue and cry. You'll soon come to understand our local fog-signal: *Sauve qui peut*. So you're going to take our star's part, Miss Doyle. Don't cut her out; she'll never forgive you if you do. Urquhart, this is Jack Doyle's daughter. Mr. Urquhart—Miss Doyle. Miss Doyle, did you ever see this play? In London, I mean."

"No," said Phoebe, bowing to Mrs. Urquhart's husband, and following Lawrence to the front fire-place where the reading was going on.

"So, that's Jack Doyle's daughter," said Urquhart. "If I hadn't known, I'd have said——"

"What?"

"What else, but from her eyes? That she's the daughter of us all."

"What, Marion?"

"Psyche."

"No, no. Marion is dead. And this girl is——"

"What?"

"Alive."

IN CAMP WITH A CONQUEROR.

THE High and Puissant Lord, Don Henry, King of Castile and Leon, hearing much of the power of the great Turk, Bajazet, and not a little of the prowess of the great Mongol, Tamerlane, became curious to learn which of the two was the mightier man, and to that end despatched Payo de Sotomayor and Hernan Sanchez de Palazuelos to the East. A better time could not have been chosen for ascertaining beyond doubt the respective strength of the rival potentates. The Castilian knights were witnesses of the Battle of Angora, and the utter discomfiture of the great Turk's army by the hordes of the crippled Mongol chief. In the name of their master they congratulated the victor on his triumph, and in return were hospitably entertained, loaded with gifts, and finally appointed a companion home in the person of Mohammed Alcagi, bearing a letter from Tamerlane to the King of Castile, and charged with the delivery of divers presents from his master, including "the women he had sent according to his custom."

Mohammed Alcagi had every reason to

be satisfied with his reception at the Castilian court, and when the time came for his departure King Henry deputed Fray Alonzo Paez de Santa Maria, Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, and Gomez de Salazar to accompany him home on a formal embassy to Samarcand. They sailed from Cadiz on the 22nd of May, 1403, but being forced to winter at Pera, did not reach Trebizond until the 11th of April, 1404. Here a military escort awaited them, and thus protected they went safely on their way, never wanting anything. "The custom of the country was that at each town when they arrived small carpets were brought from each house for them to sit upon, and afterwards they placed a piece of leather in front on which they had their meals" of bread, meat, cream, milk, and eggs, the involuntary contributions of the townspeople. If there was any failure of supplies the chief men were sent for and received "such a number of blows with sticks and whips that it was quite wonderful."

On the 2nd of May the party arrived at the fortified town of Alongogaza, and two days afterwards reached the city of Arsinga, the governor of which informed them that "the lord" had left Carabaqui for the land of the Sultanieh. Here, too, the envoys learned what they ought to have learned from their travelling companion, namely, that they must not speak of Tamerlane, "the lord's" designation being Timour Beg, or the Lord of Iron, whereas Tamerlane was a nickname, in ridicule of his being lame on the left side and having had the two small fingers of the right hand maimed in his young days when leading a sheep-stealing night raid. Was this the origin of Timour's title of the Great Wolf? A title more appropriate to the wearer than the grandiloquent ones of the Master of Time, the Axis of Faith, and Lord of the Grand Conjunctions, which were arrogated by the lowly-born conqueror, whose device symbolised his claim to rule over three parts of the world.

The communicative governor also enlarged his visitors' knowledge of contemporary history, by relating how the Turk and the Tartar came to know each other. Zaratan, Lord of Arsinga, held some territory bordering on Bajazet's dominions, upon which that tyrant cast covetous eyes. Zaratan, one day, received unpleasant intimation of the fact in the shape of a demand for tribute and the surrender of the castle of Camog. Preferring, if he must have a master, to have one of his own

choosing, Zaratan sent straightway to Timour, then waging war in Persia, acknowledging his sovereignty and claiming his protection. Timour thereupon notified Bajazet not to meddle with his new subject. Wrathful at being so rudely awakened from blissful ignorance of Timour's existence, the great Turk expressed his astonishment that any man could be so mad and so insolent as to write such foolishness, declared he would do as he pleased with Zaratan and every other man in the universe, and, moreover, would at his earliest convenience look Timour up and bring him to his senses. The latter responded by marching his army through Arsinga into Turkey, capturing, pillaging, and razing the city of Sabastria; and, having given this taste of his quality, made for Persia again, on his way thither encountering and defeating the White Tartars. Enraged at this defiance, Bajazet set his troops in motion, overran Arsinga, and paid the penalty on the field of Angora.

After spending a fortnight in Arsinga, the Castilians proceeded on their journey, passing through Erzeroum, a large town surrounded by a strong wall with towers; Delularquente, "the town of the madmen," inhabited by Moorish hermits; and the great city of Calmarin, one league from Ararat, "the first city built in the world after the flood;" halting, in the third week in June, at Sultanieh, a very populous city, defended by a castle with towers and armed catapults. "This land," says Don Clavijo, "is so hot that when a foreign merchant is struck by the sun, he is killed; and they say that when the sun strikes any one it presently penetrates to his heart and kills him; and those who escape almost always remain quite yellow, and never return to their proper colour. From Cathay vessels come within sixty days' journey of the city, having navigated the western sea. The ships and boats which navigate this sea have no iron, but their timbers are joined with cords and wooden pegs, for if they were united with iron they would be torn to pieces by the loadstones, of which there are many in that sea."

So far all had gone well with the travellers, but one of the three envoys was not to see the tedious journey's end. Instructed that Timour impatiently awaited their coming at Samarcand, the party pushed on towards that city with all possible speed, when Gomez de Salazar, falling ill, had to be left behind to the tender mercies of the

native leeches, and in a few days was a dead man. The Oxus crossed, a halt was made at Timour's birthplace, Kesh, a large mud-walled city, notable for its many unfinished palaces, and for two grand mosques, one the burial-place of the lord's sire and of his first-born son, for whose souls twenty sheep were daily sacrificed; the other intended to receive the lord himself when his time should come. From Kesh the Spaniards and the ambassador of the Sultan of Babylon, who had joined company, were conducted to a village about a league from the capital, there to pass the period prescribed by etiquette before presentation.

At last the welcome summons came, and the ambassadors took horse for Samarcand, at three in the afternoon drawing rein and dismounting at a large garden outside that city. Passing under a tall gateway adorned with blue and gold tiles, guarded by footmen armed with maces, and soldiers in wooden castles borne by elephants, the Castilians came to the portal of a splendid palace, halting before a fountain throwing up water to a great height "with red apples in it." Behind the fountain, sitting cross-legged upon a pile of embroidered carpets and pillows, they saw a man in a silken robe and wearing a tall white hat, crowned with a spiral ruby stuck around with pearls and other precious stones. This was the famous Timour Beg, crippled, half-blind, and threescore-and-ten, but fierce and terrible as ever.

After making obeisance thrice, by bending one knee to the ground and inclining the head, the Spanish envoys were seized by the armpits by the meerzas or councillors, Alodalmelio, Borundo, and Nouredin, and so led one by one into the lord's presence. This being done that he might see them the better, his eyelids having fallen down entirely from age. "How is my son, the king? Is he in good health?" was Timour Beg's greeting. Assured on that point, turning to the councillors and courtiers ranged around him, he said: "Behold! Here are the ambassadors of my son the King of Spain, who is the greatest king of the Franks, and lives at the end of the world. These Franks are truly a great people, and I will give my benediction to the King of Spain, my son! It would have sufficed if he had sent the letter without the presents, so well satisfied am I to hear of his health and prosperous state."

Having duly acknowledged this gracious speech, Clavijo and his companions were

ushered into an adjacent banquetting chamber, where many other comers from distant lands were already seated, and by Timour's command the envoys of his son and friend were accorded precedence over the Chinese ambassador, whose master "was a bad man and a thief"—a gentle intimation to that personage that the tribute he came to claim was not likely to be forthcoming. As soon as the lord of the feast was seated, troops of servitors bore in boiled and roasted sheep and roast horses, and laid them upon very large pieces of stamped leather, upon which the carvers knelt, and deftly slicing the carcasses, filled therewith huge bowls of gold and silver, glass and earthenware; half a score gold and silver bowls being reserved for the most honourable dish—a medley of horse-haunch, horse-tripes, and sheep's-heads, two of which were, as a special mark of favour, set before the Spaniards. Ere the company fell to, a small quantity of salted soup was poured into each bowl of flesh, and a thin corn cake placed upon the top. This substantial fare was supplemented by meats dressed in various ways, nectarines, grapes, and melons, with a plentiful supply of bosat, a beverage made from sugar and cream, served in gold and silver jugs. When all had satisfied their appetites, the company broke up, every one taking away with him what remained of his portion of the feast; the Castilians finding themselves provided with a six months' supply of food, on so liberal a scale had the banquet been furnished.

How they, not being to the manner born, contrived to survive a succession of such entertainments is somewhat of a mystery. Probably they accommodated themselves to circumstances, with proverbial national gravity; a gravity that seems to have been too much for Timour, since, after enjoying their company at two or three feasts, he gave another at which wine was to be served, and that they might come to it in a jovial mood, sent them a jar of wine wherewith to prime themselves beforehand.

If Timour Beg's subjects loyally kept the law forbidding public or private wine-bibbing without permission first obtained, they made the most of opportunities when they came. Says Don Clavijo: "The attendants serve the wine upon their knees, and when one cup is finished, they give another; and these men have no other duty, except to give another cup as soon as one is finished. When one attendant is

tired of filling the cups, another takes his place, each attendant confining himself to one or two of the guests; and those who do not wish to drink are told that they insult the lord at whose request they drink. They drink from one cup once or twice, but if called upon to drink by their love of the lord, they must drink it at one pull, without leaving a drop." Those who received a cup from Timour's own hands, first knelt down upon the right knee, then moving forward a little, knelt upon both knees; then, taking the cup, they rose and walked backwards a few steps, knelt again, and emptied the cup at a draught. A troublesome performance which its chronicler escaped thanks to his never drinking wine at all.

Timour's favourite palace outside Samarcand overlooked a vast plain intersected by a river and several smaller streams. Under the pretence of celebrating certain marriages with befitting pomp, but possibly desiring to impress his foreign friends, and convince the Chinese envoy that his master had best think twice before crossing swords, Timour commanded his pavilion to be pitched on the plain, and ordered the immediate assemblage there of all his host, scattered in different parts of the land. This host was divided into captaincies: captaincies over a hundred men, captaincies over a thousand men, captaincies over ten thousand, and one captain over all. Other officers were charged with the care of so many horses or sheep, and if they failed to produce these when wanted, they received "no other pay but the seizure of all they possessed." So swiftly were Timour's orders conveyed and obeyed, that within three days' time twenty thousand men were encamped, each division bringing with it everything it required, even to baths and bathmen, and taking its appointed place without delay or confusion.

Before the camp-festivities fairly began, some little stir was created by the appearance of an embassy from a land bordering on Cathay, which once belonged to that empire. The chief ambassador wore a dress of skins with the hair outwards, much the worse for wear, and a hat so small that it would hardly go on his head, and fastened to his breast by a cord. His companions wore dresses of skin too, some with the skin one side, some with it on the other. "They looked," says Clavijo, "like a party of blacksmiths, and they were Christians after the manner of those of Cathay." What these queer

Christians thought of the busy scene around them, he does not tell, but he and his fellows were charmed with their novel surroundings. All along the riverside stood ranks of tents, and running parallel with these ranks were streets of other tents, occupied by the butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers of Samarcand, in obedience to the lord's behest that all the city's shopkeepers were to bring themselves and their wares to the camp. Towering over all rose Timour Beg's three-chambered pavilion, three lances in height and a hundred paces in breadth, with a turreted silken tower surmounting its decorated vaulted ceiling, from which depended silken cloths, fastened archwise to twelve gilt and painted poles of the circumference of a man's chest. The sides of the pavilion were of black, white, and yellow silk, surrounded at a distance of three hundred paces by a silken wall as high as a mounted man; the space between being appropriated to the tents of Timour's wives and other members of his family.

In grim contrast to the rainbow-hued tented field, a number of gallows studded the part of the plain apportioned to the traders, for justice was not leaden-heeled in Timour's dominions. His judges always went wherever he went, holding their courts in tents set apart for the purpose. In effect they were rather jurors than judges, their office ending with reporting their conclusions to Timour, who himself pronounced judgment. Old as he was he knew not the meaning of mercy, and gave the camp executioners plenty to do. Among those who suffered at their hands were Dina, the greatest officer in Samarcand, who was accused of neglecting his duties during Timour's absence; a grandee who dared to intercede in his behalf, and another who had been entrusted with three thousand horses, and could not produce every one of them at short notice. Meaner criminals, such as tradesmen guilty of charging more for their goods than they were worth, were deemed unworthy of the gallows, and were merely beheaded. For keeping the Spanish envoys waiting his arrival, and thereby causing them to be late at a court dinner, their interpreter was condemned to be bored through the nose, and have a rope passed through the hole, by which he was to be dragged through the camp; a sentence his employers had much difficulty in persuading the tyrant to enforce.

The lighter amusements of the camp consisted of races between elephants and

horses, races between elephants and men, acrobatic performances, and various "games" devised and executed by each trade in turn. At one of these latter entertainments the fair sex appeared in force. With a troop of slaves marching before her and three hundred dames walking behind her, came a stately lady, clad in a loose flowing robe of red silk trimmed with gold lace, without sleeves or any openings save two for the arms and one for the head, with a train requiring fifteen ladies-in-waiting to manage it so that its wearer could walk, while three more were employed in keeping her head-dress in its proper place. This wondrous contrivance was of red cloth-of-gold, decorated with pearls, with a long stream half hiding the jet-black tresses over which it hung. A miniature castle ornamented with three magnificent rubies, and surmounted with a plume of white feathers, crowned the edifice. The face beneath it was plastered with white lead, and further protected from the unkind influences of sun and air by a thin veil. This elaborately got-up dame was Cano, Timour's wife, but not his only one. He was lord, if not master, of eight, namely: Cano, "the lady;" Ouirchicano, "the little lady;" Dileoltanga, Mundagaso, Vengaraga, Cholpamalaga, Ropaarbaraga, and Yanguraga, the last not standing least in the much-married monarch's estimation, since he gave her the name she bore, which, being interpreted, means "Queen of the Heart." Respecting the personal charms of these dames of high degree, Don Clavijo is significantly silent. Regarding their manners he is not so reticent, telling us that at a feminine gathering the ladies tore the meat out of each other's hands, and tossed off cup after cup of wine, as fast as the kneeling servitors could minister to their thirsty need; heightening their own enjoyment by making the wine-servers themselves drink until they were helpless, there being, in their opinion, "no pleasure without drunken men."

Satiated with barbarous festivity, the Castilians longed to return to Spain, but while they waited the order of release, Timour was stricken down, lost the power of speech, and was apparently about to die. In vain did the envoys ask for some message for their sovereign, the frightened councillors could only bid them go before the end came. Go they accordingly did, with more haste than ceremony, hoping to get out of the land before the news of its lord's death was spread abroad.

Luckily for them, Timour lived three months longer, so they escaped molestation, and in due time reached Castile to recount all they had seen when in camp with a conqueror.

FOR LIFE AND DEATH.

"NAUGHT to be done"—eh? It was that he said,
The doctor, as you stopped him at the door?
Nay, never try to smile and shake thy head,
I could ha' told thee just as well afore.
I haven't lived these thirty year to want
Parsons or women telling what is nigh,
When the pulse labours and the breath is scant,
And all grows dim before the glazing eye.

I felt that something gave here, at my heart,
In that last tussle, down there on the Scar.
Nay, never cry, fond lassie as thou art,
Thou wilt do fine without me—better far.
Thou'st been a good and patient wife to me
Sin' that spring day, last year, when we were wed.

I never meant so cold and strange to be.
Come, an' I'll tell thee. Sit here by my bed,

So, where the sunshine rests upon thy hair.
It shows almost as smooth and bright as hers,
The girl I wooed in Dunkerque, over there—
Fie, how the thought the slackening life-blood
stirs!

Oh, wild black eyes, so quick to flash and fill!
Oh, rich red lips, so ripe for kiss and vow!
Did not your spell work me enow of ill,
That you must haunt and vex me even now?

I swore, as we drove out into the gale,
And staggering down mid-channel went the
boat.

Never at Dunkerque Pier to furl my sail,
While I and the old Lion kept afloat:
The pier where she and her French lover laughed
At the poor trusting fool who had his due;
Quick though his hand flew to his keen knife's
haft,
The English fist was yet more quick and true.

She and her beaten sweetheart, do they prate
Yet of her triumph? Let them, an' they please.
I shall know naught about it, lying straight
Up on the headland, 'neath the tall fir-trees.
I wish I could ha' been content, my lass,
With thee, and thy blue eyes and quiet ways;
Thou hast thy bairn, and as the calm years pass,
Thou wilt forget thy stormy April days.

Thou'rt young and bonnie still, my wench. Thou'lt
make

A happy wife yet. Choose some quiet chap
Who'll love the little 'un for thy sweet sake,
And bear thee to some inland home, mayhap.
We're rough and stern, we on the seaboard bred,
And can't forget, or smooth a rankling wound.
Come close; there's just one thing left to be said,
Before I'm dumb for ever, underground.

Last night they watched the lifeboat driven back,
The rocket battling vainly with the blast,
While the good barque, amid the roar and wrack,
Drove headlong—struck—and lay there hard and
fast.

They neither saw nor heeded; as the flash
Of cold blue fire lit all, above, below,
The French flag flying o'er the whirl and crash
"Louise, Dunkerque," the letters on her prow.

I saw, plunged, fought, and reached the sinking
bark,

The old hot poison fierce in every vein,
Seized on two sailors, shrieking in the dark,
Bore them to land, and turned to swim again.

Clasping the rigging yet one man I found;
I caught him, struggled on; the beach was
near.

"Louise!" he gasped, and 'mid the roar around,
I knew the voice last heard on Dunkerque Pier.

The murderer's lust surged to the throbbing heart,
The murderer's cunning loosed the saving hand.
'Twas but to let him go; I'd done my part—
Praised and avenged! Why, thus 'twere well to
land.

But she— No cloud on her bright life should
rest,
An' I could ward it; love and hate at strife
A moment, then, snatched from the breaker's
crest,
I dragged him, stunned and bleeding, back to
life.

Somehow I hurt myself, and so it's over,
And better so for all. Thou'lt rear the lad
To make some Yorkshire laas an honest lover,
Nor tell him all the wrong his mother had;
And sometimes—for thou'rt kind—when stars are
out

In the green country, where no tempests blow,
Thou'lt say, "Thy father had his faults, no doubt,
But still, he died to save his bitterest foe."

A FRENCH STAMP ACT.

THE great monarch, Louis the Fourteenth, has been long ago found out. Indeed, the danger is lest we should run into the opposite extreme from that into which contemporary Europe fell, and should unduly disparage both the man and his policy. His object was, like that of many French kings, to make France at once bigger and more compact than he found her. The Dutch, and afterwards the English and Germans, declined to let him do the first, and so he fought them, stubbornly going on even when he had almost beggared his kingdom. The Huguenots seemed an obstacle to compactness; they had once called in foreign help, and they might do so again; therefore he revoked the edict which protected them, driving out thousands of his most valuable subjects, and flinging overboard the national ballast which could have steadied the country through after revolutions.

His wars were costly, as was also his home life. The heartless way in which he put down the risings caused by his unbearable taxation was worthy of the first Napoleon—showed the same selfishness, the same want of thought for those whom he was set to govern.

Louis wanted money to carry on his Dutch war, and every expedient was tried to wring it out of an already exhausted country. All sorts of new offices were created and put up for sale—legal and quasi-legal offices, the holders of which continued a burden on the industry of the

country. James the First has been reproached for selling baronetcies; but, at any rate, no one was poorer for his so doing except the buyers of this new order of nobility; but when Louis appointed deputy and assistant-deputy judges, and new controllers of this and assessors of that, the salaries of these people had to be paid out of the taxes; and thus the revenue was diminished by the very means that were taken to put something into the treasury.

New taxes had therefore to be put on continually—taxes for putting the Government mark on the tin and pewter plates which then were used instead of crockery; stamp duties of every conceivable kind; heavier taxes than before on salt and tobacco; taxes on workmen's guilds and apprenticeships. These last caused much misery—not under the king's eyes, for he took care to keep away at Versailles, but in his capital as well as in the provinces. Madame de Sévigné tells how a poor fringe and edging maker in the suburb of St. Marceau, driven mad by the new tax of ten crowns on all master-workmen, and by the seizure in payment of his bed and porringer, cut the throats of his three children, and lay down to die in his empty room. The salt tax, always hateful, was, of course, hated all the more when its burden became heavier. Moreover, this salt tax had hitherto been only partially exacted. Roussillon, for instance, and the landes of Gascony, had never paid it before; and in both districts its imposition led to obstinate and bloody insurrections. The Boulonnais had hitherto been a favoured country. It had to pay no salt tax, no aide or taille; but, being near the frontier, it had to keep more than its share of troops in winter-quarters. This the Boulognese found so distasteful, and, withal, so expensive, that in 1660 they compounded by giving a benevolence of forty thousand livres. Next year, when peace was signed, they naturally thought this war-payment would cease; but the king said, "No;" he would let them off cheap; but thirty thousand livres they must pay regularly every year. When they objected, and even rose against the exaction, Louis was indignant. In his instructions to the Dauphin, he writes: "I laid on them a small sum just to let them know that I had the right to do so, and my kindness produced a bad effect." He then determined to do away with the privileges of the Boulogne country, and did so in spite of a rising, in the course of which one popular leader was

broken on the wheel, half-a-dozen hanged, and four hundred sent off to the galleys, that service which Colbert was so anxious to reorganise. Some provinces were too wretched to revolt; of Berri, for instance, a "master of requests" writes to Colbert in 1664 that the wine-tax (raised to a third of the value) must really be lowered, for the poor of the country were reduced to live on alms.

For several years, the king's successes in Flanders, and, at first, in Holland, helped to keep things quiet at home. The salt tax was submitted to for the sake of glory. But when, in 1674, England made peace with Holland, and the gallant little republic, which had hitherto been trying to hold its own against Louis backed by his pensioner Charles, was able to shake off the invader, the French provinces were naturally rather restless just as more money was wanted, and the new stamp duties had been put on.

Guienne at once broke out into insurrection. Bordeaux had forgotten the lesson which it had got more than a century before, when it rose against an increase of the salt tax, and when the grim Constable Montmorenci having taken the town, marched in through a breach in the walls, put to death more than one hundred people, among them the magistrates and chief townsmen, and quartered ten thousand troops on the inhabitants. The Stamp Act of 1675 roused the Bordelais just as the salt tax of 1548 had roused their forefathers. "No stamped pewter" was the cry, and the mob went round to the whitesmiths' shops plundering all those where they found the obnoxious mark. "Long live the king; and no stamps," they shouted, and whoever would not shout as they did had to fly for his life. The deputy-intendant was killed, and flung into a carriage and burned. A parliament-councillor who tried to make a speech was trampled to death on his own doorstep. In fact, the city was in the hands of the rioters, and there was no Montmorenci to crush them down. The stamp duties touched every class. The lawyers, notaries, and solicitors were as much aggrieved at having to use stamped paper as the people in general were at having their tin and pewter taxed. Colbert thought he could set one class against the other. He had it whispered round that corn and bacon and lamb should be untaxed, and the taxes of pewter and tobacco be done away

with, if only the stamped paper duties, which injured nobody, were kept up. But the government was only biding its time; and, six months after the rising seemed to have been successful, and the Parliament of Guienne had abolished the taxes, and the people had burnt the stamp offices, Marshal D'Albret came on the scene, the insurgents were put down, or (so soon did the business seem over) dropped down of themselves, and the usual severities began; many were hanged, more sent to the galleys, and the disturbances in Guienne drop out of Colbert's correspondence.

All this time Brittany had been even more excited than Guienne. The Bordeaux people had heard of troubles at Rennes, and that was all. In those days one province was so cut off from another that it was hard for them to make common cause. Brittany had reason enough to stand against being compacted into the unity of the French Kingdom on the basis of a common taxation. It had its own privileges, and its people—Welsh, in fact, speaking the same tongue which yet flourishes in the Principality, though it has died out in Cornwall—held to these privileges with more than French tenacity.

When Anne of Brittany married Louis the Twelfth, it was covenanted that her duchy should remain distinct, keeping all its old privileges; and when Louis heartlessly put away his wife, the poor ill-favoured Jane, daughter of Louis the Eleventh, that he might add the ermine of Brittany to the lilies of France, he vowed for himself and his successors to respect their privileges. One of these was that no taxes could be imposed without the consent of the estates of the duchy in parliament assembled.

These old French parliaments were much like our own under the Plantagenets, with this difference, that there was one for every large province; and thus the power, which in England was sufficient to check absolutism and to extort redress of grievances, was frittered away among a number of assemblies with no cohesion and no notion of working together. The main object of these parliaments was to vote money. The principle which we look on as peculiarly English, that taxes could not be levied without the consent of the taxpayers, was universal in feudal Europe. There were certain dues from vassals to their lords, and, of course, from crown vassals to the suzerain; but, when the

king wanted anything beyond these, he had to appeal to his crown vassals, who, in their courts-baron, laid the matter each before his own vassals. Otherwise, he was reduced to such irregular devices as drawing Jews' teeth, or debasing the coin, or selling charters or privileges to the towns. This last method was a subtle undermining of the feudal system itself; and when Philip the Fair summoned the States General in 1302, and got a subsidy from them, it was seen that those who had been mere dependents of the nobles had grown up under the tutelage of the crown lawyers into a comparatively independent position. The king, in fact, was setting people against nobles; and thenceforth was fain to be very careful in his dealings with the towns and the commons.

Why parliament in England should have got more and more powerful, while abroad it gradually lost its control of the purse, was, no doubt, partly due to the setting up abroad of standing armies long before they were thought of in England, and partly also to the fact that in England the nobles have always been on better terms with the commons than they have been elsewhere. This is explained by our nobles not forming a class apart. Abroad, barons' sons were all noble, and all claimed the privileges of nobles. With us, whatever their position by courtesy, they were all, except the eldest, commoners before the law. Perhaps too much has been made of this difference. Quite as important is the change which came over our nobility after the Wars of the Roses. They were recruited from new classes, which had sympathies with the commons, inasmuch as they were taken from among them; and, ever since, distinguished commoners have been promoted in a way which has kept our nobility from becoming a close body, offensive, therefore, to all other classes in the State. Our nobles again, have—in old times, owing to their having smaller fiefs, and therefore being less independent of the king; in modern times, owing to their origin—always given themselves much more to public business than their brethren abroad. From the Paris Parliament, for instance, the bishops and nobles soon stood apart, the former pleading their spiritual duties, the latter the duty of attending on the king. The same took place in the Castile Parliament, once the most independent in Europe; and, of course, when the commons had to stand alone, parliament was weakened and its voice dis-

regarded. It became a mere talking-shop.*

In Brittany, however, nobles and commons did hold together. The province had been joined to France at a time when the king needed the help of towns, and before both towns and nobles had been crushed under the centralisation which went on from Richelieu to Colbert. It had its privileges, and was proud of them; and so the struggle against being taxed like the rest of France, without being allowed to say a word against it, was severer there even than in Gascony. M. de la Borderie and other Breton historians give a very sad picture of the way in which the stamp and other duties were forced on the province. But we can see quite enough in the brief remarks of a great letter-writer, who was in the thick of it during the greater part of the troubles.

We may be quite sure Madame de Sévigné does not exaggerate what went on in Brittany. She was not likely to be too much moved by troubles befalling the common people. "Her heart was in the right place," says her latest biographer (Mrs. Ritchie, better known to us as Miss Thackeray), but, like a good many hearts nowadays, it was fenced in with such a fortification of class-prejudice, and had been passed through so many hardening mediums, that she could not feel for mere peasants and low canaille as keenly as if they had been gentlefolks.

Our great letter-writer, therefore, is not righteously indignant; she does not strive to shame tyranny by holding it up to execration; she simply states facts, and darts now and then a barbed though polished shaft, which no doubt rankled then, though now a hasty reader may fail to catch her meaning.

She is always the same. When she has to tell of Vatel's self-murder, she seems half in fun, the blank misery of the poor man's end being all the more shocking from her light, jaunty way of telling it.

Vatel, greatest of cooks, Fouquet's legacy to Condé, had to cater at Chantilly for a host of grand guests. Big Louis the Fourteenth was striving to crush little Holland, and Condé, who was to be the real commander, gave a fête in honour of the expedition. There was a hunt, a moonlight promenade, and a supper in a garden of jonquils.

* In this sense the word is used in Yorkshire (North Riding). "What are you two doing?" said an overlooker to two shirking labourers. "Oh, just hoddin' bits o' parlaments," was the reply.

Vatel had been in his glory. The cookery was exquisite; but, alas, at the twenty-fifth table the joint failed, for more sat down than had been expected. Vatel was upset. He told the steward, Gourville: "My honour is lost; this is a disgrace that I can't endure." Poor man, he had not had any proper sleep for nearly a fortnight. Gourville saw he was not well, and spoke to Condé, and the prince went to Vatel's room, and told him: "It's all right; there never was anything so beautiful as the king's supper." "Ah, my prince, you are very kind to me; but the joint gave out at two tables." "No such thing," replied Condé, "it all went off remarkably well." But Vatel would not be comforted; he could not lay on himself the blame of the fireworks, which were a failure though they cost sixteen thousand francs, but he was exercised in mind about the king's dinner for the next day. Would the fish come in time? Every seaport in France had been sent to, for it was to be a great fish-dinner. So he was once more sleepless, and at four in the morning was wandering all over the grounds. At last a purveyor drove in with two little loads of fish. "Is that all?" anxiously asked the chef. "Yes, sir," said the man, who thought Vatel meant, "Is that all you individually have got?" As time went on Vatel got excited, and told Gourville: "Sir, I shall not be able to survive this disgrace. My honour and reputation are at stake." The unsympathising Gourville tried to laugh him out of his low spirits, but the poor man was terribly in earnest; and, going up to his room, put his sword against the door, and at the third thrust ran it through his heart. Meanwhile the fish came pouring in from all sides, and everybody was looking for Vatel, who was at last found dead in a pool of blood behind his door. Condé was in despair; to think that a chef should have had such a code of honour. Louis said sadly: "For five years I put off coming because I knew how much trouble my visit would cause." But it was all too late for poor Vatel. He was lying dead behind his door, and Gourville had to do the best he could with the fish, and turned out a dinner which everyone pronounced excellent. They supped afterwards right royally, and promenaded and hunted, and next day lunched among the jonquils. It was like fairyland.

That is the airy way in which Madame de Sévigné describes the end of Vatel. Nor does she show her good heart much

more when Brittany, her husband's province, is in question. It is astonishing how readily even kindly-natured people acquiesce in the misery of those who are not connected with them. Kind is kin, after all; and few of us quite get over the feeling that the only sorrows with which we are called on to sympathise are those of "the clan." Thus it comes about that this kind-hearted lady, who could really pity "the grande mademoiselle," Henry the Fourth's granddaughter, for her ridiculous love affair with Lauzun, actually wrote, "Present my compliments to the Captain-General of the Galleys," when she heard that a general muster of galley-slaves, who shouted their strange hou-hou, had formed part of the fêtes with which her daughter was welcomed as she went through Provence on her wedding trip.

The woes of Brittany, of course, touched her more nearly. She liked her husband's country seat of Les Rochers as well as she could like anything that was not Paris. She enjoyed the old avenues, and still more enjoyed planning out new ones, with summer-houses at the end, and sets of verses or moral maxims cropping up in unexpected places. She liked a talk with old Pilois, the gardener, more than with a good many of the "Chevaliers of the Parliament of Rennes." Still she made the best of her dull country guests, and very delightful are her descriptions of how they came clattering into the courtyard, some on horseback, some in coaches and six, with queer un-French names, like De Kerqueoison and De Kerborgne, which remind us of Cornwall; and how she gave them surprise collations at the end of the grand avenue, and how one day they all got wet to the skin, and came skurrying into the house, and were dressed up (the ladies of them) in the odds and ends of her wardrobe while their own slips and petticoats and shoes were drying. She is so French, even to the little grumble that these unexpected uninvited visits were rather costly, and that four or five hundred livres are too much to pay for a fricassée. "A life," says Mrs. Ritchie, "reminding us of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the Duke of Chaulnes, Governor of Brittany, and his wife figuring in all the entertainments, and entertaining in turn at that Vitré, of which Mr. Birket Foster has given us such beautiful sketches."

Brittany just then was keeping high holiday; loyal Brittany loyally getting drunk in honour of the opening of parliament

Not that the Rennes Parliament did much. Here is Madame de Sévigné's account of it:

"The States don't last long; they ask what is the king's pleasure, they themselves say not one word, and it's all over, except the granting of pensions, the giving of presents, the repairing of roads and towns. But all the while a score of great tables are constantly spread; there is gambling, there are balls and plays, and all the world dresses in its best, and three or four hundred pipes of wine are swallowed."

This year, 1671, there was unusual rejoicing. The king had been graciously pleased to give back to his loyal Bretons twenty-five thousand francs of the "benevolence," which the province had to make to him. It was only a trifle; his majesty still got two and a quarter millions; but such royal generosity gave occasion for an immense amount of health-drinking, the glasses being duly broken as soon as they had been drained in the king's honour.

Less than four years after, the Duke of Chaulnes had worn out even Breton patience, and damped even Breton loyalty.

The Rennes Parliament objected most strongly to the stamp and tobacco duties; and in 1673 it had more than doubled its usual "benevolence," giving the king five million two hundred thousand francs on the distinct understanding that these taxes were not to be imposed. Chaulnes writes to Colbert: "It's strange for them to be singing *Te Deum*, when they've saddled themselves with all that extra payment. And, yet, it is not strange, for those duties are not only hateful, but collected in a hateful manner."

Within eighteen months these duties had actually been re-imposed along with the still more vexatious duty on pewter-plate. There was a grand gathering at Rennes, which waited on the Chief President of Parliament, and obtained his promise that he would take the matter to the king direct. Whereupon, to the cry of "Long live the king; down with the three taxes!" the mob broke into the stamp offices and tobacco warehouses, destroying everything, and, above all, burning the books. That night the town was in the hands of the rioters, who were rather angered than frightened by five of their number having being shot by some of the government clerks. Next day the Marquis of Coëtlogon got together the gentry and the "fifties" (yeomanry), and charged the mob, killing some

thirty of them. But though Rennes was kept quiet, there were risings at Nantes, at Guingamp, at Carhaix, and all over "upper Cornouailles." At Nantes the rioters seized the bishop, and vowed they would put him to death unless a woman, who had been taken prisoner, was liberated. This demand was complied with, and the impartial mob straightway wrecked a Huguenot meeting-house, on the plea that the government clerks belonged to the reformed religion.

For three months not a tax-gatherer dared to show himself in the country parts, and Rennes itself was only kept down by the watchfulness of the "fifties."

Once the Duke of Chaulnes went a step too far. Thinking to overawe the disaffected, he sent to Nantes for three companies of militia, who marched in with guns loaded and matches lighted. Now, one of the most cherished of Breton privileges was that no royal garrison was ever to be sent to Rennes, and when the Nantes men marched up to the town-hall and began ousting the civic guard which was on duty there, a desperate riot began. The strangers were driven off, and had to find quarters at the governor's house. Next morning an angry crowd surrounded the Hôtel de Chaulnes, demanding the instant dismissal of the Nantes troops.

Brave as were all the French noblesse of that day, the duke came out and stood unmoved amid a shower of stones and mud, while two hundred muskets were aimed at him, and hundreds of voices were crying, "Shoot him." He waited till the civic guard had partly forced, partly persuaded, the people to disperse, and then, walking up to the town-hall, he promised to send away the three companies, and said that in five weeks he would summon a parliament, not, he was sorry to say, at Rennes, but at Dinan.

Meanwhile, he was, as far as possible, hiding the real state of affairs from the king, anxious above all things to keep his post, and afraid of being sent off in disgrace if the serious nature of the outbreak came to be known. His governorship gave him "admiralty rights," including a tithe of all prizes taken by Breton privateers. In one year, Dangeau tells us, his share amounted to nearly nine hundred thousand francs.

So he made the best of things, and laid the blame on the people of the faubourgs. "The best thing would be to destroy these suburbs out and out. It seems a harsh measure, but it would rid us of a nest of

ruffians, and it could easily be done if you could only send me a few regular troops, a cavalry regiment among them." Happily for what we may call the St. Antoine of Rennes, not a man could be spared from the Rhine or from Holland, and the duke had to be content with his civic guard and his "fifties."

However, he managed to overawe the parliament, and to prevent it from sending a deputation to court to claim the redress of grievances. He even contrived to take out of its hands the power of trying the rioters, and to hand them over to military commissions.

Rioting was going on merrily. "Blue caps" in lower Brittany, "red caps" in other parts, were scouring the country, warning everyone not to give food or shelter to tax-gatherers, but to shoot them down like mad dogs, burning all the stamps and pillaging the stamp-offices, and advising the nobles and the gentry to go back to their castles, where no harm would befall them. Even in Rennes the Duchess of Chaulnes was insulted—a dead cat was thrown into her carriage, and one of her pages was knocked down and badly hurt. "It's quite time these red and blue caps were hanged to teach them to be civil," writes Madame de Sévigné; and, when Tregear, Lanyon, and Morlaix, and a good part of Vannes were all in the rioters' hands, no wonder the gentry took shelter as fast as they could in the towns. At last, at the end of August, the king managed to spare six thousand troops. Chaulnes put himself at their head, and marched for Carhaix (there is a Carhayes in Cornwall, near Falmouth, as there are scores of Tregears and Lanyons in West Penwith), where the disaffection was most marked. He beat the rioters in a pitched battle; and then, as Madame de Sévigné coolly remarks, the hangings began. Chaulnes behaved in a way which happily has never been seen in England, at least, since Norman William's time. Even "the bloody assize" had its judge, and even such a judge as Jeffries was better than no judge at all. The poor peasants, armed with clubs and hayforks, knelt down, whole troops at a time, before the soldiers, crying out "Mea culpa," pleading for mercy in Latin, the only language that was common to both. But they were shot down, hanged, and broken on the wheel; the remnant being marched off to the galleys at Brest and Toulon. To find a parallel in our own islands we must go to Scotland after the '45, or to Ireland in '98, as the horrible

repression which there took place is described in Massey's *George the Third*.

When the country had got quiet, the duke turned to Rennes and paid off old scores with a vengeance. He marched in with two companies of musketeers, six of Swiss and French guards, six hundred dragoons, and so on, all with swords drawn, guns loaded, matches lighted at both ends. Rennes, thanks to the royal privilege aforesaid, had no barracks; so the six thousand troops were billeted on the disgusted townsmen. Some forms of law were gone through, a master of requests being appointed to try the culprits. A fine of one hundred thousand crowns was laid on the town, to be doubled if not paid in four-and-twenty hours. One suburb was pulled down, its inhabitants being hunted off, and the rest of the townspeople forbidden, on pain of death, to give them shelter. Madame de Sévigné is horrified at the picture of old men, women, and children wandering in tears about the town-gates, hungry and hopeless of shelter.

Sixty citizens were tried, and among those executed was a poor fiddler, who, while he was on the rack, said it was the Commissioners of Stamps who had bribed him and others to begin the riot. What happened at Nantes certainly tallied with this. The tax-collector there gave in a claim for a quarter of a million, whereas his strong box, which, unknown to him, the magistrates had preserved, only contained sixty-four thousand francs. But Rennes was not yet punished enough. The six thousand troops were reported to have been too considerate, and, instead of them, ten thousand were sent from that army of the Rhine whose cruelties in the Palatinate War have become a by-word. These men, sent into winter quarters in the Breton capital, behaved just as if it had been the enemy's country. Bands of them used to go out foraging in the villages round; the town was full of robberies; and the soldiers would often pick a quarrel with the people on whom they were billeted, throwing them out of window, and breaking up and burning their furniture. Both Madame de Sévigné and her son say that several cases occurred of their spitting young children on their pikes and roasting them. "There has been nothing like it," adds the son, "since Jerusalem was destroyed."

Happily, as soon as the campaign reopened, March, 1676, these savages in uniform were wanted on the Rhine. The Parliament met at Vannes and passed an

amnesty for all except the most culpable. Most of these were attorneys, for the new Stamp Act meant a great money loss to this class, and of course drove its members largely into the ranks of the insurgents.

Brittany gradually settled down, though it was not till 1690 that the Parliament was allowed to meet at Rennes, and then only in consideration of a benevolence of five hundred thousand francs.

We said Madame de Sévigné did not show much heart while detailing these troubles. Once or twice she wrote in bitter irony: "This province is a fine pattern to the rest to teach them respect for governors and governesses, and not to say rude things to them, nor to throw stones into their gardens." And again: "We are no longer broken on the wheel as we were. One a week to keep justice in hand. Mere hanging seems a refreshing process. I have quite a new idea of justice since I came here. Your galley-slaves seem to me a society of honest folks who have retired from the world to lead a peaceful existence."

So fared Louis the Fourteenth's Stamp Act, very differently from the way in which another Stamp Act fared, with results to the world's history much more important. Bordeaux and Brittany were put down, the usual fate of insurgents. The Americans turned out to be exceptions to the rule, and were not put down.

DAFFODIL.

CHAPTER V. THE LETTER.

THOUGH the eldest son at the farm was a dreamer he was no sluggard, and in the season would be out by daybreak and following the winding stream with his fishing-tackle and basket. Every feature and expression of the landscape was familiar to him, as he picked his way over the dewy grass, fearful of crushing a daisy. Mysterious cloud-armies with banners of purple and gold preceded him noiselessly in the depths of the placid water, gliding past the feet of the rushes and the heads of the water-lilies in a swift race with the breeze to meet the sun. He knew the moment at which the lark would soar from her nest in the grass, and the smoke come curling out of the cottage chimneys; and was accustomed to see the first opening of meadow gates in the morning and the turning out of the cattle into the pastures. The twinkle of the red rising sun on certain lattice windows, and the flitting flush across roof, gable, and grove, were all known

to his eye, as were to his ear the clatter of milking-pails and the song of the milkmaid. Here in this stilly hour he had learned to know the note of every kind of bird, and there was scarce a melodious utterance from bough or brake which he had not invested with a meaning to be woven up in his own romances. Not only the birds, but every living thing that sprang through the grass, or burrowed in the underwood, had a share in his visions and a part to play in the world of his dreams. The cooing of the rock-dove, and the croaking of the frog suggested to him, each in its turn, some daring extravagance. Even the flowing of the water had a burden for his ear which bewitched him, though he could never translate it into action or song. Nature (who has many a time made a poet out of worse material) kept him bound hand and foot on the banks of a stream, half poet and half fool, angling for something which (no matter how the silver trout might leap in his basket) he could never bring to shore, and making but a quaint and half-melancholy figure in the foreground of a pastoral scene.

With Giles, the fisherman, Daffodil felt she had more in common than with any other of the Marjoram family. She liked him, not knowing why, and never thought of laughing—except in delight—at his oddities. His fantastic character had a charm for her, and his chivalrous demeanour towards herself was a pleasant contrast to the vulgar patronage of his brother. It was always an agreeable surprise to her to find herself suddenly drawn into his peculiar world, and become an actor in one of his visionary dramas. It was always out of doors and about the hour of dawn that a certain curious transformation took place in him, and Daffodil, who understood the magic hour as well as he, soon came to know how and when to find him at his best, living the life he loved so well, and willing to share it with any one who had the wit to penetrate its mysteries. Of all the beings who had come along that grassy path and entered into a minute's conversation with him, Daffodil was the first who had been able to raise the latch of the golden gate and enter into the regions of glory. He habitually shrank from rude footsteps, and turned a deaf ear to unsympathetic voices, and only that Daffodil had taken him in the beginning by surprise, his shyness would have kept her at a distance for ever.

She had come upon him by accident one morning. He looked up and saw what seemed to him a glorified figure, an aureole

round the head, white garments dyed with flame, and the countenance of a goddess, moving towards him by the edge of the water, the sedges bending to her light movements, her glowing image gliding in the river beneath, and a long cloud-banner of gold and purple unfurled and floating behind her. Trembling and amazed he laid down his rod, and gazed at her as she approached; and even when he recognised that this glorified intruder on his solitude was only little Daffodil, the girl who sat opposite to him every day at dinner, and hemmed dusters of an evening while he made his flies, only Daffodil transfigured by the sunrise, he lost none of the awe and gladness which her appearance had awakened in him.

"Why do you look at me so strangely, Mr. Giles?" asked the girl laughingly. "Did you think I was a ghost?"

"Not a ghost; rather a spirit, a messenger; one of the goddesses of old; perhaps a princess of early romance," returned Giles hesitatingly, looking at her still through the medium of his dream.

"Do they ever come to you?" asked Daffodil, seating herself on the trunk of a tree which leaned out and dropped garlands into the river.

Giles eyed her askance, being used to suspect ridicule, but Daffodil had asked the question with grave large eyes fixed on his, eyes which looked as if they too might have gazed upon occasional visions.

"Not so visibly as you came; not so substantially, if I might be permitted the expression in speaking of a creature so delicate as Miss Daffodil," he answered still hesitating; "but they do come," he added, kindling as the interest deepened on his listener's face, "their voices are in the air, their footsteps on the grass—many and various; thick as notes in the sun!"

Daffodil looked round her cautiously with eyes that widened and widened.

"Close your eyes and listen. Hark, do you not hear martial music in the distance?"

Daffodil, with her eyes tightly shut, strained her ears, but could hear nothing, save that indescribable almost imperceptible hum of peace which Nature makes in her moods of sweetest contentment.

"I hear something," said Daffodil, "but it is only the clashing of the lilybells, the whispering of the leaves, the curling of the smoke—that does purr, I am sure—the lapping of the water. Now I hear a cock crowing faraway. And there was the coo of a wood-pigeon! That is all I hear. Mr. Giles."

"I hear more than all that, Miss Daffodil. I hear the Crusaders marching on Jerusalem. Their banners are flying, their coats of mail are glittering, the red cross burns upon their breasts. I hear the beating of their heroic hearts, the clash of their brass instruments, the rolling of their drums. And now I hear the mournful lute tuning the sad lay from the casements of noble ladies, who watch over the sea for the return of their dauntless lords. Oh, Miss Daffodil, why was I not born in that day that I too might have joined those devoted ranks!"

Daffodil unclosed her eyes, and beheld Mr. Giles with his nose pointed at an acute angle, a look of rapt enthusiasm on his long thin face, and his fishing-rod dangling forgotten from one limp hand. A smile dimpled her cheeks, which might have been fatal to their intercourse had Mr. Giles seen it; but at the dangerous moment he started and jerked himself suddenly into his ordinary attitude.

"Ah, a bite!" he said, tightening his hold on the fishing-rod. "Miss Daffodil, if this be not a false alarm it will be the seventh trout I shall have caught since sunrise."

One morning (in the young girl's second year at the farm), when Daffodil and Giles were coming home with the trout-basket, they saw Daughter walking up and down the orchard-path with an open letter which engaged her deeply. Now Daughter was as regular as clockwork in her habits, and this was her moment for turning the tap of the urn and letting the water steam into the tea-pot. The fishers, wondering, looked at their watches. Ursula was ten minutes late! When she espied Giles and Daffodil, she hurriedly dropped the letter into a large inside pocket which she wore under her skirt. This was no common letter to be handed round the breakfast-table, as was the usual fate of the Marjoram correspondence, for letters were so scarce at the farm that the contents of every envelope were studied like the family newspaper.

Ursula boiled the butter on the egg-boiler that morning, and left the eggs uncooked, besides going all astray in the sugaring of the tea-cups. Here is the letter which had fallen like a meteor into Daughter's quiet life.

"MY DEAR URSULA,—It is many years since you and I have exchanged letters, and I should not have ventured to think you had borne me in remembrance such a length of time, only for your brother's assurance conveyed to me in a letter some time ago. No doubt you think, as I do, that promises

are sacred things even when made between boy and girl. I have still the half of the ring we broke between us, and I can honestly say to you that I have never loved any other woman than yourself. Indeed, my life has been such that circumstances have prevented my ever seeing much of the society of ladies. Except the little daughter of my lost friend whom you have so kindly taken care of for me, I have scarcely been intimate with one of your sex; and she cannot be called a woman yet. My position is now assured, and I have wealth sufficient to offer you something more than a comfortable home. I therefore ask you to renew your troth and consent to be my wife. I shall travel to England by the next mail, and shall see you about a week after you receive this letter. Unless I find one from you waiting for me at the enclosed address I shall conclude you have not received my proposal unkindly and shall start for the Peach Apple Farm without delay.—Believe me, my dear Ursula, yours in all truth,

“LAURENCE DARTFIELD.”

Daughter's first feelings on reading this letter were of distress, annoyance, even fright. Walking up and down the orchard failed to calm her agitation at this sudden resurrection from her dead past. What had Samuel written about her which had caused her old lover thus to address her? Her brother had taken upon himself to do all the correspondence regarding Daffodil with her guardian, and he must have made some allusion to her which she had never authorised him to make. It was wrong, very wrong. There had never been any binding engagement between her and Laurence. Friends had prevented it long ago; oh, so long ago! And now was it fit that anyone should seek to draw him to her again? It was not fit; it was not right; the time for it was past; and yet there was the letter in her hand, and he was coming without waiting for an answer. True she might stop him even at the London hotel; but that would look so inhospitable, so unkind. And would he not naturally want to see his ward?

No wonder Ursula behaved strangely at the breakfast-table. After the meal was over she retired to her own room, the first time for years, without having visited the kitchen and dairy. Here again the letter was drawn forth and conned, and Ursula, pressing her hands across her eyes, recalled that old faded story of the past and tried to weave it in with the present. Laurence Dartfield, the Laurence she knew, was not

that stately gentleman in Daffodil's picture, who could write a grave measured love-letter (or was it indeed a love-letter!) after all these silent years. Her Laurence hung there upon the wall, looking out and away above her, an ardent boy; and beside this boy she saw a girl in a white frock and blue ribbons, with laughing eyes and wavy yellow hair. So had they roamed the orchard together picking up the peach-apples. There had been a swing; it hung in the orchard still, newly roped for Daffodil; and he had used to swing her. She had been a hoydenish girl enough in her time, a pleasant companion for an active lad. And he had been fond of her, and she of him; and between them they had broken a ring.

Laurence Dartfield had been the poor relation of a family much beyond Ursula's in rank; he had been placed with a tutor in the neighbourhood of the farm, and through an acquaintance with Giles, then studying under the same master and looked on as a promising young man, he had become intimate and welcome in the home of his fellow-student. Laurence, with little pocket-money, and no friends, was not much thought of among the pupils at his tutor's house, and was warmly grateful for every kindness he met with. Separated from his own sisters, the good-natured Ursula had charms for him; to her he used to read his mother's letters, rejoicing in her youthful sympathy with his sorrows and joys. When the fact of their attachment became known, Ursula's prudent father had strictly forbidden any engagement between them. Laurence admitted that he had no prospects in life, and Ursula's fortune was but small. Mrs. Dartfield wrote explaining her circumstances to Mr. Marjoram, and it was generally understood that the young pair must part. They saw the necessity for obedience, but in their tribulation they wrung their hands together under the apple-trees, and, with vague, wild promises, broke and shared a ring between them. No correspondence was permitted them, and Laurence was too honourable and too docile ever to dream of breaking through the prohibition.

Time went on and Laurence made known to Giles that an appointment in Ceylon had been procured for him by his friends. His mother and sisters were depending on him for support, and he was as far as ever from being able to marry, unless it might be that he would marry for fortune. This he had not done; and years

passed on during which little was heard of him at the Peach Apple Farm. Giles was not a good correspondent, and so that means of communication was gradually cut off. His mother and one of his sisters died; the other sister married and went to India, and of late Laurence had been alone. So much his friends at the farm had indirectly learned, but after the lapse of so long a time they had ceased to look on him as a person in any way connected with themselves, except indeed by the memory of a bygone friendship. His letter to Mrs. Marjoram, asking her to receive Daffodil, had dropped as a surprise into their lives. They were flattered and pleased that he had chosen them as her protectors, before others of his own blood who were more highly placed in the world.

After all this time of silence, of absence, of strange scenes and busy employment, he had been true, thought Ursula, to his boyish honour, faithful to his boyish sentiment; so true at least that he could say he had never loved any other woman than herself. Nevertheless he had not felt himself bound, he had not spoken, until her brother had written something which had prompted him to speak. Had he been merely told that she was unmarried? Would that account for the wording of that sentence of his letter? Samuel never could have said that she waited and hoped for his return! Had she done so? was a question that now arose in Daughter's mind. It is true that as a drift of rose-leaves may lie in a drawer, scenting everything with which they come in contact, so the memory of Daughter's early romance had lain all these years in the back of her mind as the one beautiful fact of her life. She did not expect the romance ever to return and become a reality again, any more than she expected the shrivelled rose-leaves to gather themselves up and re-bloom into a new-blown rose. Her mind was of a matter-of-fact cast, and when she dried her eyes after crying over his departure for Ceylon, Ursula's common-sense had told her that she need never expect to see Laurence Dartfield again. She was too good a daughter herself to wish to interfere with his duty to his mother, and she was far too home-loving to greatly desire that she could follow him into strange lands, leaving the old people and her brothers behind her.

She had accepted her fate therefore patiently enough, and, if she had refused one or two eligible offers before her twenty-fifth year, it was not so much the hope of

what might be, as the regret for what might have been, that deterred her from accepting them. Since her twenty-fifth year no man had asked her to wed, for even then the doom of Aunt Joan had begun to descend upon her. A few hours of depression, a few natural struggles of rebellion against fate had disturbed Daughter's placid existence, when she first began to observe that there were changes taking place within and without herself; but after some time she accepted this also as she accepted every other disappointment of her life. She left the sunshine and walked in the shadow, but her paths were still the same—under the apple-trees; along by the river; up and down the old brown staircase; in and out the low-roofed, lavender-scented chambers; and she still found them pleasant, and her feet became more wedded to them as the days and years went on. Father wanted her, Mother wanted her, the hens flew round her, the calf licked her hand. What would become of Giles if she were gone out of the life at the farm? Even Samuel would have no one to lecture and correct. So, with a sigh and no bitterness, had Daughter consented to her fate as an old maid. Since Daffodil had been developing so rapidly into a woman the contrast between them had struck Ursula forcibly, and had seemed to age her rapidly. And now here was a love-letter lying in her lap!

While Ursula meditated, with perturbation in her heart and on her face, her mother came to look for her.

"Daughter, dear, dear," she said, "cook has been asking about dinner."

"Yes, Mother. I am coming presently."

"Is anything the matter?" asked the old lady; struck by something unusual.

"Yes, Mother; I have just heard that Laurence Dartfield is coming to see us."

"Laurence coming! Home from Ceylon! Of course he will want to look after his ward. How glad the child will be! Little Daff is so fond of him."

Poor Ursula with the letter under her apron felt an increased assurance that long ago was indeed long ago, seeing that her mother seemed to have forgotten their old relations with this friend, and only thought of the newer ones. The old lady's speech was one that she herself might have uttered yesterday; but an hour had changed her beyond her own knowing.

"When did he write to her, my dear?" asked Mrs. Marjoram.

"He has not written to her at all, Mother. The letter is to me."

"Very nice of him. You are the older friend. What does he say about her?"

"Not much," said Ursula, colouring violently. "Indeed, the letter is written all about himself and—me. He thinks, Mother, he thinks— Oh, don't look so dreadfully surprised!"

"Go on, Daughter dear," said the old lady, straightening her slight figure, while the delicate lace-frill of her cap-border began to tremble.

"He thinks we might be married after all," said Daughter desperately.

"Married!" echoed her mother in a tone of dismay that went to Daughter's heart; and a little pink flush came into the fair wrinkled face and went out again. "You, Daughter dear, married!"

"Mother, Mother dear, don't get excited or you will be ill," cried Ursula, forgetting herself at sight of the old lady's agitation. And she wheeled a chair to the open window, and, placing a footstool under her mother's small feet, took one of the peacock fans from Ceylon down from the mantel-shelf, and fanned the frail creature tenderly.

"Mother," said Daughter presently, "if you feel it wrong even to think about it, if you could not bear it, tell me at once, and I will write that he must not come. There is still a week before he can be here."

"No, Daughter dear; no, no, no! It is only the surprise of it that takes away my breath. Not but what you still look nice, Ursula, as nice to me as you ever did, my daughter, but it is so long ago, and you were both such children. And he does look so young hanging over there on the wall."

"But he is not quite like that now," said Daughter, hanging her head in sad humility.

"No, dear, no. Of course he has advanced as well as you. And I do say solemnly that such constancy is a compliment to touch any woman's heart."

Then tears gathered in the good old mother's eyes, and she grasped her daughter's hands.

"To let you go, Ursula! To let you go out of our lives!"

"I could not, Mother. I know I never could. But I have been thinking he may intend to stay at home."

"Ah!" Mrs. Marjoram drew a long breath of relief. "How stupid of me never to think of that! Of course he is

coming to settle at home. And there is The Larches to be let, close to our own land. We shall have you backwards and forwards. Oh, Daughter dear, what a foolish old woman I am, to be sure!"

"And you would not object to see me married, Mother?"

"Object? Dear heart, no! Why should I not be glad? All my old friends have grandchildren years ago. Some of them have great-grandchildren, and why should not I see my daughter with a home of her own? You know I wished it long ago, Ursula, only there was nobody you would take. And to think of its being Laurence after all—laughing Laurence who used to shake the apple-trees!"

The cool March wind blew in upon Daughter's fevered cheeks. She was frightened to feel how her mind had taken in the possibility of a new state of things. Until she heard herself pleading with her mother, she had not been aware of the desire of her heart.

"Mother," she said presently, "don't tell Daffodil. After all, when he sees me he may change his mind; or I may not consent. There are many things that may happen. And I should feel so ashamed somehow with that young girl wondering at me."

"Just as you like, Daughter. The matter is quite your own, my dear."

"I fear—I fear I am too old for a bride."

"Not at all," said Mrs. Marjoram. "There was your Aunt Joan (Daughter winced), who married at fifty. What does it matter, my dear, when the man loves you?"

"But does he love me? Will he love me?" asked Daughter, when she was once more alone in her room and her excitement had a little subsided. She saw again a boy and a girl breaking a ring under the apple-trees. That merry romping girl in the white frock and blue ribbons, with her wild fair hair and dimpled cheeks, kept haunting Daughter and would not go out of her sight. Her face was the pendant for that other which hung upon the wall. And though Ursula had deprecated her mother's remarks about the portrait, the sight of it troubled her more than she could bear. That boy was all the Laurence she knew as yet; and she felt like his mother. At last she hung a fan above it so that the drooping feathers hid the youthful face.

THE CAPTAINS' ROOM.

BY WALTER BESANT AND JAMES RICE,

AUTHORS OF

"READY-MONEY MORTIBOY," "THIS SON OF VULGAR," "THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY," "BY CELIA'S ARBOUR,"
"THE MONKS OF THRELEMA," "T'WAS IN TRAFALGAR'S BAY," "THE SHAMY SIDE," ETC., ETC.

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THE CAPTAINS' ROOM.

CHAPTER I. THE MESSAGE OF THE MUTE.

PERHAPS the most eventful day in the story of which I have to tell, was that on which the veil of doubt and misery which had hung before the eyes of Lal Rydquist for three long years, was partly lifted. It was so eventful, that I venture to relate what happened on that day first of all, even though it tells half the story at the very beginning. That we need not care much to consider, because, although it is the story of a great calamity long dreaded and happily averted, it is a story of sorrow borne bravely, of faith, loyalty, and courage. A story such as one loves to tell, because, in the world of fiction, at least, virtue should always triumph, and true hearts be rewarded. Wherefore, if there be any who love to read of the mockeries of fate, the wasting of good women's love, the success of craft and treachery, instances of which are not wanting in the world, let them go elsewhere, or make a Christmas tale for themselves, and their joy bells, if they like it, shall be the funeral knell, and their noels a dirge beside the grave of ruined and despairing innocence, and for their feast they may have the bread and water of affliction.

The name of the girl of whom we are to speak was Alicia Rydquist, called by all her friends Lal; the place of her birth and home was a certain little-known suburb of

London, called Rotherhithe. She was not at all an aristocratic person, being nothing but the daughter of a Swedish sea-captain, and an English wife. Her father was dead, and, after his death, the widow kept a Captains' boarding-house, which of late, for reasons which will presently appear, had greatly risen in repute.

The day which opens my story, the day big with fate, the day from which everything that follows in Lal's life, whether that be short or long, will be dated, was the fourteenth of October, in the grievous year of rain and ruin, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine. And though the summer was that year clean forgotten, so that there was no summer at all, but only the rain and cold of a continual and ungracious April, yet there were vouchsafed a few gracious days of consolation in the autumn, whereof this was one, in which the sun was as bright and warm as if he had been doing his duty like a British sailor all the summer long, and was proud of it, and meant to go on giving joy to mankind until fog and gloom time, cloud and snow time, black frost and white frost time, short days and long nights time, should put a stop to his benevolent intentions.

At eleven o'clock in the forenoon, both the door and the window belonging to the kitchen of the last house of the row, called "Seven Houses," were standing open for the air and the sunshine.

As to the window, which had a warm south aspect, it looked upon a churchyard. A grape vine grew upon the side of the house, and some of its branches trailed across the upper panes, making a green drapery which was pleasant to look upon, though none of its leaves this year were able to grow to their usual generous amplitude, by reason of the ungenerous season. The churchyard itself was planted with planes, lime-trees, and elms, whose foliage, for the like reason, was not yellow, as is generally the case with such trees in mid-October, but was still green and sweet to look upon. The burying-ground was not venerable for antiquity, because it was less than a hundred years old, church and all; but yet it was pleasing and grateful, a churchyard which filled the mind with thoughts of rest and sleep, with pleasant dreams. Now, the new cemeteries must mostly be avoided, because one who considers them falls presently into grievous melancholy, which, unless diverted, produces insanity, suicide, or emigration. They lend a new and a horrid pang to death.

It is difficult to explain why this churchyard, more than others, is a pleasant spot: partly, perhaps, on account of the bright and cheerful look of the place in which it stands; then, there are not many graves in it, and these are mostly covered or honoured by grey tombstones, partly moss-grown. On this day the sunshine fell upon them gently, with intervals of shifting shade through the branches; and though the place around was beset with noises, yet, as these were always the same, and never ceased except at night, they were not regarded by those who lived there, and so the churchyard seemed full of peace and quiet. The dead men who lie there are of that blameless race who venture themselves upon the unquiet ocean. The dead women are the wives of the men, their anxieties now over and done. When such men are gone, they are, for the most part, spoken of with good will, because they have never harmed any others but themselves, and have been kind-hearted to the weak. And so, from all these causes together, from the trees and the sunshine, and the memory of the dead sailors, it is a churchyard which suggested peaceful thoughts.

At all events it did not sadden the children when they came out from the school, built in one corner of it, nor did its presence ever disturb or sadden the mind

of the girl who was ^{made} in the kitchen. There were sparrows on the branches, and in one tree sat a blackbird now and then, late as it was, delivering himself of one note, just to remind himself of the past, and to keep his voice in practice against next spring.

The girl was fair to look upon, and while she made her pudding, with sleeves turned back and flecks of white flour upon her white arms, and a white apron tied round her waist, stretching from chin to feet like a child's pinafore or a long bib, she sang snatches of songs, yet finished none of them, and when you came to look closer into her face you saw that her cheeks were thin and her eyes sorrowful, and that her lips trembled from time to time. Yet she was not thinking out her sad thoughts to their full capabilities of bitterness, as some women are wont to do—as, in fact, her own mother had done for close upon twenty years, and was still doing, having a like cause for plaint and lamentation; only the sad thoughts came and went across her mind, as birds fly across a garden, while she continued deftly and swiftly to carry on her work.

At this house, which was none other than the well-known Captains' boarding-house, sometimes called "Rydquist's, of Rotherhiths," the puddings and pastry were her special and daily charge. The making of puddings is the poetry of simple cookery. One is born, not made, for puddings. To make a pudding worthy of the name requires not only that special gift of nature, a light and cool hand, but also a clear intelligence and the power of concentrated attention, a gift in itself, as many lament when the sermon is over and they remember none of it. If the thoughts wander, even for a minute, the work is ruined. The instinctive feeling of right proportion in the matter of flour, lemon-peel, currants, sugar, allspice, eggs, butter, breadcrumbs; the natural eye for colour, form, and symmetry, which are required before one can ever begin even to think of becoming a maker of puddings, are all lost and thrown away, unless the attention is fixed resolutely upon the progress of the work. Now, there was one pudding, a certain kind of plum duff, made by these hands, the recollection of which was wont to fill the hearts of those Captains who were privileged to eat of it with tender yearnings whenever they thought upon it, whether far away on southern seas, or on the broad Pacific, or in the shallow Baltic,

and it nerved their hearts when battling with the gales while yet a thousand knots at least lay between their plunging bows and the Commercial Docks, to think that they were homeward bound, and that Lal would greet them with that pudding.

As the girl rolled her dough upon the white board and looked thoughtfully upon the little heaps of ingredients, she sang, as I have said, scraps of songs; but this was just as a man at work, as a carpenter at his bench or a cobbler over his boot, will whistle scraps of tunes, not because his mind is touched with the beauty of the melody, but because this little action relieves the tension of the brain for a moment without diverting the attention or disturbing the current of thought. She was dressed—behind the big apron—in a cotton print, made up by her own hands, which were as clever with the needle as with the rolling-pin. It was a dress made of a sympathetic stuff—there are many such tissues in every draper's shop—which, on being cut out, sewn up, and converted into a feminine garment, immediately proceeds, of its own accord, to interpret and illustrate the character of its owner; so that for a shrew it becomes draggled-tailed, and for a lady careless of her figure, or conscious that it is no longer any use pretending to have a figure, it rolls itself up in unlovely folds, or becomes a miracle of flatness; and for a lady of prim temperament it arranges itself into stiff vertical lines, and for an old lady, if she is a nice old lady, it wrinkles itself into ten thousand lines, which cross and recross each other like the lines upon her dear old face, and all to bring her more respect and greater consideration; but for a girl whose figure is tall and well-formed, this accommodating material becomes as clinging as the ivy, and its lines are every one of them an exact copy of Hogarth's line of beauty, due allowance being made for the radius of curvature.

I do not think I can give a better or clearer account of this maiden's dress, even if I were to say how-much-and-eleven-pence-three-farthings it was a yard and where it was bought. As for that, however, I am certain it came from Bjornsen's shop, where English is spoken, and where they have got in the window, not to be sold at any price, the greatest curiosity in the whole world (except the Golden Butterfly from Sacramento), namely, a beautiful model of a steamer, with everything complete—rigging, ropes, sails, funnel, and

gear—the whole in a glass bottle. And if a man can tell how that steamer got into that bottle, which is a common glass bottle with a narrow neck, he is wiser than any of the scientific gentlemen who have tackled the problems of Stonehenge, the Pyramids, the Yucatan inscriptions, or the Etruscan language.

That is what she had on. As for herself, she was a tall girl; her figure was slight and graceful, yet she was strong; her waist measured just exactly the same number of inches as that of her grandmother Eve, whom she greatly resembled in beauty. Eve, as we cannot but believe, was the most lovely of women ever known, even including Rachel, Esther, Helen of Troy, Ayesha, and fair Bertha-with-the-big-feet. The colour of her hair depended a good deal upon the weather: when it was cloudy it was a dark brown; when the sunlight fell upon it her hair was golden; there was quite enough of it to tie about her waist for a girdle if she was so minded; and she was so little of a fine lady, that she would rather have had it brown in all weathers, and was half ashamed of its golden tint.

It soothes the heart to speak of a beautiful woman; the contemplation of one respectfully, is in itself, to all rightly constituted masculine minds, a splendid moral lesson.

"Here," says the moralist to himself, "is the greatest prize that the earth has to offer to the sons of Adam. One must make oneself worthy of such a prize; no one should possess a goddess who is not himself godlike."

Having drawn his moral, the philosopher leaves off gazing, and returns, with a sigh, to his work. If you look too long, the moral is apt to evaporate and vanish away.

The door of the kitchen opened upon the garden, which was not broad, being only a few feet broader than the width of the house, but was long. It was planted with all manner of herbs, such as thyme, which is good for stuffing of veal; mint, for seasoning of that delicious compound, and as sauce for the roasted lamb; borage, which profligates and toppers employ for claret-cup, though what it was here used for I know not; parsley, good for garnish, which may also be chopped up small and fried; cucumber, chiefly known at the West End in connection with salmon, but not disdained in the latitude of Rotherhithe for breakfast, dinner, tea, or supper, in combination with vinegar or anything else, for

cucumber readily adapts itself to all palates save those set on edge with pickiness. Then there were vegetables, such as onions, which make a noble return for the small space they occupy, and are universally admitted to be the most delightful of all roots that grow; lettuces crisp and green; the long lettuce and the round lettuce all the summer; the scarlet-runner which runneth in brave apparel, and eats short in the autumn, going well with leg of mutton; and, at the end of the strip of ground, a small forest of Jerusalem artichoke, fit for the garden of the Queen. As for flowers, they were nearly over for the year, but there were trailing nasturtiums, long sprigs of faint mignonette, and one great bully hollyhock; there were also in boxes, painted green, creeping-jenny, bachelors'-button, thrift, ragged-robin, stocks, and candy-tuft, but all over for the season. There was a cherry-tree trained against the wall, and beside it a peach; there were also a Siberian crab, a medlar, and a mulberry-tree. A few raspberry-canecanes were standing for show, because among them all there had not been that year enough fruit to fill a plate. The garden was separated from the churchyard by wooden pailings painted green; this made it look larger than if there had been a wall. It was, in fact, a garden in which not one inch of ground was wasted; the paths were only six inches wide, and wherever a plant could be coaxed to grow, there it stood in its allotted space. The wall fruit was so carefully trained that there was not a stalk or shoot out of place. The flower-borders were so carefully trimmed that there was not a weed or a dead flower, while as for grass, snails, slugs, bindweed, dandelion, broken flower-pot, brickbat, and other such things which do too frequently disfigure the gardens of the more careless, it is delightful to record that there was not in this little slice of Eden so much as the appearance or suspicion of such a thing. The reason why it was so neat and so well watched was that it was the delight and paradise of the Captains who, by their united efforts, made it as neat, snug, and orderly as one of their own cabins. There were live creatures in the garden, too. On half-a-dozen crossbars, painted green, were just so many parrots. They were all trained parrots, who could talk and did talk, not altogether as is the use of parrots, who too often give way to the selfishness of the old Adam, but one at a time, and deliberately, as if they were instructing mankind in some new and great

truth, or delighting them with some fresh and striking poetical ejaculation. One would cough slowly, and then dash his buttons. If ladies were not in hearing he would remember other expressions savouring of fo'k'sle rather than of quarter-deck. Another would box the compass as if for an exercise in the art of navigation. Another seldom spoke except when his mistress came and stroked his feathers with her soft and dainty finger. The bird was growing old now, and his feathers were dropping out, and what this bird said you shall presently hear.

Next there was a great kangaroo hound, something under six feet high when he walked. Now he was lying asleep. Beside him was a little Maltese dog, white and curly, and in a corner—the warmest corner—there was an old and toothless bulldog. Other things there were—some in boxes, some in partial confinement, or by a string tied to one leg; some running about, such as tortoises, hedgehogs, Persian cats, Angola cats, lemurs, ferrets, Madagascar cats. But they were not all in the garden, some of them, including a mongoose and a flying-fox, having their abode on the roof, where they were tended faithfully by Captain Zachariassen. In the kitchen, also, which was warm, there resided a chameleon.

Now, all these things—the parrots, the dogs, the cats, the lemurs, and the rest of them—were gifts and presents brought across the seas by amorous captains to be laid at the shrine of one Venus—of course I know that there never can be more than one Venus at a time to any well-regulated male mind—whom all wooed and none could win. There were many other gifts, but these were within doors, safely bestowed. It may also be remarked that Venus never refuses to accept offerings which are laid upon her altar with becoming reverence. Thus there were the fragile coral fingers, named after the goddess, from the Philippine Islands; there were chests of the rich and fragrant tea which China grows for Russia. You cannot buy it at all here, and in Hong-Kong only as a favour, and at unheard-of prices. There were cups and saucers from Japan; fans of the coco de mer from the Seychelles; carved ivory boxes and sandalwood boxes from China and India; weapons of strange aspect from Malay islands; idols from Ceylon; praying tackle brought down to Calcutta by some wandering Thibetan; with fans, glasses, mats,

carpets, pictures, chairs, desks, tables, and even beds, from lands d'outre mer, inso-much that the house looked like a great museum or curiosity-shop. And every-thing, if you please, brought across the sea and presented by the original importers to the beautiful Alicia Rydquist, commonly called Lal by those who were her friends, and Miss Lal by those who wished to be, but were not, and had to remain outside, so to speak, and all going, in consequence, green with envy.

On this morning there were also in the garden two men. One of them was a very old man—so old that there was nothing left of him but was puckered and creased, and his face was like one of those too faithful maps which want to give every detail of the country, even the smallest. This was Captain Zachariasen, a Dane by birth, but since the age of eight on an English ship, so that he had clean forgotten his native language. He had been for very many years in the timber trade between the ports of Bergen and London. He was now in the protracted evening of his days, enjoying an annuity purchased out of his savings. He resided constantly in the house, and was the dean, or oldest member among the boarders. He said himself sometimes that he was eighty-five, and sometimes he said he was ninety, but old age is apt to boast. One would not baulk him of a single year, and certainly he was very, very old.

This morning, he sat on a green box half-way down the garden—all the boxes, cages, railings, shutters, and doors of the house were painted a bright navy-green—with a hammer and nails in his hand, and sometimes he drove in a nail, but slowly and with consideration, as if noise and haste would confuse that nail's head, and make it go loose, like a screw. Between each tap he gazed around and smiled with pleased benevolence. The younger man, who was about thirty years of age, was weeding. That is, he said so. He had a spud with which to conduct that operation, but there were no weeds. He also had a pair of scissors, with which he cut off dead leaves. This was Captain Holstius, also of the mercantile marine, and a Norwegian. He was a smartly-dressed sailor—wore a blue cloth jacket, with trousers of the same; a red silk handkerchief was round his waist; his cap had a gold band round it, and a heavy steel chain guarded his watch. His face was kind to look upon. One noticed, especially,

a greyish bloom upon a ruddy cheek. It was an oval face, such as you may see in far-off Bamborough, or on Holy Island, with blue eyes; and he had a gentle voice. One wonders whether the Normans, who so astonished the world a thousand years ago, were soft of speech, mild of eye, kind of heart, like their descendants. Were Bohemond, Robert the Devil, great Canute, like unto this gentle Captain Holstius? And if so, why were they so greatly feared? And if not, how is it that their sons have so greatly changed? They were sailors—the men of old. But sailors acquire an expression of unworldliness not found among us who have to battle with worldly and crafty men. They are not tempted to meet craft with craft, and treachery with deceit. They do not cheat; they are not tempted to cheat. Therefore, although the Vikings were ferocious and bloodthirsty pirates, thinking it but a small thing to land and spit a dozen Saxons or so, burn their homesteads, and carry away their pigs, yet no doubt, in the domestic circle, they were mild and gentle, easily ruled by their wives, and obedient even to taking charge of the baby, which was the reason why they were called, in the pronunciation of the day, the hardy Nursemen.

A remarkable thing about that garden was that if you looked to the north, over the garden walls of the Seven Houses, you obtained, through a kind of narrow lane, a glimpse of a narrow breadth of water, with houses on either side to make a frame. It was like a little strip of some panorama which never stops, because up and down the water there moved perpetually steamers, sailing-ships, barges, boats, and craft of all kinds. Then, if you turned completely round, and looked south, you saw beyond the trees in the churchyard a great assemblage of yard-arms, masts, ropes, hanging sails, and rigging. And from this quarter there was heard continually the noise of labour that ceaseth not, the labour of hammers, saws, and hatchets; the labour of lifting heavy burdens with the encouraging, "Yo-ho;" the labour of men who load ships and unload them; the labour of those who repair ships; the ringing of bells which call to labour; the agitation which is caused in the air when men are gathered together to work. Yet the place, as has been already stated, was peaceful. The calm of the garden was equalled by the repose of the open place on which the

windows of the house looked, and by the peace of the churchyard. The noise was without; it affected no one's nerves; it was continuous, and, therefore, was not felt any more than the ticking of a watch or the beating of the pulse.

The old man presently laid down his hammer, and spoke, saying softly:

"Nor—wee—gee."

"Ay, ay, Captain Zachariasen," replied the other, pronouncing the name with a foreign accent, and speaking a pure English, something like a Welshman's English. They both whispered, because the kitchen-door was open, and Lal might hear. But they were too far down the garden for her to overhear their talk.

"Any luck this spell, lad?"

The old man spoke in a meaning way, with a piping voice, and he winked both his eyes hard, as if he was trying to stretch the wrinkles out of his face.

Captain Holstius replied evasively, that he had not sought for luck, and, therefore, had no reason to complain of unsuccess.

"I mean, lad," whispered the old man, "have you spoke the barque which once we called the Saucy Lal? And if not," because here the young man shook his head, while his rosy cheek showed a deeper red—"if not, why not?"

"Because," said Captain Holstius, speaking slowly—"because I spoke her six months ago, and she told me—"

Here he sighed heavily.

"What did she tell you, my lad? Did she say that she wanted to be carried off and married, whether she liked it or not?"

"No, she did not."

"That was my way, when I was young. I always carried 'em off. I married 'em first and axed 'em afterwards. Sixty year ago, that was. Ay, nigh upon seventy, which makes it the more comfortable a thing for a man in his old age to remember."

"Lal tells me that she will wait five years more before she gives him up, and even then she will marry no one, but put on mourning, and go in widow's weeds—being not even a wife."

"Five years!" said Captain Zachariasen.

"'Tis a long time for a woman to wait for a man. Five years will take the bloom off of her pretty cheeks, and the plumpness off of her lines, which is now in the height of their curliness. Five years to wait! Why, there won't be a smile left on her rosy lips. Whereas, if you'd the heart of a loblolly boy, Cap'en Holstius, you'd ha'

run her round to the church long ago, spoke to the clerk, whistled for the parson, while she was still occupied with the pudding and had her thoughts far away, and—well, there, in five years' time she'd be playin' with a four-year-old, or maybe twins, as happy as if there hadn't never been no Cap'en Armiger at all."

"Five years," Captain Holstius echoed, "is a long time to wait. But any man would wait longer than that for Lal, even if he did not get her, after all."

"Five years! It will be eight, counting the three she has already waited for her dead sweetheart. No woman, in the old days, was ever expected to cry more than one. Not in my day. No woman ever waited for me, nor dropped one tear, for more than one twelvemonth, sixty years ago, when I was dr—" Here he recollected that he could never have been drowned, so far back as his memory served. That experience had been denied him. He stopped short.

"She thinks of him," Captain Holstius went on, seating himself on another box, face to face with the old man, "all day; she dreams of him all night; there is no moment that he is not in her thought—I know because I have watched her; she does not speak of him: even if she sings at her work, her heart is always sad."

"Poor Rex Armiger! Poor Rex Armiger!" This was the voice of the old parrot, who lifted his beak, repeated his cry, and then subsided.

Captain Holstius's eyes grew soft and humid, for he was a tender-hearted Norwegian, and he pitied as well as loved the girl.

"Poor Rex Armiger!" he echoed; "his parrot remembers him."

"She is wrong," said the old man, "very wrong. I always tell her so. Fretting has been known to make the pastry heavy: tears spoil gravy." He stated this great truth as if it was a well-known maxim, taken from the Book of Proverbs.

"That was the third time that I spoke to her; the third time that she gave me the same reply. Shall I tease her more? No, Captain Zachariasen, I have had my answer, and I know my duty."

"It's hard, my lad, for a sailor to bear. Why, you may be dead in two years, let alone five. Most likely you will. You look as if you will. What with rocks at sea and sharks on land, most sailors, even skippers, by thirty years of age, is nummore. And though some," here he tried

to recollect the words of Scripture, and only succeeded in part, "by good seamanship escape, and live to seventy and eighty, or even, as in my case, by a judgmatic course and fair winds, come to eighty-five and three months last Sunday, yet in their latter days there is but little headway, the craft lying always in the doldrums, and the rations, too, often short. Five years is long for Lal to wait in suspense, poor girl! Take and go and find another girl, therefore," the old man advised.

"No," the Norwegian shook his head sadly; "there is only one woman in all the world for me."

"Why, there, there," the old Captain cried, "what are young fellows coming to? To cry after one woman! I've given you my advice, my lad, which is good advice; likely to be beneficial to the boarders, especially them which are permanent, because the sooner the trouble is over, the better it'll be for meals. I did hear there was a bad egg, yesterday. To think of Rydquist's coming to bad eggs! But if a gal will go on fretting after young fellows that is long since food for crabs, what are we to expect but bad eggs? Marry her, my lad, or sheer off, and marry some one else. P'raps, when you are out of the way, never to come back again, she will take on with some other chap."

Captain Holstius shook his head again.

"If Lal, after three years of waiting, says she cannot get him out of her heart—why, why there will be nothing to do, no help, because she knows best what is in her heart, and I would not that she married me out of pity."

"Come to pity!" said Captain Zachariassen, "she can't marry you all out of pity. There's Cap'en Borlinder and Cap'en Wattles, good mariners both, also after her. Should you like her to marry them out of pity?"

"I need not think of marriage at all," said the Norwegian. "I think of Lal's happiness. If it will be happier for her to marry me, or Captain Borlinder, or Captain Wattles, or any other man, I hope that she will marry that man; and if she will be happier in remembering her dead lover, I hope that she will remain without a husband. All should be as she may most desire."

Then the girl herself suddenly appeared in the doorway, shading her eyes from the sunshine, a pretty picture, with the flour still upon her arms, and her white bib still tied round her.

"It is time for your morning beer, Captain Zachariassen," she said. "Will you have it in the kitchen, or shall I bring it to you in the garden?"

"I will take my beer, Lal," replied the old man, getting up from the box, "by the kitchen fire."

He slowly rose and walked, being much bent and bowed by the weight of his years, to the kitchen-door.

Captain Holstius followed him.

There was a wooden armchair beside the fire, which was bright and large, for the accommodation of a great piece of veal already hung before it. The old man sat down in it, and took the glass of ale, cool, sparkling, and foaming, from Lal's hand.

"Thoughtful child," he said, holding it up to the light, "she forgets nothing—except what she ought most to forget."

"You are pale to-day, Lal," said the Norwegian gently. "Will you come with me upon the river this afternoon?"

She shook her head sadly.

"Have you forgotten what day this is, of all days in the year?" she asked.

Captain Holstius made no reply.

"This day, three years ago, I got his last letter. It was four months since he sailed away. Ah me! I stood upon the steps of Lavender Dock and saw his ship slowly coming down the river. Can I ever forget it! Then I jumped into the boat and pulled out mid-stream, and he saw me and waved his handkerchief. And that was the last I saw of Rex. This day, three years and four months ago, and at this very time, in the forenoon."

The old man, who had drained his glass and was feeling just a little evanescent headiness, began to prattle in his armchair, not having listened to their talk.

"I am eighty-five and three months, last Sunday; and this is beautiful beer, Lal, my dear. 'Twill be hard upon a man to leave such a tap. With the Cap'ens' room; and you, my Lal."

"Don't think of such things, Captain Zachariassen," cried Lal, wiping away the tear which had risen in sympathy for her own sorrows, not for his.

"'Tis best not," he replied cheerfully. "Veal, I see. Roast veal! Be large-handed with the seasonin', Lal. And beans? Ah! and apple-dumplings. The credit of Rydquist's must be kept up. Remember that, Lal. Wherefore, awake my soul, and with the sun. Things there are that should be forgotten. I am eighty-five and a quarter last Sunday, like Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob—even Methuselah was eighty-five once—when he was little more than a boy, and never a grey hair—and, like the patriarchs at their best and oldest, I have gotten wisdom. Then, listen. Do I, being of this great age, remember the gals that I have loved, and the gals who have loved me? No. Yet are they all gone like that young man of yours, gone away and past like gales across the sea. They are gone, and I am hearty. I shall never see them nummore; yet I sit down regular to meals, and still play a steady knife and fork. And what I say is this: ‘Lal, my dear, wipe them pretty eyes with your best silk pocket-handkercher, put on your best frock, and go to church in it for to be married.’”

“Thank you, Captain Zachariasen,” said the girl, not pertly, but with a quiet dignity.

“Do not,” the old man went on. His eyes kept dropping, and his words rambled a little—“do not listen to Nick Borlinder. He sings a good song, and he shakes a good leg. Yet he is a rover. I was once myself a rover.”

She made no reply. He yawned slowly and went on:

“He thinks, he does, as no woman can resist him. I used to have the same persuasion, and I found it sustaining in a friendly port.”

“I do not suppose,” said Lal softly, “that I shall listen to Captain Borlinder.”

“Next,” the old man continued, “there is Cap'en Wattles. Don't listen to Wattles, my dear. It is not that he is a Yankee, because a Cap'en is a Cap'en, no matter what his country, and I was, myself, once a Dane, when a boy, nigh upon eighty years ago, and drank corn brandy, very likely, though I have forgotten that time, and cannot now away with it. Wattles is a smart seaman; but Wattles, my dear, wouldn't make you happy. You want a cheerful lad, but no drinker and toper like Borlinder; nor so quiet and grave as Wattles, which isn't natural, afloat nor ashore, and means the devil.”

Here he yawned again and his eyes closed.

“Very good, sir,” said Lal.

“Yes, my dear—yes—and this is a very—comfortable—chair.”

His head fell back. The old man was asleep.

Then Captain Holstius drew a chair to the kitchen door, and sat down, saying nothing, not looking at Lal, yet with the

air of one who was watching over and protecting her.

And Lal sat beside the row of freshly-made dumplings, and rested her head upon her hands, and gazed out into the church-yard.

Presently her eyes filled with tears, and one of them in each eye overflowed and rolled down her cheeks. And the same phenomenon might have been witnessed directly afterwards in the eyes of the sympathetic Norweege.

It was very quiet, except, of course, for the screaming of the steam-engines on the river, and the hammering, yo-ho-ing, and bell-ringing of the Commercial Docks; and these, which never ceased, were never regarded. Therefore, the calm was as the calm of a Sabbath in some Galilean village, and broken only in the kitchen by the ticking of the roasting-jack, and an occasional remark made, in a low tone, by a parrot.

Captain Holstius said nothing. He stayed there because he felt, in his considerate way, that his presence soothed and, in some sort, comforted the girl. It cost him little to sit there doing nothing at all.

Of all men that get their bread by labour it is the sailor alone who can be perfectly happy doing nothing for long hours together. He does not even want to whittle a stick.

As for us restless landmen, we must be continually talking, reading, walking, fishing, shooting, rowing, smoking tobacco, or in some other way wearing out brain and muscle.

The sailor, for his part, sits down and lets time run on, unaided. He is accustomed to the roll of his ship and the gentle swish of the waves through which she sails. At sea he sits so for hours, while the breeze blows steady and the sails want no alteration.

So passed half an hour.

While they were thus sitting in silence, Lal suddenly lifted her head, and held up her finger, saying softly:

“Hush! I hear a step.”

The duller ears of her companion heard nothing but the usual sounds which included the trampling of many feet afar off.

“What step?” he asked.

Her cheeks were gone suddenly quite white and a strange look was in her eyes.

“Not his,” she said. “Oh, not the step of my Rex; but I know it well for all that. The step of one who— Ah! listen!”

Then, indeed, Captain Holstius became aware of a light hesitating step. It halted at the open door (which always stood open for the convenience of the Captains), and entered the narrow hall. It was a light step, for it was the step of a bare-footed man.

Then the kitchen-door was opened softly and Lal sprang forward, crying madly :

"Where is he? Where is he? Oh, he is not dead!"

At the sound of the girl's cry the whole sleepy place sprang into life; the dogs woke up and ran about, barking with an immense show of alertness, exactly as if the enemy was in force without the walls; the Persian cat, which ought to have known better, made one leap to the palings, on which she stood with arched back and upright tail, looking unutterable rage; and the parrots all screamed together.

When the noise subsided the new comer stood in the doorway. Lal was holding both his hands, crying and sobbing.

Outside the old parrot repeated :

"Poor Rex Armiger! Poor Rex Armiger!"

Captain Zachariassen, roused from his morning nap, was looking about him, wondering what had happened.

Captain Holstius stood waiting to see what was going to happen.

The man, who was short in stature, not more than five feet three, wore a rough cloth sailor's cap, and was barefoot. He was dressed in a jacket, below which he wore a kind of petticoat called, I believe, by his countrymen, who ought to know their own language, a "sarong." His skin was a copper colour; his eyes dark brown; his face was square with high cheek-bones; his eyes were soft, full, and black; his mouth was large with thick lips; his nose was short and small, with flat nostrils; his hair was black and coarse—all these characteristics stamped him as a Malay.

Captain Zachariassen rubbed his eyes.

"Ghosts ashore!" he murmured. "Ghost of Deaf-and-Dumb Dick!"

"Who is Dick?" answered Captain Holstius.

"Captain Armiger's steward—same as was drowned aboard the Philippine three years ago along with his master and all hands. Never, nevermore heard of, and he's come back."

The Malay man shook his head slowly. He kept on shaking it, to show them that

he quite understood what was meant, although he heard no word.

"Where is he? Oh, where is he?" cried the girl again.

Then the dumb man looked in her face and smiled. He smiled and nodded, and smiled again.

"Like a Chinaman in an image," said Captain Zachariassen. "He can't be a ghost at the stroke of noon. That's not Christian ways nor Malay manners."

But the smile to Lal was like the first cool draught of water to the thirsty tongue of a wanderer in the desert. Could he have smiled were Rex lying in his grave?

A Malay who is deaf and dumb is, I suppose, as ignorant of his native language as of English; but there is an atmosphere of Malayan abroad in his native village out of which this poor fellow picked a language of his own. That is to say, he was such a master of gesture as in this cold land of self-restraint would be impossible.

He nodded and smiled again. Then he laughed aloud, meaning his most cheerful note, but the laughter of those who can neither hear nor speak is a gruesome thing.

Then Lal, with shaking fingers, took from her bosom a locket, which she opened and showed the man. It contained, of course, the portrait of her lover.

He took it, recognised it, caught her by one hand, and then, smiling still, pointed with eyes that looked afar towards the east.

"Lies buried in the Indian Ocean," murmured the old man; "I always said it."

Lal heard him not. She fell upon the man's neck and embraced and kissed him.

"He is not dead," she cried. "You hear, Captain Holstius? Oh, my friend, Rex is not dead. I knew he could not be dead—I have felt that he was alive all this weary time. Oh, faithful Dick!" She patted the man's cheek and head as if he was a child. "Oh, good and faithful Dick! what shall we give him as the reward for the glad tidings? We can give him nothing—nothing—only our gratitude and our love."

"And dinner, may be," said Captain Zachariassen. "No, not the veal, my dear;" for the girl, in her hurry to do something for this messenger of good tidings, made as if she would sacrifice the joint. "First, because underdone veal is unwholesome even for deaf and dumb Malays; second, roast veal is not for the likes of him, but

for Cap'ens. That knuckle of cold pork now——”

Lal brought him food quickly, and he ate, being clearly hungry.

“Does he understand English?” asked Captain Holstius.

“He is deaf and dumb; he understands nothing.”

When he had broken bread, Dick stood again and touched the girl's arm, which was equivalent to saying, “Listen, all of you!”

The man stood before them in the middle of the room with the open kitchen door behind him, and the sunlight shining upon him through the kitchen window. And then he began to act, after the fashion of that Roman mime, who was able to convey a whole story with by-play, underplot, comic talk, epigrams, tears, and joyful surprises, without one word of speech. The gestures of this Malay were, as I have said, a language by themselves. Some of them, however, like hieroglyphics before the Rosetta Stone, wanted a key.

The man's face was exceedingly mobile and full of quickness. He kept his eyes upon the girl, regarding the two men not at all.

And this, in substance, was what he did. It was not all, because there were hundreds of little things, every one of which had its meaning in his own mind, but which were unintelligible, save by Lal, who followed him with feverish eagerness and attention. Words are feeble things at their best, and cannot describe these swift changes of face and attitude.

First, he retreated to the door, then leaped with a bound into the room. Arrived there he looked about him a little, folded his arms, and began to walk backwards and forwards, over a length of six feet.

“Come aboard, sir,” said Captain Zachariassen, greatly interested and interpreting for the benefit of all. “This is good mummicking, this is.”

Then he began to jerk his hand over his shoulder each time he stopped. And he stood half-way between the extremities of his six-foot walk and lifted his head as one who watches the sky. At the same time Lal remarked how by some trick of the facial muscles, he had changed his own face. His features became regular, his eyes intent and thoughtful, and in his attitude he was no longer himself, but—in appearance—Rex Armiger.

“They're clever at mummicking and

conjuring,” said Captain Zachariassen; “I've seen them long ago, in Calcutta, when I was in——”

“Hush!” cried Lal imperatively. “Do not speak! Do not interrupt.”

The Malay changed his face and attitude, and was no more Rex Armiger, but himself; then he held out his two hands, side by side, horizontally, and moved them gently from left to right and right to left, with an easy wave-like motion, and at the same time he swung himself slowly backwards and forwards. It seemed to the girl to imitate the motion of a ship with a steady breeze in smooth water.

“Go on,” she cried; “I understand what you mean.”

The man heard nothing, but he saw that she followed him, and he smiled and nodded his head.

He became once more Rex Armiger. He walked with folded arms, he looked about him as one who commands and who has the responsibility of the ship upon his mind.

Presently he lay down upon the floor, stretched out his legs straight, and with his head upon his hands went to sleep.

“Even the skipper's bunk is but a narrow one,” observed Captain Zachariassen, to show that he was following the story, and proposed to be the principal interpreter.

The dumb actor's slumber lasted but a few moments. Then he sprang to his feet and began to stagger about. He stamped, he groaned, he put his hand to his head, he ran backwards and forwards; he presented the appearance of a man startled by some accident; he waved his arms, gesticulated wildly, put his hands to his mouth as one who shouts.

Then he became a man who fought, who was dragged, who threatened, who was struck, tramping all the while with his feet so as to produce the impression of a crowd.

Then he sat down and appeared to be waiting, and he rocked to and fro continually.

Next he went through a series of pantomimic exercises which were extremely perplexing, for he strove with his hands as one who strives with a rope, and he made as one who is going hand over hand, now up, now down a rope; and he ran to and fro, but within narrow limits, and presently he sat down again, and nodded his head and made signs as if he were communicating with a companion.

“Dinner-time,” said Captain Zachariassen, “or, may be, supper.”

After awhile, still sitting, he made as if he held something in his hand which he agitated with a regular motion.

"Rocking the baby," said Captain Zachariassen, now feeling his way surely.

Lal, gazing intently, paid no heed to this interruption.

Then he waved a handkerchief.

"Aha!" cried Captain Zachariassen; "I always did that myself."

Then he lay down and rested his head again upon his arm; but Lal noticed that now he curled up his legs, and the tears came into her eyes, because she saw that he, personating her Rex, seemed for a moment to despair.

But he sat up again, and renewed that movement, as if with a stick, which had made the old skipper think of babies.

Then he stopped again, and let both arms drop to his side, still sitting.

"Tired," said Captain Zachariassen. "Pipe smoke time."

The Malay did not, however, make any show of smoking a pipe. He sat a long time without moving, arms and head hanging.

Then he started, as if he recollected something suddenly, and taking paper from his pocket, began to write. Then he went through the motion of drinking, rolled up the paper very small, and did something with it difficult to understand.

"Sends her a letter," said the Patriarch, nodding his head sagaciously. "I always wrote them one letter after I'd gone away, so's to let 'em down easy."

This done, the Malay seated himself again, and remained sitting some time. At intervals he lay down, his head upon his hands as before, and his legs curled.

The last time he did this he lay for a long time—fully five minutes—clearly intending to convey the idea of a considerable duration of time.

When he sat up, he rubbed his eyes and looked about him. He made motions of surprise and joy, and, as before, communicated something to a companion. Then he seemed to grasp something, and began again the same regular movement, but with feverish haste, and painfully, as if exhausted.

"Baby again!" said the wise man. "Rum thing, to bring the baby with him."

Then the Malay stopped suddenly, sprang to his feet, and made as if he jumped from one place to another.

Instantly he began again to rush about,

shake and be shaken by shoulders, arms, and hands, to stagger, to wave his hands, finally to run along with his hands straight down his sides.

"Now I'm sorry to see this," said Captain Zachariassen mournfully. "What's he done? Has that baby brought him into trouble? Character gone for life, no doubt."

Lal gazed with burning eyes.

Then the Malay stood still, and made signs as if he were speaking, but still with his arms straight to his sides. While he spoke, one arm was freed, and then the other. He stretched them out as if for relief. After this, he sat down, and ate and drank eagerly.

"Skilly and cold water," said Captain Zachariassen. "Poor young man!"

Then he walked about, going through a variety of motions, but all of a cheerful and active character. Then he suddenly dropped the personation of Rex Armiger, and became himself again. Once more he went through that very remarkable performance of stamping, fighting, and dragging.

Then he suddenly stopped and smiled at Lal. The pantomime was finished.

The three spectators looked at each other enquiringly, but Lal's face was full of joy.

"I read this mummicking," said Captain Zachariassen, "very clearly, and if, my dear, without prejudice to the dumplings, which I perceive to be already finished, and if I may have a pipe, which is, I know, against the rules in the kitchen—but so is a mouthing mummicking Malay—I think I can reel you off the whole story, just as he meant to tell it, as easy as I could read a ship's signals. Not that every man could do it, mind you; but being, as one may say, at my oldest and best—"

Lal nodded. Her eyes were so bright, her cheeks so rosy, that you would have thought her another woman.

"Go, fetch him his pipe, Captain Holstius," she said. Then, seized by a sudden impulse, she caught him by both hands. "It could never have been," she said, "even—even—if— You will rejoice with me?"

"If it is as you think," he said, "I both rejoice and thank the Father humbly."

Fortified with his pipe, the old man spoke slowly, in full enjoyment of his amazing and patriarchal wisdom.

"Before Cap'en Armiger left Calcutta," he began, "he did a thing which manv

sailors do, and when I was a young man, now between seventy and eighty years ago, which is a long time to look back upon, they always did. Pecker up, Lal, my beauty. You saw how the mummicker rolled his eyes, smacked his lips, and clucked his tongue. Not having my experience, prob'ly you didn't quite understand what he was wishful for to convey. That meant love, Lal, my dear. Those were the signs of courting, common among sailors. Your sweetheart fell in love with you in the Port of London, and presently afterwards with another pretty woman in the Port of Calcutta, which is generally the way with poor Tom Bowling. She was a snuff-and-butter, because at Calcutta they are as plenty as blackberries; and when young, snuff-and-butter is not to be despised, having bright eyes; and there was another thing about her which I guess you missed, if you got so far as a right understanding of the beginning. She was a widow. How do I know she was a widow? This way. The mummicking Malay, whose antics can only be truly read, like the signs of the weather, by the wisdom of eighty and odd, put his two hands together. You both saw that—second husband that meant. Then he waved his hands up and down. If I rightly make out that signal it's a signal of distress. She led the poor lad, after he married her, a devil of a life. Temper, my girl, goes with snuff-and-butter, though when they're young I can't say but there's handsome ones among them. A devil of a life it was, while the stormy winds did blow, and naturally Cap'en Armiger began to cast about for to cut adrift."

"Go on, Captain Zachariasen," said Lal, who only laughed at this charge of infidelity.

The Malay looked on gravely, understanding no word, but nodding his head as if it was all right.

"He marries this artful widow then, and, in due course, he has a baby. You might ha' seen, if you'd got my eyes, which can't be looked for at your age, that the mummicking moulder kept rocking that baby. Very well, then; time passes on, he has a row with the mother; she, as you may have seen, shies the furniture at his head, which he dodges, being too much of a man and a sailor to heave the tables back. Twice she shies the furniture. Then he ups and off to sea, taking—which I confess I cannot understand, for no sailor to my

knowledge ever did such a thing before—actually taking—the-baby—with him!" The sagacious old man stopped, and smoked for a few moments in meditation. "As to the next course in this voyage," he said, "I am a little in doubt. For whether there was a mutiny on board, or whether his last wife followed him and carried on shameful before the crew, whereby the authority of the skipper was despised and his dignity lowered, I cannot tell. Then came chucking overboards, and whether it was Cap'en Armiger chucking his wife and baby, or whether he chucked the crew, or whether the crew chucked him, is not apparent, because the mummicker mixed up Jonah and the crew, and no man, not even Solomon himself, in his cedar-palace, could tell from his actions which was crew and which was Jonah. However, the end is easy to understand. The Cap'en, in fact, was run in when he got to shore—you all saw him jump ashore—for this chucking overboard, likely. He made a fight for it, but what is one man against fifty. So they took him off, with his arms tied to his sides, being a determined young fellow, and he was tried for bigamy, or chucking overboard, or some such lawful and statutable crime. And he was then sentenced to penal servitude for twenty years or it may be less. At Brisbane, Queensland, it was, perhaps, or Sydney, New South Wales, or Singapore, or perhaps Hong-Kong, I can't say which, because the mummicker at this point grew confused. But it must be one of these places where there's a prison. There he is still, comfortably working it out. Wherefore, Lal, my dear, you may go about and boast that you always knew he was alive, because right you are and proud you may be. At the same time, you may now give up all thoughts of that young chap, and turn your attentions, my dear, to"—here he pointed with his pipe—"to the Norweegees."

Captain Holstius, who had shaken his head a great deal during the Seer's interpretation, shook his head again, deprecatingly.

"Thank you, Captain Zachariasen," said Lal, laughing. What a thing joy is! She laughed, who had not laughed for three years. The dimples came back to her cheek, the light to her eyes. "Thank you. Your story is a very likely one, and does your wisdom great credit. Shall I read you my interpretation of this acting?"

The Captain nodded.

"Rex set sail from Calcutta with a fair

wind, leaving no wife behind, and taking with him no baby. How long he was at sea I know not; then there came a sudden storm, or perhaps the striking on a rock, or some disaster. Then he is in an open boat alone with Dick here, though what became of the crew I do not know; then he writes me a letter, but I do not understand what he did with it when he had written it; then they sit together expectant of death; they row aimlessly from time to time; they have no provisions; they suffer greatly; they see land, and they row as hard as they can; they are seized by savages and threatened, and he is there still among them. He is there, my Rex, he is there, waiting for us to rescue him. And God has sent us this poor dumb fellow to tell us of his safety."

The old man shook his head.

"Poor thing!" he said compassionately. "Better enquire at every British port, where there's a prison, in the East, after an English officer working out his time, and ask what he done, and why he done it?"

"Let be, let be," said Captain Holstius. "Lal is always right. Captain Armiger is among the savages, somewhere. We will bring him back. Lal, courage, my dear; we will bring him back to you alive and well!"

CHAPTER II. THE PRIDE OF ROTHERHITHE.

THE terrace or row called Seven Houses is situated, as I have stated above, in a riverside township, which, although within sight of London Bridge, is now as much forgotten and little known as any of the dead cities on the Zuyder-Zee or in the Gulf of Lyons. In all respects it is as quiet, as primitive, and as little visited, except by those who come and go in the matter of daily business.

The natives of Rotherhithe are by their natural position, aided by the artificial help of science, entirely secluded and cut off from the outer world. They know almost as little of London as a Highlander or a Cornish fisherman. And as they know not its pleasures, they are not tempted to seek them; as their occupations keep them for the most part close to their own homes, they seldom wander afield; and as they are a people contented and complete in themselves, dwelling as securely and with as much satisfaction as the men of Laish, they do not desire the society of strangers. Therefore great London, with its noises and mighty business, its press and hurry, is a place which they care not often to

encounter; and as for the excitement and amusements of the West, they know them not. Few there are in Rotherhithe who have been further west than London Bridge, fewer still who know the country and the people who dwell west of Temple Bar.

It is a place protected and defended, so to speak, by a narrow pass, or entrance, uninviting and unpromising, bounded by river on one side and docks on the other. This Thermopylæ passed, one finds oneself in a strange and curious street with water on the left and water on the right, and ships everywhere in sight.

It possesses no railway, no cabstand, no omnibus runs thither; there is no tram. The nearest station is for one end, Thames Tunnel, and for the other, Deptford. All the local arrangements for getting from one place to the other seem based on the good old principle that nobody wants to get from one place to the other; one would not be astonished to meet a string of pack-horses laden with the produce of the town, so quiet, so still, so far removed from London, so old-world in its aspect is the High Street of Rotherhithe.

If, however, they are little interested in the great city near which they live, they know a great deal about foreign countries and strange climates; if they have no politics, they read and talk much about the prospects of trade across the sea; they do not take in Telegraph, Standard, or Daily News, but they read from end to end that admirable paper, the Shipping and Mercantile Gazette. For all their prospects and all their interests are bound up in the mercantile marine. No one lives here who is not interested in the Commercial Docks, or the ships which use them, or the boats, or in the repairs of ships, or in the supply of ships, or in the manners, customs, and requirements of skippers, mates, and mercantile sailors of all countries. Their greatest man is the Superintendent of the Docks, and after him, in point of importance, are the dock-masters and their assistants.

Rotherhithe consists, for the most part, of one long street, which runs along the narrow strip of ground left between the river and the docks when they were built. The part of the river thus overlooked is Limehouse Reach; the street begins at the new Thames Tunnel Station, which is close beside the old Rotherhithe Parish Church, and it ends where Deptford begins. There are many beautiful, and many wonderful,

and many curious streets in London "and her daughters;" but this is, perhaps, the most curious. It is, to begin with, a street which seems to have been laid down so as to get as much as possible out of the way of the ships which press upon it to north and south. Ships stick their bows almost across the road, the figure-heads staring impertinently into first-floor windows. If you pass a small court or wynd, of which there are many, with little green-shuttered houses, you see ships at the end of it, with sails hanging loosely from the yard-arms.

On the left hand you pass a row of dry docks. They are all exactly alike; they are built to accommodate one vessel, but rarely more; if you look in, no one questions your right of entrance; and if you see one you have seen them all.

Look, for instance, into this dry dock. Within her is a two-masted sailing vessel; most likely she hails from Norway or from Canada, and is engaged in the timber trade. Her planks show signs of age, and she is shored up by great round timbers like bits of a mast. Her repairs are probably being executed by one man, who is seated on a hanging board leisurely brandishing a paint-brush. Two more men are seated on the wharf, looking on with intelligent curiosity. One man—perhaps the owner of the ship, or some other person in authority—stands at the far end of the dock and surveys the craft with interest, but no appearance of hurry, because the timber trade, in all its branches, is a leisurely business. No one is on board the ship except a dog, who sits on the quarter-deck sound asleep, with his nose in his paws.

The wharf is littered all about with round shores, old masts, and logs of ship timber; it is never tidied up, chips and shavings lie about rotting in the rain, the remains of old repairs long since done and paid for, upon ships long since gone to the bottom; there is a furnace for boiling pitch, and barrels for the reception of that useful article; there is a winch with rusty chains; there is a crane, but the wheels are rusty. The litter and leisure of the place are picturesque. One wonders who is its proprietor; probably some old gentleman with a Ramillies wig, laced ruffles, gold buckles on his shoes, silk stockings, a flowered satin waistcoat down to his knees, sober brown coat, and a gold-headed stick.

At the entrance to the dock there is a little house with green shutters, a pretence

of green railings which enclose three feet of ground, and green boxes furnished with creeping-jenny and mignonetta. But this cannot be the residence of the master.

Beyond the dock, kept out by great gates which seem not to have been opened for generations, so rusty are the wheels and so green are their planks with weed and water-moss, run the waters of the Thames. There go before us the steamers, the great ocean steamers, coming out of the St. Katharine's, London, and West India Docks; there go the sailing ships, dropping easily down with the tide, or slowly making way with a favourable breeze up to the Pool; there creep the lighters and barges, heavily laden, with tall mast and piled-up cargo, the delight of painters; there toil continually the noisy steam-tug and the river packet steamer; there play before us unceasingly the life, the movement, the bustle of the Port of London.

But all this movement, this bustle, seems to us, standing in the quiet dock, like a play, a procession of painted ships upon a painted river, with a background of Limehouse church and town all most beautifully represented; for the contrast is so strange.

Here we are back in the last century; this old ship, whose battered sides the one man is tinkering, is a hundred years old; the Swedish skipper, who stands and looks at her all day long, in no hurry to get her finished and ready for sea, flourished before the French Revolution; the same leisurely dock, the same leisurely carpenter, the same leisurely spectators, the same green palings, the same little lodge with its green door and green flower-box, were all here a hundred years ago and more; and we, who look about us, find ourselves presently fumbling about our heads to see whether, haply, we wear tye-wigs and three-cornered hats.

On the doors of this dock we observe an announcement warning marine-store dealers not to enter. What have they done—the marine-store dealers?

A little farther on there is another dry dock. We look in. The same ship, apparently; the same leisurely contemplation of the ship by the same man; the same dog; the same contrast between the press and hurry of the river and the leisure of the dock; the same warning to marine-store dealers. Again we ask, what have they done—the marine-store dealers?

Some of the docks have got suggestive and appropriate names. The "Lavender" leads the poet to think of the tender care

bestowed upon ships laid up in that dock (the name is not an advertisement, but a truthful and modest statement); the "Pageants" is magnificent; the "Globe" suggests geographical possibilities which cannot but fire the imagination of Rotherhithe boys; and what could be more comfortable for a heart of oak than "Acorn" Wharf?

One observes presently a strange sweet fragrance in the air, which, at first, is unaccountable. The smell means timber. For behind the street lie the great timber docks. Here is timber stacked in piles; here are ships unloading timber; here is timber lying in the water. It is timber from Canada and from Norway; timber from Honduras; timber from Singapore; timber from every country where there are trees to cut and hands to cut them.

It is amid these stacks of timber, among these ships, among these docks, that the houses and gardens of Rotherhithe lie embowered.

Some of the houses were built in the time of great George Tertius. One recognises the paucity of windows, the flat façade, the carved, painted, and varnished woodwork over the doors. More, however, belong to his illustrious grandfather's period, or even earlier, and some, which want painting badly, are built of wood and have red-tiled roofs.

Wherever they can they stick up wooden palings painted green. They plant scarlet-runners wherever they can find so much as a spare yard of earth. They are fond of convolvulus, mignonette, and candy-tuft in boxes. They all hammer on their walls tin plates, which show to those who can understand that the house is insured in the "Beacon." And some of the houses—namely, the oldest and smallest—have their floors below the level of the street.

There is one great house—only one—in Rotherhithe. It was built somewhere in the last century, before the Commercial Docks were excavated. It was then the home of a rich merchant living among the dry docks—probably he was the proprietor of Lavender and Acorn Docks. There is a courtyard before it; the door, with a porch, stands at the top of broad stairs; there is ornamental stone-work half-way up the front of the house; and there is a gate of hammered iron, as fine as any in South Kensington.

The shops have strange names over the doors. They are chiefly kept by Norwegians, Dutchmen, Swedes, and Danes, with a sprinkling of Rotherhithe natives.

The things exhibited for sale look foreign. Yet we observe with satisfaction that the public-houses are kept by Englishmen, and that the Scandinavian taste in liquor is catholic. They can drink—these Northmen—and do, anything which "bites."

Quite at the end of this long street you come to a kind of open place, in which stands the terrace called "Seven Houses." They occupy the east side. On the west is, first, a timber-yard, open to the river; next, a row of houses, white, neat, and clean; beyond the terrace is the church, with its churchyard and schools. Then there is another short street, with shops, the fashionable shopping-place of Rotherhithe. And here the town, properly so called, ends, for beyond is the entrance to the Commercial Docks, and all around spread great sheets of water, in which lie the timber-ships from Norway, Sweden, Canada, Archangel, Stettin, Memel, Dantzic, St. Petersburg, Savannah, and the East.

Hither, too, come ships from New Zealand, bringing grain and wool, and here put in ships, but in smaller number, bound for almost every port upon the globe.

And what with the green trees in the churchyard, the clean houses, the bright open space, the ships in the dock, and the glimpses of the river, one might fancy oneself not in London at all, but across the North Sea and in Amsterdam.

It was in Rotherhithe that Lal Rydquist was born, and in Rotherhithe she was educated. Nor for eighteen years and more did the girl ever go outside her native place, but continued as ignorant of the great city near her as if it did not exist. On the other hand, from the conversation of those around her, she became perfectly familiar with the greater part of the globe; namely, its oceans, seas, ports, harbours, gulfs, bays, currents, tides, prevalent winds, and occasional storms. Most people are brought up to know nothing but the land: it is shameful favouritism to devote geography books exclusively to the land upon this round globe; Lal knew nothing about the land, but a great deal about the water. Such other knowledge as she had acquired pertained to ships, harbours, cargoes, Custom dues, harbour dues, bills of lading, insurance, wet and dry docks, and the current price of timber, grain, rice, and so forth. A very varied and curious collection of facts lay stored in her brain; but as for

the accomplishments and acquirements of ordinary English girls, she knew none of them.

Her christian-name was Alicia. When she was but a toddler, the sailor folk with whom she played, and who gave her dolls, called her Lal. As she grew up, these honest people remained her friends, and therefore her name remained. Girls grow up, by Nature's provision, gradually, so that there never comes a time when a pet name ceases of its own accord. Therefore, the Captains, who used the boarding-house, being all personal friends—none but friends, in fact, were admitted to the privileges of that little family hotel—she continued to be Lal.

The boarding-house was carried on by Mrs. Rydquist, Lal's mother, who had been a notable woman in her day. The older inhabitants of Rotherhithe testified to that effect. But her misfortunes greatly affected and changed her for the worse. One need only touch upon the drowning of her father, which happened many years before, and was regarded by the burghesses of Rotherhithe as a special mercy bestowed upon his family, so wasteful was he and fond of drink when ashore. He was chief officer of an East Indiaman which went down with all hands in a cyclone, as was generally believed, somewhere north of the Andaman Islands, outward bound. He had spent all his pay in ardent drinks, and there was nothing left for his daughter. But she married a stout fellow, a Swede by nation, and Rydquist by name, who sailed to and fro between the ports of Bjorneborg and London, Captain and part owner of a brig in the timber trade. Alas! that brig dropped down stream one morning as usual, having the Captain on board, and leaving the Captain's wife ashore with the baby, and she was never afterwards heard of. Also there was some trouble about the insurance, and so the Captain's widow got nothing for her husband's share in the ship.

Mrs. Rydquist, then a young woman and comely still, who might have married again, took to crying, and continued to cry, which was bad for the boarding-house which her husband's friends started for her. In most cases time cures the deadliest wounds, but in this poor lady's case the years went on and she continued to bewail her misfortunes, sitting, always with a teapot before her, upon a sofa as hard as a bed of penitence, and plenty of pocket-handkerchiefs in her lap.

There could not have been a happier child, a brighter, merrier child, a more sunshiny child, a more affectionate child, a more contented child than Lal, during her childhood, but for two things. Her mother was always crying, and the house went on anyhow. When she grew to understand things a little, she ventured to point out to her mother that men who go to sea do often get drowned, and among the changes and chances of this mortal life, this accident must be seriously considered by the woman who marries a sailor. But no use. She remonstrated again, but with small effect, that the house was not kept with the neatness desired by Captains; that it was in all respects ill found; that the quality of the provisions was far from what it ought to be, and that meals were not punctual. The aggravation of these things, and the knowledge that they were received with muttered grumbings by the good fellows who put up with them chiefly for her own sake, sank deep into her heart, and shortened—not her life, but her schooling.

When she was fourteen, being as tall and shapely as many a girl of eighteen, she would go to school no more. She announced her intention of staying at home; she took over the basket of keys—that emblem of authority—from her mother's keeping into her own; she began to order things; she became the mistress of the house, while the widow contentedly sat in the front parlour and wept, or else, which made her deservedly popular among the Captains, prophesied, to any who would listen, shipwreck, death, and ruin, like Cassandra, Nostradamus, and old Mother Shipton, to these friends.

Immediately upon this assumption of authority the house began to look clean, the windows bright, the bedrooms neat; immediately the enemies of the house, who were the butcher, the baker, the bacon-man, the buttermilk man, and every other man who had shot expensive rubbish into the place, began, to use the dignified language of the historian, to "roll back sullenly across the frontier." Immediately meals became punctual; immediately rules began to be laid down and enforced. Captains must henceforth only smoke in the evening; Captains must pay up every Saturday; Captains must not bring friends to drink away the rosy hours with them; Captains must moderate their language—words beginning with D were to be overhauled, so to speak, before use; Captains must complain to Lal if they wanted anything, not

go about grumbling with each other in a mean and a mutinous spirit. These rules were not written, but announced by Lal herself in peremptory tones, so that those who heard knew there was no choice but to obey.

She was the best and kindest of managers; she made such a boarding-house for her Captains as was never dreamed of by any of them. Such dinners, such beer, spirits of such purity and strength, tobacco of the finest; no trouble, no disturbance, the wheels always running smoothly. Captains' bills made out to a penny, with no surcharge or extortion. And, withal, the girl was thoughtful for each man, mindful of what he liked the best, and with a mother's eye to buttons.

It was indeed a boarding-house fit for the gods. So startling were the "effects" in cleanliness that honest Dutchmen rubbed their eyes, and seeing the ships all round them; thought of the Boompjes of Rotterdam; not a plank in the house but was like a tablecloth for cleanliness.

Then, as to punctuality: at the stroke of eight, breakfast on the table, and Lal, neat as a handbox, pouring out tea and coffee, made as they should be; while toast, dry and buttered, muffins, chops and steaks, ham and eggs, bacon, and fish just out of the frying-pan, were on the table.

On the stroke of one, the dinner, devised, planned, and personally conducted by Lal, herself, more diligently than any Cook of modern or ancient history, was borne from the kitchen to the Captains' room.

The nautical appetite is large, both on shore and afloat; but on shore it is critical as well. The skipper aboard his ship may contentedly eat his way through barrels of salt junk, yet ashore he craves variety, and is as particular about his vegetables as a hippopotamus who has studied the art of dining.

And this is the reason, not generally understood, why the market-gardens in the neighbourhood of Deptford are so extensive, and why every available square inch of Rotherhithe grows a cabbage or a scarlet-runner.

There were no complaints here, however, about vegetables.

Tea was served at five, for those who wanted any.

Supper appeared at eight; and after supper, grog and pipes. Yet, as at dinner the supply of beer was generous yet not wasteful, so at night, every Captain knew that if he wanted more than his ration, or

double ration, he must get up and slink out of the house like a truant school-boy, to seek it at the nearest public-house.

The mercantile skipper in every nation is much the same. He is a responsible person, somewhat grave; ashore he does not condescend to high jinks, and leaves sprees to the youngsters. Yet, among his fellows in such a house as Rydquist's, he is not above a song or even a cheerful hornpipe. He is generally a married man with a large family of whom he is fond and proud. He reads little, but has generally some book to talk of; and he is brimful of stories, mostly, it must be owned, of a professional and pointless kind, and some old, old Joe Millers, which he brings out with an air as if they were new and sparkling from the mint of fancy.

These men were the girl's friends, all the friends she had. They were fond of her and kind to her. When, as often happened, she found herself in the Captains' room in the evening and sat on the arm of Captain Zachariasen's chair, the stories went on with the songs and the laughing, just as if she was not present, for they were an innocent-minded race, and whether they hailed from Russia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, or America, they were chivalrous and respected innocence.

The house accommodated no more than half-a-dozen, but it was always full, and the Captains were of the better sort. Captain Hansen from Christiania dropped in after his ship was in dock; if the house was full he went back to his ship; if he could have a room he stayed there. The same with Captain Bebbington of Quebec, Captain Griggs of Edinburgh, Captain Rosenlund of Hamburg, Captain Skantlebury of Leith, Captain Eriksen of Copenhagen, Captain Vidovich of Archangel, Captain Ling of Stockholm, and Captain Tilly of New Brunswick, and a dozen more.

They rallied round Rydquist's; they thought it a proud thing to be able to put up there; and they swore by Lal.

Then who but Lal overhauled the linen, gave out some to be mended and some to be condemned, and rigged them out for the next voyage! And as for confidences, the girl was not fifteen years old before she knew all the secrets of all the men who went there, with their love stories, their disappointments, their money matters, their hopes, and their ambitions. And she was already capable, at that early age, of giving sensible advice, especially

in matters of the heart. Those who followed that advice subsequently rejoiced; those who did not, repented.

When she was seventeen, they all began, with one consent, to fall in love with her. She remarked nothing unusual for awhile having her mind greatly occupied in considering the price of vegetables, which during that year remained like runagates for scarceness. Presently, however, the altered carriage of the boarders was impossible to be otherwise than remarkable.

Love, we know, shows itself by many external symptoms. Some went careless of attire; some went in great bravery with waistcoats and neckties difficult to describe and impossible to match; some laughed, some heaved sighs, some sang songs; one or two made verses; those who were getting grey tried to look as if they were five-and-twenty, and made as if they still could shake a rollicking leg; those who were already turned of sixty persuaded themselves that a master mariner's heart is always young, and that no time of life is too far advanced for him to be a desirable husband.

Lal laughed and went on making the puddings; she knew very well what they wanted, but she felt no fancy, yet, for any of them.

When, which speedily happened, one after the other came to lay themselves, their ships, and their fortunes at her feet, she sent them all away, not with scorn or unkindness, but with a cheerful laugh, bidding them go seek prettier, richer, and better girls to marry; because, for her own part, she had got her work to do, and had no time to think about such things, and if she had ever so much time she most certainly would not marry that particular suitor.

They went away, and for a while looked gloomy and ashamed, fearing that the girl would tell of them. But she did not, and they presently recovered, and when their time came and their ships were ready, they dropped down the river with a show of cheerfulness, and so away to distant lands, round that headland known as the Isle of Dogs, with no bitterness in their hearts, but only a little disappointment, and the most friendly feelings towards the girl who said them nay.

When these were gone, the house, which was never empty, received another batch of Captains, old and young. Presently similar symptoms were developed with them; all were ardent, all confident. They had been away a year or two. They found

the little Lal, whom they left a handy maiden, a mere well-grown girl of fourteen or so, developed into a tall and beautiful young woman. Upon her shoulders, invisible to all, sat Love, discharging arrows right and left into the hearts of the most inflammable of men. This batch, excepting two, who had wives in other ports, and openly lamented the fact, behaved in the same surprising manner as their predecessors. They were presently treated with the same dismissal, but with less courtesy, because to the girl this behaviour was becoming monotonous, and it sometimes seemed as if the whole of mankind had taken leave of their senses. They retired in their turn, and when their ships were laden, they, too, sailed away a little discomfited, but not revengeful or bearing malice. Then came a third batch, and so on. But of sea-captains there is an end: Lal's friends, one after the other, came, disappeared after a while, and then came back again. Those who used the house at Rotherhithe were like comets rather than planets, because they had no fixed periods, but returned at intervals which could only be approximately guessed. When, however, the cycle was fulfilled, and there was no more to fall in love with her (strangers, as has been stated, not being admitted), there was a lull, and the rejected, when they came back again and found the girl yet heart free, rejoiced, because every man immediately became confident that sooner or later Lal's fancy would fall upon him; and every man cherished in his own mind the most delightful anticipations of a magnificent wedding feast, with the joy of Rotherhithe for the bride, and himself for bridegroom.

CHAPTER III. THE SAILOR LAD FROM OVER THE SEA.

A WOMAN'S fate comes to her, like most good or bad things, unexpectedly. Nothing is sure, says the French proverb, but the unforeseen. Nothing could have been more unexpected, for instance, than that the falling overboard of a Malay steward from an Indian liner should have led to the sorrow and the happiness of Lal Rydquist. That this was so you will presently read, and the fact suggests a fine peg for meditation on causes and effects. Had it not been for that event, this story, which it is a great joy to write, would never have been written, and mankind would have been losers to so great an extent; whereas, that temporary immersion in the cold waters of

the river in Limehouse Reach produced so many things one after the other that they have now left Lal in the possession of the most necessary ingredient of happiness quintessential. We all know what that is, and in so simple a matter a lifting of the eye is as good as a printer's sheet of words.

And could one, had it not been so, have had the heart to write this tale? Why, instead of a Christmas story it would have been a mere winter's tale, a Middle-of-March-story, a searching, biting, east wind story, fit only to be cut up and gummed upon doors and windows, to keep out the cold.

When the dinner was off her mind, served, commended, and eaten, and when her mother was deposited for the day upon the sofa, with teapot and the kettle ready, the pocket-handkerchiefs for weeping, the book which she never read in, and, perhaps, one of the younger Captains who had not yet heard the story of her misfortunes more than a dozen times or so; or with some of her friends among the widows and matrons of Rotherhithe, with whom she would exchange prophecies of disasters, general and particular; Lal would hasten to enjoy herself after her free and independent fashion. One of the Captains had given her a little dingy, and taught her to row it, and her pleasure was to paddle about the river in Limehouse Reach, dodging the steamers, and watching the craft as they went up and down.

This is a pursuit full of peril, because steamers in ballast sometimes come down the river at a reckless speed, their pilots being drunk, cutting down whatever falls in their way; yet to a girl who is handy with her sculls, and has a quick eye, the danger is part of the delight. On the Thames in Limehouse Reach one may be easily run over and one's boat cut in two. There then follows a bad time for a few moments, while the victim of the collision is getting drowned or saved; still, if one thinks of danger, half the fun of the world is gone. Lal thought of the change, the amusement, the excitement: on the Thames there is continual life, movement, and activity; on the Thames, there may be found by girls, sometimes worried by perpetual housekeeping, rest and soothing. As for Lal, the daily press of work was practically finished with the dinner, because the "service" might be trusted with the rest. And after dinner, on the river she breathed fresh air. Here was not only mental rest, but also exercise for her

young muscles; here was all the amusement and variety she ever desired; here she could even let her imagination wander abroad, to the pinnacles and spires of the city of which she knew so little even by hearsay, or to the foreign lands of which she heard so much. Above all, she was alone. This is so rare, so unattainable a thing to most girls, even to those who do not make puddings for sea-captains, that one quite understands how Lal valued the privilege. Her life was all before her. Like other maidens she loved to sit by herself and take a Pisgah-like view of her future. It might lie among the steeples and streets—she had never heard of any West End splendours—of London; it might be in those far-off lands where some of her Captains had wives; say, in New Brunswick, or beside the beauty of the Great St. Lawrence, or even in Calcutta, or in Dantzic, or in Norway or it might lie always in simple and secluded Rotherhithe, among the timber piles of the Commercial Docks. Not a girl given to self-communings, tearing her religion up by the roots to see how it was getting on, or the doubts which nowadays seem to assail most fiercely those who have the least power or knowledge to help them to a solution, a quiet, simple, cheerful, hopeful girl, with a smile for everyone and a laugh for all her friends, yet a girl so hard-worked and so full of responsibilities that there were days when she had what the French ladies call an attack of nerves, and must fain get away from all and float at rest, thinking of other things than the wickedness of butchers, upon the bosom of the great river.

Sometimes, if the weather was too rough for her little boat, she would paddle along the bank till she came to the mouth of the Commercial Docks, and there would row about among the timber ships, watching the men at work, and the great planks being shot from the portholes in the stern of the vessels, or the dockmen piling the timbers, or the foreign sailors idling about upon the wharves. But mostly she loved the river.

Now it came to pass, one Saturday afternoon late in the month of May, and the year eighteen hundred and seventy-six, that Lal happened to be out in her boat upon the river. It was a delightful afternoon, quite an old-fashioned May day, without a breath of east wind, a sky covered with light flying clouds, so that the sunshine dropped about in changing breadths, now here and now there, throwing

a bright patch upon the water, gilding a steeple, flashing from a window, making even a stumpy little tug glorious for a moment. She sang to herself as she sat in her boat, not a loud song like a Siren or a Lurlei person, but a gentle happy melody—I think it was some hymn—and she sat with her face to the bows, keeping the boat's head well to the waves raised by the swell of the passing ships. She was quite safe herself, being near the shore and between two heavily-laden lighters, waiting for tide to go up stream; the river was rising, and was covered with all kinds of craft.

Presently she became aware of a vast great ship, one of the big Indian liners, slowly rounding the Isle of Dogs. A great ship always attracted her imagination; it is a thing so vast, so easily moved, and so life-like. As the tall hull drew nearer, her eyes were fixed upon it, and she paddled a little beyond her protecting lighters, so as to get a better view of the vessel as she passed.

The ship moved up stream slowly here, because the river was so full. First Lal saw from her place the lofty bows, straight cut like a razor, rounding the Isle of Dogs and steadily growing nearer. Then her pilot put her a point more to starboard, and Lal saw the long and lofty side of her, her portholes open wide, high out of the water. Along the bulwarks were ranged a line of faces, mostly pale with Indian summers, but not all; they were the faces of the passengers who leaned over and watched the crowded river and talked together. Lal wondered whether they were glad to come home again, and what they were telling each other, and she hoped they would think their country improved since they saw it last; and then ventured in mute wish to congratulate their mothers, daughters, and sisters, wives, sweethearts, and all female cousins, relatives, and friends, that the ship had not gone to Davy's Locker on her homeward voyage, with so many brave fellows on board. The ship belonged to the great Indian Peninsular Line, and was called the Aryan. She was so great a ship, and she moved so slowly, that Lal had time for a great many observations as she passed her. Also when her little boat was about midships, still kept bows-on to meet the coming waves, one of the passengers, a young fellow, took off his hat to her with a loud "Hurrah!" He meant a respectful salutation to the first pretty girl they had

met in the good old country which is full of the prettiest girls in the world. Lal wondered what it felt like, this coming home. All her life long she had been among men who went out of port and presently put into port again; one or two, in her own experience, never came back, having met with the fate reserved for many sailors; but that was not a home-coming like that of these exiles from India. There would be joy in their homes, no doubt, but what would the poor fellows themselves feel after these years of separation? The feminine mind, everybody knows very well, reserves nearly all its sympathies for the sufferings of the men; while it is an honourable trait in the male character, that it is roused to fury by the sufferings of women.

Just before the ship passed her, the great wave which rolled upwards from her keel came curling six feet high, like the Bore of the Severn and the Parrott, towards Lal's little boat. The lighters reeled and rolled, she seized her sculls and held her bows straight, steady to meet the swell, so that the little vessel gallantly rode over the wave; and this passed swiftly on trying to swamp everything in its way, and presently capsized a boat with two promising and ambitious young thieves, who had gone down the river gaily, hoping to pick up plunder by the way. They got no plunder on that occasion, but a wet skin and a very near escape from the habitual criminal life for which they were preparing themselves. In this they are now in fact actively engaged; insomuch that one has been in prison during three of the five years since that event, and the other two and a half years. When they are out they enjoy themselves very much and drink bad gin. Then the wave caught a Greenwich steamboat and knocked the land-lubber passengers off their legs; and then it filled and sunk a barge full of hay. The hay went down the river with the next tide and littered the shore of Greenwich, where people who went down to dine gazed upon it from the windows of the Ship. There was also a sister or a brother wave on the north bank, proceeding from the starboard bow, but I do not know what mischief that wave succeeded in accomplishing.

While Lal was considering the ways of this swell, and looking to see what a pother, with a rolling and a rocking and a staggering to and fro it caused, she heard a sudden splash, and right in front of her

she was aware of a man in the water. Immediately afterwards another man leaped gallantly from the ship after the first man, and a moment afterwards came up to the surface holding him.

Then, without waiting to think, because at such moments the reasoning faculty only brings people to grief and discredit, Lal shot her boat ahead to help, for certainly the two appeared to want immediate assistance, and that so badly, that if it came not at once, they would very soon want it no longer. Their arms were interlocked, they beat, or one of them beat, the water helplessly; their heads kept disappearing and coming up again. On the ship there was a crowd of faces, terror-stricken. The girl caught one hand as her boat came to the spot. The hand belonged to one of the two men, that was clear, but whether the first or the second she could not tell; in fact, only that one hand and a little piece of coat cuff were at the moment visible above water, and probably the next moment there would have been nothing at all. The fingers clutched hers like a vice. Lal threw herself down in the boat to prevent being drawn over, and caught the wrist with her other hand.

Then the group, so to speak, emerged again from the water, and the hand the girl had seized caught the gunwale of the boat, and the eyes in the head which belonged to the hand opened, and the mouth in the head gasped something inarticulate. As for the man's other hand and the whole of the rest of him, that was locked tight in the embrace of the first man who had fallen overboard. It is, anybody knows, the general custom and the base ingratitude of persons who are drowning, to try and drown their rescuers.

"Row us ashore quickly," cried the one who clung to the gunwale; "I can hold on for a spell. He won't let go, even to be helped into the boat."

The ship was brought to now, and there was a vast crowd of passengers, and the officers shouting and gesticulating.

They saw the action of the girl in the boat, and then they saw her seize the sculls and pull vigorously to shore. As for Lal, all she saw was a pale and dripping face, fingers which clutched the gunwale and nearly pulled it under, and an indiscriminate something in the water.

"Oh, can you hold on?" she cried. "It is but a moment—twenty strokes—see, we are close to the steps."

"Quick!" he replied; "it is a heavy weight. Row as hard as you can, please."

Presently, when the Captain of the ship saw the boat landed at the steps, and was sure of the safety of the two men, he made a sign to the pilot, and the ship went on her way, for time is precious.

"Lucky escape," he said. "Armiger will come over presently, none the worse for a ducking."

But the passengers with one accord raised a mighty cheer as the boat touched the shore, and the men on the lighters cheered lustily, and even the two young capsized thieves who were wet and dripping, cheered. And there were some who said the case must be forwarded to the Royal Humane Society, and some who talked about Grace Darling, and made comparisons, and some who said it was their sacred duty to write to the papers, and tell the story of this wonderful presence of mind. But they did not, because shortly afterwards they reached the docks, and there was kissing of relations, packing of wraps, counting of boxes, and afterwards so much to see and to talk about, and so many things to tell, that the rescue of the second officer in the Thames became only an incident in the history of the voyage, and the voyage itself only an incident in the history of their sojourn abroad.

The distance to be rowed was more, indeed, than twenty strokes, but not much more. Still, there are times when twenty strokes of the oar take more time, to the imagination, than many hours of ordinary work. Lal rowed with beating heart; in two minutes the boat lay alongside the steps.

When her passenger's feet touched the stones he let go, and, being a strong young fellow, and none the worse for his cold bath, he carried his burden, an apparently inanimate body, up the stairs to the top. Here he laid him while he ran down again to help his preserver.

"These are my steps," she said; "my boat is always moored here. Thank you, but if you don't give her the whole length of her painter, she will be hung up by the bows when the tide runs out."

She jumped out and ran lightly up the stone steps. At the top the man who had given them all this trouble sat up, looking about him with wondering eyes. Then Lal saw that he was of some foreign country, partly by his dress and partly

from his face. The other, who did indeed present a rueful appearance in his dripping clothes, was, she perceived, an officer of the steamer. Then Lal began to laugh.

"It is all very well to laugh," he said grimly, and shaking himself like Tommy Trout, medallist of the Humane Society, after rescuing that Tom, "but here's half my kit ruined. And, I say, you've saved my life and I haven't even thanked you. But I do not know how to thank you."

"It was all by chance," replied Lal, "and I am very glad."

"And what are we to do next?" he asked.

He made a sign to the other man, who sprang to his feet, shivered and nodded.

"I am very glad you saved his life, at any rate," the young man went on; "he is the steward of the officers' mess, and he cannot thank you himself, because he is deaf and dumb; we call him Dick."

"Come, both of you," said the girl, recovering her wits, which were a little scattered by this singular event. "Come both and dry your clothes."

She led the way, and they all three set off running—a remarkable procession of one dry girl and two wet men, which drew all eyes upon them, and a small following of boys, in the direction of the Captains' house.

"I thought we should have dragged the gunwale under water," gasped the young fellow.

"So did I," said Lal simply. "Can you swim?"

"No," he replied.

"Yet you jumped overboard to rescue your steward. What a splendid thing to do!"

"I forgot I couldn't swim till I was in the water. Never mind. I mean to learn."

The young fellow was a tall, slight-built lad of twenty-one or twenty-two. Lal pushed him into a bedroom, and pointed to a bundle of clothes. It was not her fault that they belonged to Captain Jansen, who was five feet nothing high, and about the same round the waist. So that when the lad was dressed in them, he felt a certain amount of embarrassment, as anyone might who was sent forth into an unknown house with trousers no longer than his knees, and of breadth phenomenal.

"Where can I hide," he said to himself, "till the things are dry?"

He found a room set with a long table and a good many chairs. This was the

Captains' room, where they took their meals by day and smoked pipes at night. Just then no one was in it. He wanted to find the girl who had saved his life and rescued him; so, after a look round, he went on his cruise of discovery.

Next, he opened another door. It was Lal's housekeeping room, in which sat an old, old man in an armchair, sound asleep. This was Captain Zachariassen.

He shut the door quietly and opened another. This was the front parlour, and in it sat Mrs. Rydquist, alone, also fast asleep; but the opening of the door awakened her, and she sat up and put on her spectacles.

"Come in, Captain," she said, thinking it was one of her friends, but uncertain which of them looked so young and wore clothes of such an amplitude. "Come in, Captain. It is a long time since we have had a talk."

"Thank you, ma'am," he replied. "It is my first visit here. We always, you know, put into East India Docks."

"Ah!" She shook her head. "Very wrong—very wrong! Many have been robbed at Shadwell. But come in, and I will tell you some of my troubles. Do take a chair."

She drew out a handkerchief, and wiped a rising tear.

"Dear me, what a delightful thing to see a young fellow like you—not drowned yet!"

"I might have been," he replied, "but for——"

"Ah, and you may be yet." This seemed a very cheerful person. "Many no older than yourself are lying at the bottom of the sea this minute."

"That is very true," he said, "but——"

"Oh, I know what you would say. And Captain Zachariassen eighty-six years of age if a day."

The young man began to feel as if he had got into an enchanted palace.

When Lal found him there, he was sitting bolt upright, while Mrs. Rydquist was discoursing at large on perils and disasters at sea.

"You yourself," she was saying, "look like one who will go early and find your end——"

"Gracious, mother!" cried Lal, in her quick sharp way, "how can you say such things? Time enough when he does go to find it out. Besides—— Your clothes are quite dry now, and——oh! oh! oh!"

Then she laughed again, seeing the delightful incongruity of trousers, sleeves, arms, and legs, so that he retired in confusion.

When he came to put on his own things, he discovered that the girl of the boat—this girl so remarkably handy with her sculls—had actually taken the opportunity to restore a button to the back of his neck. The loss of this button had troubled him for two voyages and a half. So delicate and unusual an attention naturally went straight to his heart, which was already softened by the consideration of the girl's bravery and beauty.

He thought she looked prettier than ever, with her large eyes and the sweet innocence of her face, when he came down again in his uniform.

"Your steward is dry too," she said, "and warming himself before the kitchen fire. Will you have some tea with the Captains? It is their tea-time."

"I would rather have some tea with you," he replied, "if I might."

"Would you? Then of course you shall."

She spoke as if it were a mere nothing, a trifle of no value at all, this invitation to take tea with her.

She took him into her own room, where the young man had seen the old fellow asleep, and presently brewed him a cup of tea, the like of which, he thought, he had never tasted, and set before him a plate of hot toast.

"That is better for you," she said as wisely as any doctor, "than hot brandy-and-water."

At last he rose, after drinking as much tea as he could and staying as long as he dared. The ship would be in dock by this time. He must get across.

"May I come over, when I can get away, to see you again?" he asked bashfully.

She replied, without any bashfulness at all and with straightforward friendliness, that she would be very glad to see him whenever he could call upon her, and that the best time would be in the afternoon, or, as the evenings were now long, in the evening; but not in the morning, when she was busy with all sorts of things, and especially in superintending the Captains' dinner.

"I will come," he said, and this time he blushed. "What is your name?"

"I am Lal Rydquist," she replied, as if everybody ought to know her. But that was not at all what she meant.

"Lal! What a pretty name. It suits——" And here he stopped and blushed again.

"And what is your name?"

"Rex Armiger," he said. "And I am second officer on board the Aryan, of the Indian Peninsular line, homeward bound from Calcutta."

This was the beginning of Lal's love-story. A young fellow, gallant and handsome, pulled dripping out of the river—a sailor, too—how could Lal fall in love with anybody but a sailor?

Every love-story has its dawn, its first faint glimmering, which grows into a glorious rose of day. There are generally, as we know, clouds about the east at the dawn of day. Club-men about Pall Mall frequently remark this in the month of June on leaving the whist-table; policemen have told me the same thing; milkmen, in spring and autumn, report the phenomenon; old-fashioned poets observed it. There can be no real doubt or question about it. After the dawn and the morning comes the noon, when the story becomes uninteresting to outsiders, yet is a very delightful story to the actors themselves. There are different kinds of clouds, and you already know pretty well what was the cloud which for a long time made poor Lal's story a sad one.

When, however, the first streaks of dawn appeared the sky was cloudless. You must not suppose that this young lady beheld the man and straightway fell in love with him. Not at all. Love is a plant which takes time to grow. In her case it kept on growing long after Rex had left her; long, indeed, after everybody said he was dead. But it cannot be denied that she thought about him.

The Captains congratulated her on having pulled the young fellow out of the river. Captain Zachariasen, with a gallantry beyond his years, even went so far as to wish he had himself been the subject of the immersion and the rescue. He also related several stories of his own daring, fifty, sixty, or seventy years before, in various parts of the ocean. All this was pleasing.

Lal laughed at the compliments and sang the more about the house, nor did it disturb her in the least when her mother lifted up her voice in prophecy.

"My dear," she said, "mark my words. If ever I saw shipwreck and drowning—I mean quite young drowning—on any man's face, it is marked on the face of that young

man. The heedless and the giddy may laugh; but we know better, my dear—who have gone through it."

When a ship comes home and has but three weeks in which to discharge her cargo and take in her new lading, the officers have by no means an easy time. It is not holiday with them, but quite the reverse; and it was not often that Rex could get even an evening free. In fact, the whole of his wooing was accomplished in five visits to Rotherhithe.

On his first visit he was disappointed. Lal was on the river in her boat, and so he sat with her mother and waited. Mrs. Rydquist took the opportunity, which might never occur again, of solemnly warning him against falling in love with her daughter. This, she said, was a very possible thing to happen, especially for a sailor, because her girl was well set-up, not to say handsome. Therefore, it was her duty to warn him, as she had already warned a good many, including Captain Skantlebury, afterwards cast away in Torres Straits, that it was an unlucky thing to marry into a family whose husbands and male relations generally found a grave at the bottom of the sea. Further, it was well known among sailors that if you rescued a person from drowning, that person would, at some time or other, repay your offices by injuring your earthly prospects. So that there were two excellent reasons why Rex should avoid the Rock of Love.

They were doubtless valid; but they were not strong enough to repress in the young man a look of joy and admiration when the girl came home fresh and bright as an ocean nymph. He took supper with her, and between them the two managed to repress the gloom even of the prophetess who sat with them, as cheerful as Cassandra at a Trojan supper. Did ever any one consider how much that good old man King Priam had to put up with?

Another time was on a Sunday evening. They went to church together and sang out of the same hymn-book. Captain Zachariassen was in the pew also, and he went to sleep three times, viz., during the first lesson, the second lesson, and the sermon, without counting the prayers, during which he probably dropped off as well. After the service, as the evening was fine and the air warm, they sat awhile in the churchyard, and the young fellow, seated on a tombstone, unconscious of the moral he was illustrating, had a very good

time indeed talking with Lal. When they were tired of the churchyard they walked away to the bridge over the entrance to the docks, and leaned over the rail talking still. Lal was quite used to the confidences of her friends, but somehow this one's confidences were different. He sought no advice, he confessed no love-affair; he did not begin to look at her as if he was struck silly, and then ask her to marry him—which so many of the Captains had done; he asked her about herself, and seemed eager to know all she would tell him, as if there was anything about herself that so gallant a sailor would care to know, with such stupid particulars about her daily life, and how she never left Rotherhithe at all, and had seen no other place.

"What a strange life!" he said, after many questions. "What a dull life! Are you not tired of it?"

"No," she answered. "Why should I be? Do they not bring a constant change into the house, my Captains? I know all their adventures, and I could tell you, oh! such stories. You should hear Captain Zachariassen when he begins to recollect."

"Ay, ay, we can all spin yarns. But never to leave this place!" He paused with a sigh.

"I am happy," said Lal. "Tell me about yourself."

It was her turn now, and she began to question him until he told all he had to tell; but I suppose he kept back something, as one is told to leave something on the dish, for good manners. But if he did not tell all, it was because he was modest, not because he had things to hide of which he was ashamed.

He was, he said, the son of a Lincolnshire clergyman, and he was destined to the Church; solemnly set apart, he was, by his parents and consecrated in early infancy. This made his subsequent conduct the more disgraceful, although, as he pleaded, his own consent was not asked nor his inclinations consulted. The road to the Church is grievously beset by wearisome boulders, pits, ditches, briars, and it may be fallen trunks, which some get over without the least difficulty, whereas to others they are grievous hindrances. These things are an allegory, and I mean books. Now unlucky Rex, a masterful youth in all games, schoolboy feasts, fights, freaks, and fanteegs, regarded a book, from his earliest infancy, unless it was a romance of the sea or a story of adventure, with a dislike and suspicion amounting almost to

mania. In his recital to Lal, he avoided mention of the many floggings he received, the battles he fought, and the insubordination of which he was guilty, and the countless lessons which he had not learned. He simply said that he ran away from school and got to Liverpool, where, after swopping clothes with a real sailor boy, he got on board a Canadian brig as loblolly boy, and was kicked and cuffed all the way to Quebec and all the way back again. The skipper cuffed him, the mate cuffed him, the cook cuffed him, the crew cuffed him; he got rough treatment and bad grub. His faculties were stimulated, no doubt, and a good foundation laid for smartness in after life as a sailor. Also, his frame was hardened by the fresh breeze of the Windy Fifties. On his return, he wrote to his father, to say that he was about to return to school. He did return; was the hero of the school for two months, and then again ran away and tried the sea once more, from Glasgow to New York in a cargo steamer. Finally, his father had to renounce his ambitious schemes, in spite of the early consecration and setting apart, and got him entered as a middy in the service of a great line of steamers. Now, at the age of twenty-two, he was second officer.

Such was the modesty of the young man that he omitted to state many remarkable facts in his own life, though these redounded greatly to his credit; nor was it till afterwards that Lal discovered how good a character he bore for steady seamanship and pluck, how well he stood for promotion. Also, he did not tell her that he was the softest-hearted fellow in the world, though his knuckles were so hard; that he was the easiest man in the world to lead, although the hardest to drive; that on board he was always ready, when off duty, to act as nursemaid, protector, and playfellow for any number of children; that he was also at such times as good as a son or a brother to all ladies on board; that on shore he was ever ready to give away all his money to the first who asked for it; that he thought no evil of his neighbour; that he considered all women as angels, but Lal as an archangel; and that he was modest, thinking himself a person of the very smallest importance on account of these difficulties over books, and a shameful apostate in the matter of the falling off from the early dedication.

When a young woman begins to take a real interest in the adventures of a young

man, and, like Desdemona, to ask questions, she generally lays a solid foundation for much more than mere interest. Dido, though she was no longer in her première jeunesse, is a case in point, as well as Desdemona. And every married person recollects the flattering interest taken in each other by fiancé and fiancée during the early days, the sweet sunshiny days, of their engagement.

That Sunday night, after the talk in the churchyard, they went back to the house, and Rex had supper with the Captains, winning golden opinions by his great and well-sustained powers over cold beef and pickles. After this they smoked pipes and told yarns, and Lal sat among them by the side of Rex, which was a joy to him, though she was sitting on the arm of Captain Zachariassen's wooden chair, and not his own.

On another occasion during that happy and never to be forgotten three weeks, Rex carried the girl across the river and showed her his own ship lying in the East India Docks, which, she was fain to confess, are finer than the Commercial Docks. He took her all over the great and splendid vessel, showed her the saloon with its velvet couches, hanging lamps, gilt ornaments, and long tables in the officers' quarters; and midships, and the sailors' fore'ard; took her down to the engine-room by a steep ladder of polished iron bars, showed her the bridge, the steering tackle, and the captain's cabin, in which he lowered his voice from reverence as one does in a church. When she had seen everything, he invited her to return to the saloon, where she found a noble repast spread, and the chief officer, the third mate, the Purser, and the Doctor waiting to be introduced to her. They paid her so much attention and deference; they said so many kind things about her courage and presence of mind; they waited on her so jealously, they were so kind to her, that the girl was ashamed. She was so very ignorant, you see, of the power of beauty. Then a bottle of champagne, a drink which Lal had heard of but never seen, was produced, and they all drank to her health, bowing and smiling, first to her and then to Rex, who blushed and hung his head. Then it appeared that every man had something which he ardently desired her to accept, and when Lal came away Rex had his arms full of pretty Indian things, smelling of sandal-wood, presents to her from his brother officers. This, she thought, was very kind of them, especially

as they had never seen her before. And then Dick, the officers' steward, the deaf and dumb Malay whom she had helped to pull out of the water, came and kissed her hand humbly, in token of gratitude. A beautiful and wonderful day. Yet what did the Doctor mean when they came away? For while the Purser stood at one end of the gangway, and the chief officer at the other, and the third mate in the middle, all to see her safe across, the Doctor, left behind on board, slapped Rex loudly upon the shoulder and laughed, saying:

"Gad! Rex, you're a lucky fellow!"

How was he lucky? she asked him in the boat, and said she should be glad to hear of good luck for him. But he only blushed and made no reply.

One of the things which she brought home after this visit was a certain grey parrot. He had no particular value as a parrot. There were many more valuable parrots already about the house, alive or stuffed. But this bird had accomplishments, and among other things, he knew his master's name, and would cry, to everybody's admiration: "Poor Rex Armiger! Poor Rex Armiger!"

When Lal graciously accepted this gift, the young man took it as a favourable sign. She had already, he knew, sent away a dozen Captains at least, and he was only second mate. Yet still, when a girl takes such a present she means—she surely means to make some difference.

Then there was one day more—the last day but one before the ship sailed—the last opportunity that Rex could find before they sailed. He had leave for a whole day; the lading was completed, the passengers were sending on their boxes and trunks; the Purser and the stewards were taking in provisions—mountains of provisions, with bleating sheep, milch cows, cocks and hens—for the voyage.

All was bustle and stir at the Docks, but there was no work for the second officer. He presented himself at Seven Houses at ten o'clock in the morning, without any previous notice, and proposed, if you please, nothing short of a whole day out. A whole day, mind you, from that moment until ten o'clock at night. Never was proposal more revolutionary.

"All day long?" she cried, her great eyes full of surprise and joy.

"All day," he said, "if you will trust yourself with me. Where shall we go?"

"Where?" she repeated.

I suppose that now and then some echoes reach Rotherhithe of the outer world and its amusements. Presumably there are natives who have seen the Crystal Palace and other places; here and there might be found one or two who have seen a theatre. Most of them, however, know nothing of any place of amusement whatever. It is a city without any shows. Punch and Judy go not near it; Cheap Jack passes it by; the wandering feet of circus horses never pass that way; gipsies' tents have never been seen there; the boys of Rotherhithe do not even know the travelling caravan with the fire-eater. To conjurors, men with entertainments, and lecturers it is an untrodden field. When Lal came, in a paper, upon the account of festive doings she passed them over, and turned to the condition of the markets in South Africa or Quebec as being a subject more likely to interest the Captains. Out of England there were plenty of things to interest her. She knew something about the whole round world, or, at least, its harbours; but of London she was ignorant.

"Where?" she asked, gasping.

"There's the Crystal Palace and Epping Forest; there's the National Gallery and Highgate Hill; there's the top of St. Paul's and the Aquarium; there's Kew Gardens and the Tower; there's South Kensington and Windsor Castle"—Rex bracketed the places according to some obscure arrangement in his own mind—"lots of places. The only thing is where?"

"I have seen none of them," she replied. "Will you choose for me?"

"Oh!" he groaned. "Here is a house full of great hulking skippers, and she works herself to death for them, and not one among them all has ever had the grace to take her to go and see something!"

"Don't call them names," she replied gently; "our people never go anywhere, except to Poplar and Limehouse. One of them went one evening to Woolwich Gardens, but he did not like it. He said the manners of the people wore forward, and he was cheated out of half-a-crown."

"Then, Lal," he jumped up and made a great show of preparing for immediate departure with his cap; "then, Lal, let us waste no more time in talking, but be off at once."

"Oh, I can't!"

Her face fell, and the tears came into her eyes as she suddenly recollected a reason why she could not go.

"Why can't you?"

"Because—oh, because of the pudding. I can trust her with the potatoes, and she will boil the greens to a turn. But the pudding I always make, and no one else can make it but me."

The lady referred to was not her mother, but the assistant—the "service."

"Can't they go without pudding for once?"

Lal shook her head.

"They always expect pudding, and they are very particular about the currants. You can't think what a quantity of currants they want in their pudding."

"Do you always give them plum-duff, then?"

"Except when they have roly-poly or apple dumplings. Sometimes it is baked plum-duff, sometimes it is boiled, sometimes with sauce, and sometimes with brandy. But I think they would never forgive me if there was no pudding."

Rex nodded his head, put on his cap—this conversation took place in the kitchen—and marched resolutely straight into the Captains' room, where three of them were at that moment sitting in conversation. One was Captain Zachariassen.

"Gentlemen," he said, politely saluting; "Lal wants a whole holiday. But she says she can't take it unless you will kindly go without your pudding to-day."

They looked at each other. No one for a time spoke. The gravity of the proposal was such that no one liked to take the responsibility of accepting it. A dinner at Rydquist's without pudding was a thing hitherto unheard of.

"Why," asked Captain Zachariassen severely—"why, if you please, Mr. Armiger, does Lal want a holiday to-day? And why cannot she be content with a half-holiday? Do I ever take a whole day?"

"Because she wants to go somewhere with me," replied Rex stoutly; "and if she doesn't go to-day she won't go at all, because we sail the day after to-morrow."

"Under these circumstances, gentlemen," said Captain Zachariassen, softening, and feeling that he had said enough for the assertion of private rights, "seeing that Lal is, for the most part, an obliging girl, and does her duty with a willing spirit, I think—you are agreed with me, gentlemen?"

The other two nodded their heads, but with some sadness.

"Then, sir," said Captain Zachariassen,

as if he were addressing his chief officer at high noon, "make it so."

"Now," said Rex, as they passed Rotherhithe parish church, and drew near unto Thames Tunnel Station, "I've made up my mind where to take you to. As for the British Museum, it's sticks and stones, and South Kensington is painted pots; the National Gallery is saints and sign-boards; the Crystal Palace is buns, and boards, and ginger-beer, with an organ; the Monument of London is no better than the croostrees. Where we will go, Lal—where we will go for our day out is to Hampton Court, and we will have such a day as you shall remember."

There had been, as yet, no word of love; but he called her Lal, and she called him Rex, which is an excellent beginning.

They did have that day; they did go to Hampton Court. First they drove in a hansom—Lal thought nothing could be more delightful than this method of conveyance—to Waterloo Station, where they were so lucky as to catch a train going to start in three-quarters of an hour, and by that they went to Hampton Court.

It was in the early days of the month of June, which in England has two moods. One is the dejected, make-yourself-as-miserable-as-you-can mood, when the rain falls dripping all the day, and the leaves, which have hardly yet fully formed on the trees, begin to get rotten before their time, and think of falling off. That mood of June is not delightful. The other, which is far preferable, is that in which the month comes with a gracious smile, bearing in her hands lilac, roses, laburnum, her face all glorious with sunshine, soft airs, and warmth. Then the young year springs swiftly into vigorous manhood, with fragrance and sweet perfumes, and the country hedges are splendid with their wealth of a thousand wild flowers, and the birds sing above their nests. Men grow young again, lapped and wrapped in early summer; the blood of the oldest is warmed; their fancies run riot; they begin to babble of holidays, to talk of walks in country places, of rest on hill-sides, of wanderings, rod in hand, beside the streams, of shady woods, and the wavelets of a tranquil sea; they feel once more—one must feel it every year again or die—the old simple love for earth, fair mother-earth, generous earth, mother, nurse, and fosterer—as well as grave; they enjoy the sunshine. Sad autumn

is as yet far off, and seems much farther; they are not yet near unto the days when they shall say, one to the other :

"Lo! the evil days are come when we may say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'"

The train sped forth from the crowded houses, and presently passed into the fields and woods of Surrey. Rex and Lal were alone in a second-class carriage, and she looked out of the window while he looked at her. And so to Hampton, where the Mole joins the silver Thames, and the palace stands beside the river bank.

I have always thought that to possess Hampton Court is a rare and precious privilege which Londoners cannot regard with sufficient gratitude, for, with the exception of Fontainebleau, which is too big, there is nothing like it—except, perhaps, in Holland—anywhere. It is delightful to wander in the cool cloisters, about the bare chambers, hung with pictures, and in the great empty hall, where the Queen might dine every day, if she chose, her crown upon her head, with braying of trumpets, scraping of fiddles, and pomp of scarlet retainers. But she does not please. Then one may walk over elastic turf, round beds of flowers, or down long avenues of shady trees, which make one think of William the Third; or one may even look over a wooden garden gate into what was the garden in the times before Cardinal Wolsey found out this old country grange and made it into a palace. Young people—especially young people in love—may also seek the windings of the maze.

This boy Rex, with the girl who seemed to him the most delightful creature ever formed by a benevolent Providence, enjoyed all these delights, the girl lost in what seemed to her a dream of wonder. Why had she never seen any of these beautiful places? For the first time in her life, Rotherhithe, and the docks and ships, became small to her. She had never before known the splendour of stately halls, pictures, or great gardens. She felt humiliated by her strangeness, and to this day, though now she has seen a great many splendid places, she regards Hampton Court as the most wonderful and the most romantic of all buildings ever erected, and I do not think she is far wrong.

One thing only puzzled her. She had read, somewhere, of the elevating influences of art. This is a great gallery of art. Yet somehow she did not feel elevated at all. Especially did a collection of portraits of

women, all with drooping eyes, and false smiles, and strange looks, the meaning of which she knew not, make her long to hurry out of the room and into the fair gardens, on whose lawns she could forget these pictures. How could they elevate or improve the people? Art, you see, only elevates those who understand a little of the technique, and ordinary people go to the picture-galleries for the story told by each picture. This is the reason why the contemplation of a vast number of pictures has hitherto failed to improve our culture or to elevate our standards. But these two, like most visitors, took all for granted, and it must be owned that there are many excellent stories, especially those of the old sea-fight pictures, in the Hampton Court galleries.

Then they had dinner together in a room whose windows looked right down the long avenue of Bushey, where the chestnuts were in all their glory; and after dinner Rex took her on the river. It was the same river as that of Rotherhithe. But who would have thought that twenty miles would make so great a change? No ships, no steamers, no docks, no noise, no shouting, no hammering; and what a difference in the boats! They drifted slowly down with the silent current. The warm sun of the summer afternoon lay lovingly on the meadows. It was not a Saturday. No one was on the river but themselves. The very swans sat sleepily on the water; there was a gentle swish and slow murmur of the current along the reeds and grasses of the bank; crimson and golden leaves hung over the river; the flowers of the lilies were lying open on the water.

Lal held the ropes and Rex the sculls; but he let them lie idle and looked at the fair face before him, while she gazed dreamily about, thinking how she should remember, and by what things, this wonderful day, this beautiful river, this palace, and this gentle rowing in the light skiff. As she looked, the smile faded out of her face and her eyes filled with tears.

"Why, Lal?" he asked.

She made no reply for a minute or two, thinking what reason she might truthfully allege for her tears, which had risen unbidden at the touch of some secret chord.

"I do not know," she said. "Except that everything is so new and strange, and I am quite happy, and it is all so beautiful."

Rex reflected on the superior nature of

women who can shed tears as a sign of happiness.

"I am so happy," he said, "that I should like to dance and sing, except that I am afraid of capsizing the craft, when to Davy's locker we should go for want of your dingy, Lal."

But they could not stay on the river all the evening. The sun began to descend; clouds came up from the south-west; the wind freshened; a mist arose, and the river became sad and mysterious.

Then Rex turned the bows and rowed back.

The girl shuddered as she stepped upon the shore.

"I shall never forget it," she said, "never. And now it is all over."

"Will you remember, with this day, your companion of the day?" asked Rex.

"Yes," she replied, with the frank and truthful gaze which went straight to the young man's heart; "I shall never forget the day or my companion."

They went back to the palace, and while the shadows grew deeper, walked in the old-fashioned garden of King William, beneath its arch of branches, old now and knotty and gnarled.

Rex was to sail in two days' time. He would have no other chance. Yet he feared to break the charm.

"We must go," he said. "Yes, it is all over." He heaved a mighty sigh. "What a day we have had. And now it is gone, it is growing dark, and we must go. And this is the last time I shall see you, Lal."

"Yes," she murmured, "the last time."

Years afterwards she remembered those words and the thought of ill omens and what they may mean.

"The last time," she repeated.

"I suppose you know, Lal, that I love you?" said Rex quite simply. "You must know that. But, of course, everybody loves you."

"Oh!" she laid her hand upon his arm. "Are you sure, quite sure that you love me? You might be mistaken, Rex."

"Sure, Lal?"

"Can you really love me?"

"My darling, have not other men told you the same thing? Have you not listened and sent them away? Do not send me away, too, Lal."

"They said they— Oh, it was nonsense. They could not really have loved me, because I did not love them at all."

"And—and—me?" asked Rex with

"Oh, no, Rex. I do not want to send you away—not if you really love me; and, Rex, Rex, you have kissed me enough."

They could not go away quite then; they stayed there till they were found by the custodian of the vine, who ignominiously led them to the palace-gates and dismissed them with severity. Then Rex must needs have supper, in order to keep his sweetheart with him a little longer. And it was not till the ten o'clock train that they returned to town, Lal quiet and a little tearful, her hand in her lover's; Rex full of hope, and faith, and charity, and as happy as if he were, indeed, rex orbis totius, the king of the whole world.

At half-past eleven he brought her home. It was very late for Rotherhithe; the Captains were mostly in bed by ten, and all the lights out, but to-night Mrs. Rydquist sat waiting for her daughter.

"Mrs. Rydquist," said the young man, beaming like a sun-god between the pair of candles over which the good lady sat reading, "she has promised to be my wife—Lal is going to marry me. The day after to-morrow we drop down the river, but I shall be home again soon—home again. Come, Lal, my darling, my sweet, my queen," he took her in his arms and kissed her again—this shameless young sailor—"and as soon as I get my ship—why—why—why—" he kissed her once more, and yet once more.

"I wish you, young man," said Lal's mother in funereal tones, "a better fate than has befallen all the men who fell in love with us. I have already given you my most solemn warning. You rush upon your fate, but I wash my hands of it. My mother's lost husband, and my husband, lie dead at the bottom of the sea. Also two of my first cousins' husbands, and a second cousin's once-removed husband. We are an unlucky family; but, perhaps, my daughter's husband may be more fortunate."

"Oh, mother," cried poor Lal, "don't make us down-hearted!"

"I said, my dear," she replied, folding her hands with a kind of resignation to the inevitable, "I said that I hope he may be more fortunate. I cannot say more; if I could say more I would say it. If I think he may not be more fortunate I will not say it; nor will I give you pain, Mr. Armiger, by prophesying that you will add to our list."

"Never mind," said Rex: "we sailors

are mostly as safe at sea as the land-lubbers on shore, only people won't think so. Heart up, Lal! heart up, my sweet! Come outside and say good-bye."

"Look!" said Mrs. Rydquist, pointing cheerfully to the candlestick when her daughter returned with tears in her eyes and Rex's last kiss burning on her lips; "there is a winding-sheet, my dear, in the candle. To-night a coffin popped out of the kitchen-fire. I took it up in hopes it might have been a purse. No, my dear, a coffin. Captain Zachariassen crossed knives at dinner to-day. I have had shudders all the evening, which is as sure a sign of graves as any I know. Before you came home the furniture cracked three times. No doubt, my dear, these warnings are for me, who am a poor weak creature, and ready, and willing, and hopeful, I am sure, to be called away; or for Captain Zachariassen, who is, to be sure, a great age, and should expect his call every day instead of going on with his talk, and his rum, and his pipe as if he was forgotten; or for any one of the Captains, afloat or ashore; these signs, my dear, may be meant for anybody, and I would not be so presumptuous in a house full of sailors as to name the man for whom they have come; but, if I read signs right, then they mean that young man. And oh! my poor girl——" she clasped her hands as if now, indeed, there could be no hope.

"What is it, mother?"

"My dear, it is a Friday, of all the days in the week!"

She rose, took a candle, and went to bed with her handkerchief to her eyes.

CHAPTER IV. OVERDUE AND POSTED.

THIS day of days, this queen of all days, too swiftly sped over the first and last of the young sailor's wooing. Lal's sweet-heart was lost to her almost as soon as he was found. But he left her so happy in spite of her mother's gloomy forebodings, that she wondered, not knowing that all the past years had been nothing but a long preparation for the time of love, how could she ever have been happy before? And she was only eighteen, and her lover as handsome as Apollo, and as well-mannered. Next morning at about twelve o'clock she jumped into her boat and rowed out upon the river to see the Aryan start upon her voyage. The tide was on the turn and the river full when the great steamer came out of dock and slowly made her way upon the crowded water

a miracle of human skill, a great and wonderful living thing which though even a clumsy lighter might sink and destroy it, yet could live through the wildest storm ever known in the Sea of Cyclones, through which she was to sail. As the Aryan passed the little boat Lal saw her lover. He had sprung upon the bulwark and was waving his hat in farewell. Oh, gallant Rex, so brave, and so loving! To think that this glorious creature, this god-like man, this young prince among sailors, should fall in love with her! And then the Doctor, and the Purser, and the chief officers, and even the Captain, came to the side and took off their caps to her, and some of the passengers, informed by the Doctor who she was, and how brave she was, waved their hands and cheered.

Then the ship forged ahead and in a few moments Rex jumped down with a final kiss of his fingers. The screw turned more quickly; the ship forged ahead; Lal lay to in mid-stream, careless what might run into her, gazing after her with straining eyes. When she had rounded the point and was lost to view, the girl, for the first time in her life since she was a child, burst into tears and sobbing.

It was but a shower. Lal belonged to a sailor family. Was she to weep and go in sadness because her lover was away doing his duty upon the blue water? Not so. She shook her head, dried her eyes, and rowed homewards, grave yet cheerful.

"Is his ship gone?" asked her mother. "Well, he is a fine lad to look at, Lal, and if he is as true as he is strong and well-favoured, I could wish you nothing better. Let us forget the signs and warnings, my dear," this was kindly meant, but had an unpleasant and gruesome sound, "and let us hope that he will come back again. Indeed, I do not see any reason why he should not come back more than once."

Everything went on, then, as if nothing had happened. What a strange thing it is that people can go on as if nothing had happened, after the most tremendous events! Life so changed for her, yet Captain Zachariassen taking up the thread of her discourse just as before, and the same interest expected to be shown in the timber trade! Yet what a very different thing is interest in timber trade compared with interest in a man! Then she discovered with some surprise that her old admiration of Captains as a class, had been a good deal modified during the last three weeks. There were persons in the world,

It was now quite certain, of culture superior even to that of a skipper in the Canadian trade. - And she clearly discovered, for the first time, that a whole life devoted to making Captains comfortable, providing them with pudding, looking after their linen, and hearing their confidences, might, without the gracious influences of love, become a very arid and barren kind of life. Perhaps, also, the recollection of that holiday at Hampton Court helped to modify her views on the subject of Rotherhithe and its people. The place was only, after all, a small part of a great city; the people were humble. One may discover as much certainly about one's own people without becoming ashamed of them. It is only when one reaches a grade higher in the social scale that folk become ashamed of themselves. An assured position in the world, as the chimney-sweep remarked, gives one confidence. Lal plainly saw that her sweetheart was of gentler birth and better breeding than she had been accustomed to. She therefore resolved to do her best never to make him on that account repent his choice, and there was an abundance of fine sympathy, the assumption or pretence of which is the foundation of good manners, in this girl's character.

It was an intelligent parrot which Rex had given her, and at this juncture proved a remarkably sympathetic creature, for at sight of his mistress he would shake his head, plume his wings, and presently, as if necessary to console her, would cry:

"Poor Rex Armiger! Poor Rex Armiger!"

But she was never dull, nor did she betray to any one, least of all to her old friend Captain Zachariassen, that her manner of regarding things had in the least degree changed, while the secret joy that was in her heart showed itself in a thousand merry ways, with songs and laughter, and little jokes with her Captains, so that they marvelled that the existence of a sweetheart at sea should produce so beneficial an effect upon maidens. Perhaps, too, in some mysterious way, her happiness affected the puddings. I say not this at random, because certainly the fame of Rydquist's as a house where comforts, elsewhere unknown, and at Limehouse and Poplar quite unsuspected, could be found, spread far and wide, even to Deptford on the east, and Stepney on the north, and the house might have been full over and over again, but they would take in no

strangers, being in this respect as exclusive as Boodle's.

This attitude of cheerfulness was greatly commended by Captain Zachariassen. "Some girls," he said, "would have let their thoughts run upon their lover instead of their duty, whereby houses are brought to ruin and Captains seek comfort elsewhere. Once the sweetheart is gone, he ought never more to be thought upon till he comes home again, save in bed or in church, while there is an egg to be boiled or an onion to be peeled."

The first letter which Rex sent her was the first that Lal had ever received in all her life. And such a letter! It came from the Suez Canal; the next came from Aden; the next from Point de Galle; the next from Calcutta. So far all was well. Be sure that Lal read them over and over again, every one, and carried them about in her bosom, and knew them all word for word, and was, after the way of a good and honest girl, touched to the very heart that a man should love her so very, very much, and should think so highly of her, and should talk as if she was all goodness—a thing which no woman can understand. It makes silly girls despise men, and good girls respect and fear them.

The next letter was much more important than the first four, which were, in truth, mere rhapsodies of passion, although on that very account more interesting than letters which combine matter-of-fact business with love, for, on arriving at Calcutta, Rex found a proposal waiting for his acceptance. This offer came from the Directors of the Company and showed in what good esteem he was held, being nothing less than the command of one of their smaller steamers, engaged in what is called the country trade.

"It will separate us for three years at least," he wrote, "and perhaps for five, but I cannot afford to refuse the chance. Perhaps, if I did, I might never get another offer, and everybody is congratulating me, and thinking me extremely fortunate to get a ship so early. So, though it keeps me from the girl of my heart, I have accepted, and I sail at once. My ship is named the Philippine. She is a thousand-ton boat, and classed 100 A1, newly built. She is not like the Aryan, fitted with splendid mirrors, and gold, and paint, and a great saloon, being built chiefly for cargo. The crew are all Lascars, and I am the only Englishman aboard except the mate and the chief engineer. We are

under orders to take in rice from Hong-Kong; bound for Brisbane, first of all; if that answers we shall continue in the country grain trade; if not, we shall, I suppose, go seeking, when I shall have a commission on the cargo. As for pay, I am to have twenty pounds a month, with rations and allowances, and liberty to trade—so many tons every voyage—if I like. These are good terms, and at the end of every year there should be something put by in the locker. Poor Lal! Oh, my dear sweet eyes! Oh, my dear brown hair! Oh, my dear sweet lips! I shall not kiss them for three years more. What are three years? Soon gone, my pretty. Think of that, and heart up! As soon as I can I will try for a Port of London ship. Then we will be married and have a house at Gravesend, where you shall see me come up stream, homeward bound." With much more to the same effect.

Three years—or it might be five! Lal put down the letter, and tried to make out what it would mean to her. She would be in three years, when Rex came home, one-and-twenty, and he would be five-and-twenty. Five-and-twenty seems to eighteen what forty seems to thirty, fifty to forty, and sixty to fifty. One has a feeling that the ascent of life must then be quite accomplished, and the descent fairly begun; the leaves on the trees by the wayside must be ever so little browned and dusty, if not yellow; the heart must be full of experience, the head must be full of wisdom, the crown of glory, if any is to be worn at all, already on the brows. The ascent of life is like the climbing of some steep hill, because the summit seems continually to recede, and so long as one is young in heart it is never reached. Rex five-and-twenty! Three years to wait!

It is, indeed, a long time for the young to look forward to. Such a quantity of things get accomplished in three years! Why, in three years a lad gets through his whole undergraduate course, and makes a spoon or spoils a horn. Three years makes up one hundred and fifty-six weeks, with the same number of Sundays, in every one of which a girl may sit in the quiet church, and wonder on what wild seas or in what peaceful haven her lover may be floating. Three years are four summers in the course of three years, with as many other seasons; in three years there is time for many a hope to spring up, flourish for a while, and die; for friendship to turn into hate; for strength to decay; and for youth to grow

old. The experience of the long succession of human generations has developed this sad thing among mankind that we cannot look forward with joy to the coming years, and in everything unknown which will happen to us we expect a thing of evil. Three years! Yet it must be borne, as the lady said to the school-boy concerning the fat beef, "It is helped, and must be finished."

When Mrs. Rydquist heard the news she first held up her hands, and spread them slowly outwards, shaking and wagging her head—a most dreadful sign, worse than any of those with which Panurge discomfited Thaumast. Then she sighed heavily. Then she said aloud: "Oh! dear, dear, dear! So soon! I had begun to hope that the bad luck would not show yet! Dear, dear! Yet what could be expected after such certain signs?"

"Why," said Captain Zachariassen, "as for signs, they may mean anything or anybody, and as for fixing them on Cap'en Armiger, no reason that I can see. Don't be downed, Lal. The narrow seas are as safe as the Mediterranean. In my time there were the pirates, who are now shot, hanged, and drowned, every man Jack. No more stinkpots in crawling boats pretending to be friendly traders. You might row your dingy about the islands as safe as Lime'us Reach. Lord! I'd rather go cruising with your sweetheart in them waters than take a twopenny omnibus along the Old Kent Road. Your signs, ma'am," he said to Mrs. Rydquist politely, "must be read other ways. There's Cap'en Biddiman; perhaps they're meant for him."

Then came another letter from Singapore. Rex was pleased with the ship and his crew. All was going well.

After six weeks there came another letter. It was from Hong-Kong. The Philippine had taken on board her cargo of rice, and was to sail next day.

Rex wrote in his usual confident, happy vein—full of love, of hope, and happiness.

After that—no more letters at all. Silence.

Lal went on in cheerfulness for a long time. Rex could not write from Brisbane. He would write when the ship got back to Hong-Kong.

The weeks went on, but still there was silence. It was whispered in the Captains' room that the Philippine was long overdue at Moreton Bay. Then the whispers became questions whether there was any news of her: then one went across to the

office of the Company, and brought back the dreadful news that the owners had given her up; and they began to hide away the "Shipping and Mercantile Gazette." Then everybody became extremely kind to Lal, studying little surprises for her, and assuming an appearance of light-heartedness so as to deceive the poor girl. She went about with cheerful face, albeit with sinking heart. Ships are often overdue; letters get lost on the way; for a while she still carolled and sang about her work, though at times her song would suddenly stop like the song of a bullfinch, who remembers something, and must needs stay his singing while he thinks about it.

Then there came a time when the poor child stopped singing altogether, and would look with anxious eyes from one Captain to the other, seeking comfort. But no one had any comfort to give her.

Captain Zachariassen told her at last. He was an old man; he had seen so many shipwrecks that they thought he would tell her best; also it was considered his duty, as the father or the oldest inhabitant of Rydquist's, to undertake this task; and as a wise and discreet person he would tell the story, as it should be told, in few words, and so get it over without beatings on and off. He accepted the duty, and discharged himself of it as soon as he could. He told her the story, in fact, the next morning in the kitchen.

He said quietly:

"Lal, my dear, the Philippine has gone to the bottom, and—and don't take on, my pretty. But Cap'en Armiger he is gone, too; with all hands he went down."

"How do you know?" she asked. The news was sudden, but she had felt it coming; that is, she had felt some of it—not all.

"The insurances have been all paid up; the ship is posted at Lloyd's. My dear, I went to the underwriters a month ago and more, and axed about her. Axed what they would underwrite her for, and they said a hundred per cent; and then they wouldn't do it. Not a atom of hope—gone she is, and that young fellow aboard her. Well, my dear, that's done with. Shall I leave you here alone to get through a spell o' crying?"

"The ship," said Lal, with dry eyes, "may be at the bottom of the sea, and the insurances may be paid for her. But Rex is not drowned."

That was what she said: "Rex is not drowned."

Her mother brought out her cherished crape—she was a woman whom this nasty crinkling black stuff comforted in a way—and offered to divide it with her daughter.

Lal refused; she bought herself gay ribbons, and she decked herself with them. She tried, in order to show the strength of her faith, to sing about the house.

"Rex," she said stoutly, "is not drowned."

This was a most unexpected way of receiving the news. The Captains looked for a burst of tears and lamentation, after which things would brighten up, and some other fellow might have a chance. No tears at all! No chance for anybody else!

"Ribbons!" moaned Mrs. Rydquist. "Oh, Captain Zachariassen, my daughter wears ribbons—blue ribbons and red ribbons—while her sweetheart, lying at the bottom of the sea, cries aloud, poor lad, for a single yard of crape!"

"'Twould be more natural," said Captain Zachariassen, "to cry and adone with it. But gals, ma'am, are not what gals was in my young days, when so many were there as was taken off by wars, privateers, storms, and the hand of the Lord, that there was no time to cry over them, not for more than a month or so. And as for flying in the face of Providence, and saying that a drowned man is not drowned—a man whose ship's insurances have been paid, and his ship actually posted at Lloyd's—why it's beyond anything."

"Rex is not dead," said the girl to herself again and again. "He is not dead. I should know if he were dead. He would, somehow or other, come and tell me. He is sitting somewhere—I know not where it is—waiting for deliverance, and thinking—oh, my Rex! my Rex!—thinking about the girl he loves."

This was what she said; her words were brave, yet it is hard to keep one's faith up to so high a level as these words demanded. For no one else thought there was, or could be, any chance. For nearly three years she struggled to keep alive this poor ray of hope, based upon nothing at all; and for all that time no news came from the far East about her lover's ship, nor did any one know where she was cast away or how.

Sometimes this faith would break down, and she would ask in tears and with sobbings what so many women hereof of their

lovers have asked in vain—an answer to her prayers. Ah! helpless ones if her prayers were mockeries, and her lover were dead in very truth!

CHAPTER V. THE PATIENCE OF PENELOPE.

THE longer Ulysses stayed away from the rocky Ithaca, the more numerous became the suitors for the hand of the lovely Penelope who possessed the art revived much later by Ninon de l'Enclos of remaining beautiful although she grew old. That was because Penelope wickedly encouraged her lovers—to their destruction—and held out false hopes connected with a simple bit of embroidery. Why the foolish fellows, whose wits should have been sharpened by the vehemence of their passion, did not discover the trick, is not apparent. Perhaps, however, the climate of Ithaca was bracing, and the wine good, so that they winked one upon the other, and pretended not to see, or whispered: "He will never come, let us wait."

The contrary proved the case with the lass of Rotherhithe. When, after two years or so, some of her old suitors ventured with as much delicacy as in them lay to reopen the subject of courtship, they were met with a reception so unmistakable, that they immediately retired, baffled, and in confusion; some among them—those of coarser mind—to scoff and sneer at a constancy so unusual. Others—those of greater sympathies—to reflect with all humility on the great superiority of the feminine nature over their own, since it permitted a fidelity which they could not contemplate as possible for themselves, and were fain to admire while they regretted it.

Gradually it became evident to most of them that the case was hopeless, and those Captains who had once looked confidently to making Lal their own, returned to their former habits of friendly communications, and asked her advice and opinion in the matter of honourable proposals for the hands of other young ladies.

Three suitors still remained, and, each in his own way, refused to be sent away.

The first of these was Captain Holstius, whose acquaintance we have already made. He was, of course, in the Norway trade.

Perhaps it is not altogether fair to call Captain Holstius a suitor. He was a lover, but he had ceased to hope for anything except permission to go on in a friendly way, doing such offices as lay in his power, to please and help the girl whom he regarded—being a simple sort of

fellow of a religious turn—as Dante regarded Beatrice. She was to him a mere angel of beauty and goodness; in happier times she had been that rare and wonderful creature, a merry, laughing, happy angel, always occupied in good works, such as making plum-duff for poor humanity; now, unhappily, an angel who endured suspense and the agony of long waiting for news which would never come.

For the good Norwegian, like all the rest, believed that Rex was dead long ago. Captain Holstius was not a man accustomed to put his thoughts into words; nor did he, like a good many people, feel for thoughts through a multitude of phrases and thousands of words. But had he been able to set forth in plain language the things he intended and meant, he would certainly have said something to this effect. I think he would have said it more simply, and therefore with the greater force.

"If I could make her forget him: if I could substitute my own image entirely for the image of that dead man, so that she should be happy, just as she used to be when I first saw her, and if all could be as if he had never known her, I should think myself in heaven itself; or if by taking another man to husband, and not me at all, she would recover her happiness, I should be contented, for I love her so much that all I ask is for her to be happy."

It is a form of disinterested love which is so rare that at this moment I cannot remember any other single instance of it. Most people, when they love a girl, vehemently desire to keep her for themselves. Yet in the case of Captain Holstius, as for marrying her, that seemed a thing so remote from the region of probability, that he never now, whatever he had done formerly, allowed his thoughts to rest upon it, and contented himself with thinking what he could do for the girl; how he could soften the bitterness of her misfortune; how he could in small ways relieve the burden of her life, and make her a little happier.

Lal accepted all he gave, all his devotion and care. Little by little, because she saw Captain Holstius often, it became a pleasure to her to have him in the house. He became a sort of brother to her, who had never had that often unsatisfactory relative a brother, or, at all events, a true and unselfish friend, much better than the majority of brothers, who gave her every-

thing and asked nothing for himself. She liked to be with him. They walked together about the wharves of the Commercial Docks in the quiet evenings; they rowed out together on the river in the little dingy, she sitting in the stern gazing upon the waters in silent thought, while the Norwegian dipped the sculls gently, looking with an ever-increasing sorrow in the face which had once been so full of sunshine, and now grew daily more overcast with cloud. They spoke little at such times to each other, or at any time; but it seemed to her that she thought best, most hopefully, about Rex when she was with Captain Holstius. He was always a silent man, thinking that when he had a thing to say there would be no difficulty in saying it, and that if anyone had a thing to say unto him they could say it without any stimulus of talk from himself. Further, in the case of this poor Lal, what earthly good would it do to interrupt the girl in her meditations over a dead lover, by his idle chatter?

When they got home again she would thank him gently and return to her household duties, refreshed in spirit by this companionship in silence.

It is a maxim not sufficiently understood that the most refreshing thing in the world, when one is tired and sorry, disappointed or vexed, is to sit, walk, or remain for awhile silent with a silent friend whom you can trust not to chatter, or ask questions, or tease with idle observations. Pythagoras taught the same great truth, but obscurely and by an allegory. He enjoined silence among all his disciples for a term of years. This meant a companionship of silence, so as to forget the old friction and worry of the world.

The Norway ships come and go at quickly-recurring periods. Therefore Captain Holstius was much at the Commercial Docks, and had greater chances, if he had been the man to take advantage of them, than any of the other men. He was also favoured with the good opinion and the advocacy of Captain Zachariassen, who lost no opportunity of recommending Lal to consider her ways and at the same time the ways of the Norweegees. His admonition, we have seen, produced no effect. Nor did Holstius ask for his mediation any longer, being satisfied that he had got from the girl all the friendship which she had to offer.

The other two suitors, who would not be denied, but returned continually were

of coarser mould. They belonged to the very extensive class of men who, because they desire a thing vehemently, think themselves ill-used if they do not get it, fly into rages, accuse Providence, curse the hour of their birth, and go distraught. Sometimes, as in the case of the young Frenchman whose story is treated by Robert Browning, they throw themselves into the Seine, and so an end, because the joys of this world are denied to the poor. At other times they go about glaring with envious and malignant eyes. At all times they are the enemies of honest Christian folk.

One of these men was Captain Nicolas Borlinder, whose ship sailed to and fro from ~~Cadix~~ to the port of London, carrying casks of sherry for the thirsty British aristocracy. It is not a highly-paid service, and culture of the best kind is not often found among the Captains in that trade. Yet Nick Borlinder was a happy man, because his standard was of a kind easily attainable. Like his friends of the same service, he loved beer, rum, and tobacco; like them he loved these things in large quantities; like them he delighted to sit and tell yarns. He could also sing a good song in a coarse baritone; he could dance a hornpipe—only among brother Captains, of course—as well as any fo'k'sle hand; and he had the reputation of being a smart sailor. This reputation, however, belonged to all.

It was an unlucky day for Lal when this man was allowed a right of entry to Rydquist's. For he immediately fell in love with her and resolved to make her his own—Mrs. Borlinder—which would have been fine promotion for her.

He was a red-faced jolly-looking man of five-and-thirty, or thereabouts. He had a bluff and hearty way ashore; aboard ship he was handy with a marlinspike, a rope's-end, a fist, a kick, or a round stimulating oath, or anything else strong and rough and good for knocking down the mutinous or quickening the indolent. Behind his hearty manner there lay—one can hardly say concealed—a nature of the most profound selfishness; and it might have been remarked, had any of the Captains been students of human nature, which is not a possible study, save on a very limited scale, for sailors, that among them all Nick Borlinder was about the only one who had no friends.

He came and went. When he appeared no one rejoiced: while he stayed he annoyed

Cadix

and laughed and told yarns; when he went away nobody cared.

Now, a skipper can go on very well as a bachelor up to the age of thirty-five or even forty. He is supported by the dignity and authority of his position; he is sustained by a sense of his responsibilities; perhaps, also, he still looks forward to another flog in port, for youthful follies are cherished and linger long in the breasts of sailors, and are sometimes dear even to the gravity of the Captain. When a man reaches somewhere about thirty-five years of age, however, there generally comes to him a sense of loneliness. It seems hard that there should be no one glad to see him when he puts into port; visions arise of a cottage with green palings and scarlet-runners, and, in most cases, that man is doomed when those visions arise.

Captain Borlinder was thirty-one or so when he first saw Lal. She was in her housekeeper's room making up accounts, and he brought her a letter from a "Rydquist's man," introducing him and requesting for him admission. She read the letter, asked him what his ship was, and where she traded, and showed him a room in her girlish business-like manner. This was in the year eighteen hundred and seventy-six, shortly before she met Rex Armiger.

Captain Borlinder instantly, in her own room, at the very first interview, fell in love with her, and, like many men of his class, concluded that she was equally ready to fall in love with him.

All the next voyage out he thought about her. His experience of women was small, and of such a woman as Lal Rydquist, such a dainty maiden, he had no experience at all, because he had never known any such, or even distantly resembling her. The talk of such a girl, who could be friendly and laugh with a roomful of Captains, and yet not one of them would dare so much as to chuck her under the chin—a delicate attention he had always heretofore allowed himself to consider proper—was a thing he had never before experienced. Then her figure, her face, her quickness, her cleverness—all these things excited his admiration and his envy. Should he allow such a treasure to be won by another man?

Then he thought of her business capacity and that snug and comfortable business at Rydquist's. What a retreat, what a charming retreat for himself, after his

twenty years of bucketing about the sea! He pictured himself a partner in that business—sleeping partner, smoking partner, drinking partner, the partner told off to narrate the yarns and shove the bottle round. What a place for a bluff, hearty, genuine old salt! How richly had he deserved it!

He resolved, during that voyage, upon making Lal Rydquist his own as soon as he returned. They met with nasty weather in the Bay, and a night or two on deck, which he had always previously regarded as part of his profession, and all in the day's work, became a peg for discontent as he thought of the snug lying he might have beside—not in—the churchyard in the Seven Houses.

The more he thought of the thing the more clearly he saw, in his own mind, its manifest advantages. And then, because the seclusion of the cabin and the solitude of the Captain's position afford unrivalled opportunities for reflection, he began to build up a castle of Spain, and pictured to himself how he would reign as king-consort of Rydquist's.

"The old woman," he said, "shall be the first to go. No useless hands allowed aboard that craft. Her room shall be mine, where I will receive my own friends and count the money. As for old Zachariasen, he may go too, if he likes. We shall get more by a succession of Captains than by feeding him all the year round. And as for the feeding, it's too good for the money; they don't want such good grub. And the charges are too low; and the drinks ridiculous for cheapness. And as for Lal, she'd make any house go, with her pretty ways."

About this point a certain anxiety crossed his mind, because the girl herself rather frightened him. In what terms should he convey his intentions? And how would she receive them?

When he got back to London he hastened to propose to Lal. He adopted the plain and hearty manner, with a gallant nautical attitude, indicating candour and loyalty. This manner he had studied and made his own. It was not unlike the British tar of the stage, except that the good old "Shiver my timbers!" with the hitch-up of the trousers, went out before Nick Borlinder's time. Now it must be remembered that this was very shortly after young Armiger's departure.

"What you want, my hearty," said Captain Borlinder, "is a jolly husband,

that's what you want ; and the best husband you can have is a sailor."

Lal was accustomed to propositions of this kind, though not always conveyed in language so downright, having already refused four-and-twenty Captains, and laughed at half-a-dozen more, who lamented their previous marriages for her sake, and would have even seen themselves widowers with resignation.

"Why a sailor, Captain Borlinder?"

"Because a sailor is not always running after your heels like a tame cat and a puppy-dog. He goes to sea, and is out of sight ; he leaves you the house to yourself ; and when he comes home again, he is always in a good temper. A sailor ashore is easy, contented, and happy-go-lucky."

"It certainly would be something," said Lal, "always to have a good-tempered husband."

"A sailor for me, says you," continued the Captain, warming to his work. "That's right ; and if a sailor, quartermaster is better than able seaman ; mate is better than quartermaster. Wherefore, skipper is better than mate ; and if skipper, why not Nick Borlinder ? Eh ! Why not Nick Borlinder ?"

And he stuck his thumbs in his waistcoat-pockets, and looked irresistible tenderness, so that he was greatly shocked when Lal laughed in his face, and informed him that she could not possibly become Mrs. Borlinder.

He went away in great indignation, and presently hearing about Rex Armiger and his successful courtship, first declared that he would break the neck of that young man as soon as he could get a chance, and then found fault with his own eyes because he had not struck at once and proposed when the idea first came into his head. Lost ! and all for want of a little pluck. Lost ! because the moment his back was turned, this young jackanapes, no better than a second mate in a steamer, cut in, saw his chance, and snapped her up.

For two voyages he reflected on the nature of women. He said to himself that out of sight, out of mind, and she would very likely forget all about the boy. He therefore resolved on trying the effect of bribery, and came offering rare gifts, consisting principally of an octave of sherry.

Lal accepted it graciously, and set it up in the Captains' room, where everybody fell to lapping it up until it was all gone.

Then Lal refused the donor a second time. So the sherry was clean thrown

away and wasted. Much better had made it rum for his own consumption.

We know what happened next, and none rejoiced more cordially than Captain Borlinder over his rival's death.

When a reasonable time, as he thought, had elapsed, he renewed his offer with effusion, and was indignantly, even scornfully, refused. He concluded that he had another rival, probably some fellow with more money, and he looked about him and made guarded enquiries. He could find no one likely to be a rival except Captain Holstius, who appeared to be a poor religious creature, not worth the jealousy of a lusty English sailor ; and, later on, he discovered that a certain American captain called Barnabas B. Wattles, who came and went, having no ship of his own, and yet always full of business, was certainly a rival.

Captain Wattles puzzled him, because, so far as he could see, Lal was no kinder to him than to himself. Always there was present to his mind that vision of himself the landlord or proprietor of Rydquist's, counting out the money in the front parlour over a pipe and a cool glass of rum-and-water, while Lal looked after the dinners and made out the bills.

"Bills !" he thought. "Yes ; they should be bills with a profit in them too, when he was proprietor !"

Rage possessed his soul as the time went on and he got no nearer the attainment of his object. He could not converse with the girl, partly because she avoided him, and partly because he had nothing to say. Worst of all, she told him when he ventured once more to remark that a jolly sailor, namely, Nick Borlinder, would restore her to happiness, that if he ever dared to propose such a thing again he would no longer be admitted to Rydquist's, but might stay aboard his own ship in the London Docks, or find a house at Poplar. Fear of being sent to Poplar kept him quiet.

There remained the third suitor, Captain Barnabas B. Wattles.

When he made the acquaintance of Lal, a skipper without a ship, it was in the year eighteen hundred and seventy-seven. He was an American by birth, hailing, in fact, from the town of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and he was always full of business, the nature of which no man knew. He was quite unlike the jovial Nick Borlinder, and, indeed, resembled the typical British tar in no respect.

whatever. For he was a slight spare man, with sharp features and hairless cheek. He was not, certainly, admitted to the privileges of Rydquist's, but he visited when his business brought him to London, and sat of an evening in the Captains' room drinking with any who would offer gratuitous grog; at other times he was fond of saying that he was a temperance man, and went without grog rather than pay for it himself.

He first came when Lal was waiting for that letter from Rex which never came; he learned the whole story; and either did not immediately fall in love, like the more inflammable Borlinder, being a man of prudence and forethought, else he refrained from speech, even from the good words of courtship. But he came often; by speaking gently, and without mention of love and marriage, he established friendly relations with Lal; he even ventured to speak of her loss, and, with honeyed sympathy, told the tales of like disasters, which always ended fatally to American sailors. When she declared that Rex could not be drowned, he only shook his head with pity. And in speaking of those early deaths at sea which had come under his own observation, he assumed, as a matter of course, that the bereaved woman mourned for no more than a certain term, after which time she took unto herself another sweetheart, and enjoyed perfect happiness ever afterwards. He thought that in this way he would familiarise her mind with the idea of giving up her grief.

"When she reflected," he would conclude his narrative, "that cryin' would not bring back any man to life again, she gave over cryin' and looked about for consolation. She found it, Miss Lal, in the usual quarter. As for myself, my own name is Barnabas, which means, as perhaps you have never heard, the Son of Consolation."

With such words did he essay to sap the fidelity of the mourner, but in vain, for though there were times when poor Lal would doubt, despite the fervent ardour of her faith, whether Rex might not be really dead and gone, there was no time at all when she ever wavered for a moment in constancy to his memory. Though neither Borlinder nor Barnabas Wattles could understand the thing, it was impossible for Lal ever to think of a second lover.

He would talk of other things, but always came back to the subject of consolation.

Thus one evening he began to look about him, being then in her own room.

"This," he said, "is a prosperous concern which you are running, Miss Lal. I guess it pays?"

Yes; Lal said that it paid its expenses, and more.

"And you've made your little pile already out of it?"

Yes, said Lal carelessly, there was money saved.

His eyes twinkled at the thought of handling her savings, for Captain Wattles was by no means rich. He forgot, however, that the money belonged to her mother.

"Now," he went on with an insinuating smile, "do you never think the time will come when you will tire of runnin' this ho—tel?"

Lal said she was too busy to think of what might happen, and that, as regards the future, she said, sadly, that she would rather not think about it at all, the past was already too much for her to think about.

"Yes," he said, "that time will come. It has not come yet, Miss Lal, and, therefore, I do not say, as I am ready to say, Take me and let me console you. My name is Barnabas, which means, as perhaps you do not know, the Son of Consolation."

"It would be no use at all," said Lal; "and if we are to remain friends, Captain Wattles, you will never speak of this again."

"I will not," he replied, "until the right moment. Then, with your little savings and mine, we will go back to the States. I know what we will do when we get there. There's an old ship-building yard at Portsmouth which only wants a few thousand dollars put into it. We will put our dollars into that yard, and we will build ships."

"You had better give up thinking of such nonsense," said Lal.

"Thought is free, Miss Lal. The time will come. Is it in nature to go on crying all your life for a man as dead as Abraham Lincoln? The time will come."

"Enough said, Captain Wattles," Lal said. It was in her own room, and she was busy with her accounts. "You can go now, and you need not come back any more unless you have something else to say. I thought you were a sensible man. Most American Captains I know are as sensible as Englishmen and Norwegians."

Captain Wattles rose slowly.

"Wal," he said, "you say so now. I expected you would. But the time will come. I'm not afraid of the other men. As for Cap'en Borlinder, he is not fit company for a sweet young thing like you. He would beat his wife, after a while, that man would. He drinks nobblers all day, and swaps lies with any riff-raff who will stand in a bar and listen to him. You will not lower yourself to Cap'en Borlinder. As for the Norweege, he is but a poor soft shell; you might as well marry a gell. I shan't ask you yet, so don't be afraid. When your old friends drop away one by one, and you feel a bit lonesome with no one to talk to, and these bills always on your mind, and the house over your head like a cage and a prison, I shall look in again, and you will hold out your pretty hand, and you will sweetly say: 'Cap'en Wattles, you air a sailor and a temperance man: you subscribe to a missionary society and have once been teacher in a Sunday-school; you have traded Bibles with natives for coral and ivory and gold dust; you air smart; you air likewise a kind-hearted man, who will give his wife her head in everything, with Paris bonnets and New York frocks; your name is Barnabas, the Son of Consolation.' . . . Don't run away, Miss Lal. I've said all I wanted to say, and now I am going. Business takes me to Liverpool to-night, and on Thursday I sail again for Baltimore."

CHAPTER VI. THE MESSAGE FROM THE SEA.

It was, then, in October, eighteen hundred and seventy-nine, that Dick, the Malay, made his appearance and told his tale. Having told it he remained in the house, attaching himself as by right to Lal, whose steward he became as he had been steward to Rex.

The thing produced, naturally, a profound sensation in the Captains' room, whither Dick was invited to repeat his performance, not once but several times.

It was observed that, though substantially the same, the action always differed in the addition or the withdrawal of certain small details, the interpretation of which was obscure. One or two facts remained certain, and were agreed upon by all: an open boat, a long waiting, a rescue, either by being picked up or by finding land, and then one or two fights, but why, and with whom, was a matter of speculation.

Captain Zachariassen remained obstinate to his theory. There was a widow, there was a marriage, there was a baby, there

were conjugal rows, and finally a prison in which Rex Armiger still remained. How to fit the pantomime into these wonderful details was a matter of difficulty which he was always endeavouring to overcome by the help of the more obscure gestures in the mummicking.

The general cheerfulness of the house was naturally much elevated by this event. It was, indeed, felt not only that hope had returned, but also that honour was conferred upon Rydquist's by so mysterious and exciting a revelation.

This distinction became more generally recognised when the Secretary and one of the Directors of the Indian Peninsular Line came over to see the Malay, hoping to get some light thrown upon the loss of their ship.

Captain Zachariassen took the chair for the performance, so to speak, and expounded the principal parts, taking credit for such mummicking as no other house could offer.

The Director learned nothing definite from the pantomime, but came away profoundly impressed with the belief that their officer, Captain Armiger, was living.

The Malay, now domesticated at Seven Houses, was frequently invited of an evening to the Captains' room, where he went through his performance—Captain Zachariassen always in the chair—for every new comer, and was a continual subject of discussion. Also there were great studyings of charts, and mappings out of routes, with calculations as to days and probable number of knots. And those who had been in Chinese and Polynesian waters were called upon to narrate their experiences.

The route of a steamer from Hong-Kong to Moreton Bay is well known, and easily followed. Unfortunately, the Malay's pantomime left it doubtful of what nature was the disaster. It might have been a piratical attack, though that was very unlikely, or a fire on board, or the striking on a reef.

"Her course," said Captain Holstius, laying it down with Lal for the fiftieth time, "would be—so—E.S.E. from Hong-Kong, north of Luçon here; then due S.E. between the Pelews and Carolines, through Dampier Straits, having New Guinea to the starboard. Look at these seas, Lal. Who knows what may have happened? And how can we search for him over three thousand miles of sea, among so many islands?"

How, indeed? And yet the idea was

growing up strong in both their minds that a search of some kind must be made.

And then came help, that sort of help which our pious ancestors called Providential. What can we call it? Blind chance? That seems rather a long drop from benevolent Providence, but it seems to suit a good many people nowadays almost as well—more's the pity.

Two months after the Malay's appearance, while winter was upon us and Christmas not far off, when the church-yard trees were stripped of leaf, and the vine about the window was trimmed, the garden swept up for the season, and the parrots brought indoors, and Rydquist's made snug for bad weather, another person called at the house, bringing with him a message of another kind. It was no other than the Doctor of the Aryan, Rex's old ship. He bore something round, wrapped in tissue paper. He carried it with great care, as if it was something very precious.

The time was evening, and Lal was in her room making up accounts. In the Captains' room was a full assemblage, numbering Captain Zachariassen, Captain Borlinder, who purposed to spend his Christmas at Rydquist's and to consume much grog, Captain Holstius, Captain Barnabas B. Wattles, whose business had again brought him to London, and two or three Captains who have nothing to do with this history except to fill up the group in the room where presently an important function was to be held.

At present they were unsuspecting of what was coming, and they sat in solemn circle, the Patriarch at the head of the table, getting through the evening, all too quickly, in the usual way.

"This was picked up," the Doctor said, still holding his treasure in his hands as if it was a baby, "in the Bay of Bengal, by a country ship sailing from Calcutta to Moulmein; it must have drifted with the currents and the wind, two thousand miles and more. How it contrived never to get driven ashore or broken against some boat, or wreck, or rock, or washed up some creek among the thousands of islands by which it floated, is a truly wonderful thing."

"Oh, what is it?" she cried.

He took off the handkerchief and showed a common wide-mouthed bottle, such as chemists use for effervescing things.

"It contains," he said solemnly, "poor Rex Armiger's last letter to you. The skipper who picked it up pulled out the cork and read it. He brought it to our

office at Calcutta, where, though it was written to you, we were obliged to read it, because it told how the Philippine was cast away; for the same reason our officers read it."

"His last letter?"

"Yes; his last letter. It is dated three years ago. We cannot hope—no, it is impossible to hope—that he is still alive. We should have heard long ago if he had been picked up."

"We have heard," said Lal. She went in search of the Malay, with whom she presently returned. "We have heard, Doctor. Here is Rex's steward, who came to us two months ago."

"Good heavens! it is the dumb Malay steward, who was with him in the boat."

"Yes. Now look, and tell me what you read."

She made a sign to Dick, who went through, for the Doctor's instruction, the now familiar pantomime.

"What do you think, Doctor?"

"Think? There is only one thing to think, Miss Rydquist. He has escaped. He is alive, somewhere, or was when Dick last saw him—though how this fellow got away from him, and where he is——"

"Now give me his letter."

It was tied round with a green ribbon—a slender roll of paper, looking as if seawater had discoloured it.

The Doctor took it out of the bottle and gave it her.

"I will read Rex's letter," she said quietly, "alone. Will you wait a little for me, Doctor?"

She came back in a quarter of an hour. Her eyes were heavy with tears, but she was calm and assured.

"I thank God, Doctor," she said; "I thank God most humbly for preserving this precious bottle and this letter of my dear Rex—my poor Rex—and I thank you, too, and your brother officers, whom he loved, and who were always good to him, for bringing it home to me. For now I know where he is, and where to look for him, and now I understand it all."

"If he is living we will find him," said the Doctor. "Be sure that we will find him."

"We will find him," she echoed. "Yes, we will find him. Now, Doctor, consider. You remember how they got into the boat?"

"Yes—off the wreck. The letter tells us that."

"Dick told us that two months ago, but

we could not altogether understand it. How long were they in the boat?"

"Why, no one knows."

"Yes, Dick knows, and he has told us. Consider. They were left, when this bottle was sent forth, like the raven out of the Ark, with no food. They sat in the boat, waiting for death. But they did not die. They drifted—you saw that they made no attempt to row—for awhile; they grew hungry and thirsty; they passed two or three days with nothing to eat. It could not have been more, because they were not so far exhausted but that, when land appeared in sight, they still had strength to row."

"Go on," cried the Doctor. "You are cleverer than all of us."

"It is because I love him," she replied, "and because I have thought day and night where he can be. You know the latitude and longitude of the wreck; you must allow for currents and wind; you know how many days elapsed between the wreck and the writing of the letter. Now let us look at the chart and work it all out."

She brought the chart to the table, and pointed with her finger.

"They were wrecked," she said, "there. Now allow five days for drifting. Where would they land? Remember he says that the wind was S.W."

"Why," said the Doctor, "they may have landed on one of the most westerly of the Caroline Islands, unless the current carried them to the Pelewa. There are islands enough in those seas."

"Yes," she replied; "it is here that we shall look for him. Now come with me to the Captains' room."

She walked in, head erect and paper in hand, followed by the Doctor, and stood at Captain Zachariasen's right—her usual place when she visited the Captains in the evening.

"You who are my friends," said Lal, bearing in one hand the chart and in the other the precious letter, "will rejoice with me, for I have had a letter from Rex."

"When was it wrote, and where from?" asked Captain Zachariasen.

"It is nearly three years old. It has been tossing on the sea, driven hither and thither, and preserved by kind Heaven to show that Rex is living still, and where he is."

Captain Wattles whistled gently. It sounded like an involuntary note of incredulity.

Lal spread the chart before Captain Zachariasen.

"You can follow the voyage," she said, "while I read you his letter. It is on the back of one from me. It is written with a lead pencil, very small, because he had a great deal to say and not much space to say it in—my Rex!"

Her voice broke down for a moment, but she steadied herself and went on reading the message from the sea.

"Anyone who picks this up," it begins, 'will oblige me by sending it to Miss Rydquist, Seven Houses, Rotherhithe, because it tells her of the shipwreck and perhaps the death'—But you know, all of you," Lal interposed, "that he survived and got to land, else how was Dick able to get back to England?—'of her sweetheart, the undersigned Rex Armiger, Captain of the steamer Philippine, now lying a wreck on a reef in latitude 5°30' N. and longitude 133°25', as near as I could calculate."

"MY DEAREST LAL,—I write this in the Captain's gig, where I am floating about in or about the above-named latitude and longitude, after the most unfortunate voyage that ever started with good promise. First, I send you my last words, dear love, solemnly, because a man in a boat on the open seas, with no provisions and no sail, cannot look for anything but death from starvation, if not by drowning. God help you, my dear, and bless you, and make you forget me soon, and find a better husband than I should ever have made. You will take another man——"

"Hear, hear!" said Captain Borlinder softly.

"Hush!" said Captain Wattles reproachfully. "Captain Armiger was a good man and a prophet."

"You will take another man," Lal repeated. "Never!" she cried, after the repetition, looking from one to the other. "Never! Not if he were dead, instead of being alive, as he is, and wondering why we do not come to rescue him."

"The boy had his points," said Captain Zachariasen, "and a good husband he would have made. Just such as I was sixty years ago or thereabouts. Get on to the shipwreck, Lal, my dear."

"It was on December the First that we set sail from Calcutta. The crew were all Lascars, except Dick, my Malay steward, the chief officer, who was an Englishman, and the engineer. We made a good passage under canvas, with auxiliary screw,

to Singapore, and from thence, in ballast, except for a few bales of goods, to Hong-Kong. Here we took in our cargo of rice, and started, all well, on January the Fourteenth, eighteen hundred and seventy-seven. The mate was a good sailor as ever stepped on a bridge, and the ship well found, new, and good in all respects.

"We had fair weather across the China Sea, and in the straits north of Luzon until we came to the open seas. Here a gale, which blew us off our course to N.E., but not far, and still in clear and open sailing, with never a reef or an island on the chart. We kept steam up, running in the teeth of the wind, all sails furled. When the wind moderated, veering from S.E. to S.W. (within a point or two), we made the Pelew Islands to starboard bow, and came well in the track of the Sydney steamers. If you look at a chart you will find that here the sea is open and clear; not a shoal nor an island laid down for a good thousand miles. Wherefore, I make no doubt that after enquiry I should have my certificate returned to me, in spite of having lost so good a ship.

"On Sunday, at noon, the wind having moderated, we found we had made two hundred and twenty-seven knots in the four-and-twenty hours. We were, as I made it, in latitude 5°30' N. and longitude 133°25', as near as I could calculate. At sunset, which was at six twenty-five, we must have made some sixty miles more to the S.W., so that you can lay down the spot on the map. The wind was fresh, and the sea a little choppy, but nothing of any consequence in open water. At eight I turned in, going watch and watch about with the mate, and at five minutes past eight, I suppose I was fast asleep.

"It was, I think, a little after six bells, that I was awakened by the ship striking. I ran on deck at once. We were on a reef, and by the grating and grinding of her bottom I guessed that it was all over. I'm sorry to say that in the shock the mate seems to have been knocked overboard and drowned, because I saw him no more. The ship rolled from side to side, grinding and tearing her bottom upon the reef. The men ran backwards and forwards crying to each other. There was no discipline with them, nor could I get them to obey orders. The engineer went below and reported water gaining fast. He and I did our best to keep the crew in hand, but it was no use. They lowered the boats and pushed off, leaving behind only the

engineer, and Dick the steward, and myself. They were in too great a hurry to put provisions on board, so that I greatly fear they must have perished, unless they have been picked up by some steamer.

"All that night we stayed on deck, we three, expecting every moment that she would break her back. The cargo of grain was loose now, and rolled with the ship like water. Her bows were high upon the rocks, and I believe we were only saved because she was lodged upon the reef as far aft as the engine-room. In the darkness the engineer must have slipped his hold and fallen overboard, I don't know how. Then there was only Dick and me.

"In the morning, at daybreak, the lookout was pretty bad. The reef is a shoal, with nothing but a fringe of white water round it to mark where it lies. It is now, I reckon, about seventeen feet below the surface of the water, but I take it to be a rising reef, so that every year will make it less, and I hope it will be set down at once on the chart. My mate was gone and my engineer, the boats and their crews were out of sight, or may be capsized, not a sail upon the sea. But there was the Captain's gig.

"When we got afloat, my purpose was to keep alongside the poor wreck until we had got enough victuals to last a week or two, and some running tackle whereby we could hoist some sort of a sail. But, my dear, we hadn't time, because no sooner had we lowered the boat and put in a few tins, with a bottle half full of brandy and a keg of water, than she parted amidships, and we had no more than time to jump into the boat and shove off.

"There we were, then, with no oars, no mast, no sail, no rudder even, and provisions for two or three days.

"We have now been floating a week. We drifted first of all in a nor-westerly direction, so near as I could make out, so long as the poor wreck remained in sight. Since then I know not what our course has been. There is a strong current here, I suspect, from the short time we took to lose sight of her, and there has been a good strong breeze blowing from the S.W. for three days.

"We have now got to the end of our provisions; the last drop of water has been drunk; the last biscuit eaten. Poor Dick sits opposite to me all day and all night, he cannot speak, but he refused his share of the last ration for my sake."

Here Lal broke down again, and Captain Zachariassen said something strong, which showed that his admiration for a generous action was greater than his religious restraint.

"We spend the day in looking for a sail; at night we take watch about. There remains only a little brandy in the heel of the bottle. We husband that for a last resource. We have fashioned a couple of rough oars out of two planks of the boat.

"I have kept this a day longer. No sail in sight. We have had two or three drops of brandy each. They are the last. Now I must commit this letter to the sea in the bottle. Oh, my dear Lal, my pretty tender darling! I shall never, never see you any more. Long before you get this letter I shall be drifting about in this boat, a dead man. I pray Heaven to bless you——"

Here Lal stopped and burst into tears.

"Read no more," said Captain Holstius, "the rest concerns yourself alone."

Lal kissed her letter, folded it tenderly, and laid it in her bosom.

"The rest only concerns me," she repeated, and was silent a while.

Captain Zachariassen, meantime, was at work upon the chart.

"I read this story somewhat different," he said. "You can't always follow a mummicker in his antics, and I now perceive that I was wrong about the baby. The widow I stick to. Nothing could be plainer than the widow, though, of course, it was not to be expected that he'd make a clean breast of it in that letter, which otherwise does him credit. Lal, my dear, you are right. If Dick is alive, then his master is alive. Question is, where would he get to, and where is he now?"

They were all silent, waiting the conclusion of the Patriarch before any other ventured to speak. He was bending over the chart, his right thumb as the position of the reef, and his fore-finger acting as a compass.

"I calculate from the position of the reef, which is here, and the run of the currents, and the direction of the wind, that they drifted towards the most westerly of the Caroline Islands."

It hardly required patriarchal wisdom to surmise this fact, seeing that these islands are the nearest places north-west of the reef.

"And next?" asked Lal.

"Next, my pretty, they were taken off of that island, but I do not know by

whom, and were shipped away to some prison, but I don't know where, and there Cap'en Armiger is still lying, though what for, as there was seemingly no baby and no chucking overboard, we mortals, who are but purblind, cannot say."

Then Captain Holstius spoke again.

"I think we might have in the Malay and go through the play-acting again. May be, with this letter before us, we may get more light."

The Doctor now showed Dick the bottle. He seized it, grinned a recognition, and, on a sign from the girl, began the story again at that point.

First, leaning over the imaginary side of the boat, he laid it gently on the floor.

"Thereby," said Captain Zachariassen solemnly, "committing the letter to the watery deep, to be carried here and driven there while the stormy winds do blow, do blow. Amen!"

Then Dick became pensive. He sat huddled up, with his elbows on his knees and head in his hands, looking straight before him. For the time, as always in this performance, of which he never tired, he was Rex himself; the same poise of the head, the same look of the eyes; he had put off the Malayan type, and sat there, before them all, pure Caucasian.

"Creditable, my lad," said Captain Zachariassen. "I think you can, all of you, understand so far, without my telling."

They certainly could.

Then the Malay sprang on his feet and pointed to some object in the distance.

"Sail ho!" cried Captain Borlinder.

Then he sat down again and began the regular motion of his arm, which the Patriarch had mistaken for rocking the baby.

"This," said the Venerable, "is plain and easy. Land it is, not a sail—why? Because, if the latter, they would wave their pocket-handkerchiefs; if the former, they would h'ist sail or out sculls. If the mummicker had been as plain and easy to understand the first time, we shouldn't have gone astray and sailed on that wrong tack about the baby."

With the help of the letter the pantomime became perfectly intelligible. The whole scene stood out plainly before the eyes of all. They were no longer in the Captains' room at Seven Houses, Rotherhithe; they were somewhere far away, east of New Guinea, watching two men in a little boat on a sea where there was no

sail nor any smoke from passing steamers. Low down on the horizon was a thin streak, which a landsman would have taken for a cloud. The two men with straining faces were rowing with feverish eagerness, encouraging each other, and ceasing not, though the paddles nearly fell from their hands with fatigue.

"Oh! Rex, Rex!" cried Lal, carried away by the acting. "Rest awhile; oh, rest!"

But still they paddled on.

Then came the scene of the struggle and the binding of the arms, and the march up country. Next the release and the quiet going up and down; and then the second struggle, with another capture, and a second binding of arms.

"See, Lal," said Captain Holstius, pointing triumphantly to the actor; "who is bound this time?"

Why, there could be no doubt whatever. It was not Rex, but the Malay.

"This is the worst o' mummicking now," said the Patriarch, as if pantomime was a recognised instrument in the teaching and illustration of history. "You're never quite sure. We've had to give up the baby with the chucking overboard. I was sorry for that, because it was so plain and easy to read. And now it seems as if it was the poor devil himself that got took off to gaol. Was his hair cut short, do you remember, Lal, when he came here two months ago? I can't quite give up the prison, neither, so beautiful as it reeled itself out first time we did the mummicking. You're a stranger, sir," he addressed the Doctor, "and you knew Cap'en Armiger. What do you think? For my own part—well, let's hear you, sir."

"There cannot be a doubt," said the Doctor, "that the man personated Armiger, and no other, until the last scene, and that there he became himself intentionally. He exaggerated himself. He walked differently; he carried his head differently. There was a fight of some kind, and the Malay, not Armiger at all, was taken prisoner."

"What is your opinion, Captain Borlinder?" asked Lal, anxious to know what each man thought.

"My opinion," said Captain Borlinder with emphasis, "is this. They got ashore; no one can doubt that. Very well, then. Where? Not many degrees of longitude from the place where they were wrecked. Who were the people they fell among? The natives. That's what I read so far. Now we go on to the fight at the

end. A better fight I never saw on the stage, not even at the Pavilion Theatre, though but one man in it. As for Captain Armiger, he was knocked on the head. That is to me quite certain. Knocked on the head with a stick, or stuck with a knife, according to the religion and customs of them natives, among whom I never sailed, and therefore do not know their ways. It's a melancholy comfort, at all events, to know the manner of his end. Next to looking forward to a decent burial, people when they are going to be knocked on the head die more comfortable if they know that other people will hear how they came to be knocked on the head, whether a club or a boathook or a bo'sn's cutlash."

"I think, sir," said the Doctor, "that you are perfectly wrong. There is nothing whatever to show that Armiger was killed."

But then he did not know that Captain Borlinder spoke according to the desire of his own heart.

Then Lal turned to the only man who had not yet spoken:

"And what is your opinion, Captain Wattles?"

"I think," replied Barnabas the Consoler, "that Cap'en Armiger landed on some island, and worried through the first scrimmage. I know them lands, and I know that their ways to strangers may be rough. If you get through the first hearty welcome, which means clubs and knives and spears mostly, there's no reason why you shouldn't settle down among 'em. There's many an English and American sailor livin' there contented and happy. P'raps Cap'en Armiger is one of them."

"Not contented," said Lal, "nor yet happy."

Captain Wattles went on:

"On the other hand, there's fights among themselves and drunken bouts, and many a brave fellow knocked on the head thereby."

"Do you speak from your own knowledge?" asked the Doctor.

"I was once," he replied unblushingly, "a missionary in the Kusaie station. Yes; we disseminated amongst us the seeds of civilisation and religion among those poor cannibals. I also traded in shirts and trousers, after they had been taught how to put them on. They are a treacherous race; they treasure up the recollection of wrongs and take revenge; they are insensible to kindness and handy with their arrows. I fear that Cap'en Armiger has

long since been killed and eaten. They probably spared the Malay on account of his brown skin, as likely to disagree."

Then Captain Holstius rose and spoke.

"Friends all," he said, "and especially Captain Borlinder and Captain Wattles, here is a message come straight from Captain Armiger himself, though now nigh upon three years old. And it comes close upon the heels of that other message brought us by this poor fellow who gave it as he knew best, though a difficult message to read in parts. Now we know, partly from Dick, and partly from the letter, what happened and how it happened, and we are pretty certain that they must have landed, as Captain Zachariassen has told us, in one of the islands lying to the nor-west of the spot where she struck." Here he paused. Captain Borlinder blew great clouds of tobacco and looked straight before him. Captain Wattles listened with impatience. Then the Norwegian went on: "I think, friends all, that here we have our duty plain before us. Here are three men in this room, Captain Borlinder, Captain Wattles, and myself, who have been in love with Lal, who is Captain Armiger's sweetheart, and therefore has no right to listen to us so long as there is any hope left that he is alive. If no hope, why, I do not say myself that she has no right——"

"No right, Captain Holstius," said Lal; "no right to listen to any other man, whatever happens."

"Very well, then. But for us who love her in a respectful way, and desire nothing but her happiness, there is only one duty, and that is——"

Here Captain Wattles sprang to his feet.

"To go in search of him. That is what I was going to propose. Miss Rydquist, I promise to go in search of Cap'en Armiger. If he is alive I will bring him home to you. If he is dead, I will bring you news of how and when he died. I ask no reward. I leave that to you. But I will bring you news."

This was honestly and even nobly spoken. But the effect of the speech was a little marred by the allusion to reward. What reward had Lal to offer, except one? and she had just declared that to be impossible.

Then Captain Borlinder rose ponderously and slapped his chest.

"Nick Borlinder, Lal, is at your service. Yours truly to command. He hasn't been a missionary, nor a dealer in reach-me-

down shirts, like some skippers, having walked the deck since a boy. And he doesn't know the Caroline Islands. But he can navigate a ship, or he can take a passage aboard a ship. Where there's missionaries there's ships. He will get aboard one of them ships, and he will visit those cannibals and find out the truth. Lal, if Cap'en Armiger is alive, he shall be rescued by Nick Borlinder, and shall come home with me arm-in-arm, to the Pride of Rotherhithe. If he isn't alive, why—then——"

He sat down again, nodding his head.

Lal turned to Captain Holstius.

"Yes," he said; "I thought this brave Englishman and this brave American would see their duty plain before them. I will go in search of him, too, Lal. I know not yet how; but I shall find a way."

"Gentlemen," said Lal, "I have nothing to give you except my gratitude. Nothing at all. Oh! who in the world has ever had kinder and nobler friends than I?"

She held out her two hands. Captain Wattles seized the right and kissed it with effusion, murmuring something about Barnabas, the Son of Consolation. Captain Borlinder followed his example with the left, though he had never before regarded a woman's hand as a proper object for a manly kiss. He took the opportunity to whisper that in all her troubles, Nick Borlinder was the man to trust.

"Now," said Captain Holstius, "there is no time to be lost; we all have things to arrange, and money to raise. Shall we all go together, or shall we go separate?"

"Separate," said the Son of Consolation.

"Separate," cried Borlinder firmly. "If the job is to be done, let ME do the job single-handed."

"Very well," said Captain Holstius; "then how shall we go?"

"We will go," said Captain Wattles, "in order. First one, and then another, to give every man a fair chance and no favour. And to get that fair chance we will draw straws. Longest straw first, shortest last."

He retired and returned with three straws in his hand.

"Now, Borlinder," he said, "you shall draw first."

Borlinder took a straw, but with hesitation.

The Doctor, who was rather short-sighted, thought he detected a little sleight-of-hand on the part of Captain Wattles at this moment. But he said nothing. Captain

Holstius then drew. Again the Doctor thought he observed what seemed to be tampering with the oracle of the straw.

On the display of the straws it was found that the longest straw was Captain Borlinder's; the shortest, that of Captain Holstius. The order of search was therefore, first, Captain Borlinder. He heaved a great breath, struck his hands together, and smote his chest with great violence and heartiness. You would have thought he had drawn a great prize instead of the right to go first on an extremely expensive voyage of search. The next was to be Captain Wattles. The third and last, Captain Holstius.

Captain Zachariassen called for glasses round to drink health and success to the gallant fellows going out on this brave and honourable quest.

Outside the house, presently, two of the gallant seekers stood in discourse.

"You don't think, Wattles," asked Borlinder, "that he's really alive?"

"I can't say," replied the ex-missionary. "I shouldn't like, myself, to be wrecked on one of those islands. You see, there's been a little labour traffic in those parts, and the ungrateful people, who don't know what's good for them, are afraid of being kid—I mean recruited. And they bear malice. But I suppose he's one of the sort that don't easily get killed. I shall be going Sydney-way about my own business next year, or thereabouts, I expect, so it's all in my day's work to make enquiries. As for you——"

"As to me, now, brother!" Captain Borlinder spoke in his most insinuating way. "As to me, now! Come, let's have a drink."

"As to you," said the Consoler, after a drink at his friend's expense, "I'm sorry for you, because you've got to go at once, and you've got no experience. Among cannibals, a man of your flesh is like a prize ox at Christmas."

Captain Borlinder turned pale.

"Yes—that is so. They would put you in a shallow pit, with a few onions and some pepper, cover all up snug with stones, and make a fire on top till you were done to a turn!"

Captain Borlinder shuddered.

"You are going first, you are, like a brave Briton. I will tell you a little story. There was once a man who promised to go over Niagara in an india-rubber machine of his own invention. A beautiful machine

it was, shut up tight, with air-holes so as the man inside could breathe free and open when so disposed."

"Well?"

"Wal, sir, he was cert'n'y bound to go. But after looking at the Falls a bit, he concluded to send a cat over first."

"Well?"

"Yes, Cap'en Borlinder, the cat went over and that man is still waiting below the Horseshoe Fall for the critter to turn up again."

Captain Borlinder looked after his friend with pale cheeks and apprehensive heart. What did it mean—this parable of the cat and Niagara?

Now, after the glass round was drank, and the three men gone, the Doctor found his way round the table and looked under it on the floor, and there found two short bits of straw lying on the carpet. He picked them up and considered. "What did he do it for?" he asked. "Longest first. They were, I suppose, all the same length, so that the man with the red face should go first. Easy, then, to nip bits off the straw and make the Norway man take the shortest. What did he do it for?" And the knowledge of this fact made him uneasy, because it looked as if the search for Armiger would not be altogether fair.

CHAPTER VII. CAPTAIN BORLINDER AMONG THE CANNIBALS.

WHEN Captain Borlinder sought the privacy of his own chamber that evening, he gave way to meditations of a very unpleasant and exasperating nature. Was ever a man more forced into a hole than himself? Was ever proposition more ridiculous? Why, if, as Holstius truly said, they were all after the same girl, what the dickens was the good of going out of the country, all the way to the Eastern Seas, at enormous expense, to say nothing of the danger, in order to find and bring home the man who would cut them all out and carry the girl away? He would rather fight for the girl; he should like, he thought, to fight for the girl. That slow and easy Norweege would pretty soon knock under, though the little Yankee would be more difficult to tackle. But actually to go and look for the man! Why, since he was happily disposed of, and if not dead, then missing for three years, what madness to disturb so comfortable and providential an arrangement! As for such disinterestedness as to desire the

happiness of any woman in the world as the first consideration, that was a thing too high for Nick Borlinder's understanding, a dark saying, a flight into unattainable heights, which appeared to him pure unmitigated nonsense. Should his own happiness, should any man's happiness, be wrecked to save that of any woman, or man either, on the whole earth? What is the happiness of another to a man who cannot himself be happy?

Who, thought honest Nicholas, without putting the thought into words, is the most important person, the central person, of the whole universe; the person about whom the stars do revolve, for whom the sun shines and the rain falls, for whose protection governments exist, for whom all people who on earth do dwell continually toil, so that this person may receive good things without cessation? Who is it, but—*moi même*? Was, then, Captain Borlinder to labour and be spent for the promotion of another's happiness? Was he to give up his ship in order to find a man who would destroy his own best chance of good fortune? The thing appeared more preposterous every moment!

"Who, in fact," he asked, giving full vent to his feelings, "but a Norweegee could be such an enormous, such an incredible ass?"

Then he remembered again the Yankee's apologue.

"Sniggerin' beast!" he said; "I hate him! I wish he'd fall overboard of a dark night and blowin' great guns. What did he mean? I'm to be the cat to go over among the cannibals, am I?"

Then a beautiful and comforting thought crossed his mind.

"I know now," he said, "what I ought to have replied. I should have said there was a man cleverer than that man. For he promised to go over the Falls in a bathing-machine, or a sewing-machine, or a reaping machine, or something, and he went away and presently he came back and said he'd done it."

This happy repartee pleased him so much that he repeated it twice, and then sat down and thought it over with intentness.

"Why," he said to himself, reasoning as a Christian of the highest principle, "man was told to stand out of the reach of temptation, and if I were to meet that man, I might be tempted to knock him on the head. If it wasn't for Holstius and Wattles I would knock him on the head.

But to kill a fellow for other fellows to reap the advantage of, it doesn't seem quite worth while. Still, there's the temptation, and I oughtn't to go anigh of it. As for searching for him, again. Where am I to look for him? Am I to land on every island and pass the word for Cap'en Armiger? Naked black savages don't know about Cap'en Armiger. Ate him up, no doubt, long ago. Am I to put up a signal at every port for Cap'en Armiger? Do these ignorant natives know a signal when they see one? Very well, then. This Norweegee is all the bigger fool."

As for the allegory of the cat again. He was himself the cat. Pleasant thing for a man of his position to be compared to the cat which led the way over the Falls and was smashed and never returned again! Work that thing out as much as you please, and it always came to this, that he, Nick Borlinder, was to go out first, get devoured by the cannibals, and never get back again.

Then the Yankee, himself out of the way, would try another way.

"I sha'n't go at all," he murmured. "Yah! for cheating and dishonesty give me a Yankee! I shall pretend to have been there!"

"As for finding him," he went on with his meditations, "it's a thousand to one that you don't light on the island where he put foot ashore; and if you do find him, a million to one at least that he's dead—and all the journey, with the expense of it, for nothing.

"To say nothing of risk and danger. Shipwreck: I suppose that goes for nothing. Fever: I suppose we needn't reckon that. Oh, no, certainly not. Sunstroke: that never kills in tropical climates, does it? Oh, no; don't reckon that. Natives: they're a mild and dovelike race, ain't they? Everybody knows that! Don't reckon natives."

It was, after all, very well to propose a pretended voyage, but what would the Yankee do? And what did he really mean about the cat and the india-rubber ball?

This doubt puzzled him not a little. The plan he proposed to himself was simple—beautiful in its simplicity. But he could not help feeling that his American cousin had some other and some deeper plan, by means of which he would himself be circumvented and anticipated.

Nothing more disturbs the crafty and subtle serpent, or more fills him with

virtuous indignation, than the suspicion that his brother serpent is more crafty and more subtle than himself.

Everybody knows how the two burglars, friends in private but strangers in profession, met one night in the same house, proposing independent research.

His plan involved no expense, no danger, no possible privations. It was nothing more nor less than to wait awhile, and then to present himself with the report of a pretended voyage.

At first he thought he would so far give in to the outward seeming of things as to get a substitute to take command of his ship for a certain space, spending that time on shore in some secluded spot. This plan, however, involved a considerable amount of expense, with the necessity of much explanation to his employers. It therefore seemed to him best to go on just the same—to take his ship from the London Docks to Cadiz as usual, and back again, to give Rotherhithe a wide berth, and then, after a certain decent interval, to present himself at Seven Houses with a narrative.

Seven weeks to Hong-Kong, seven weeks back, eight weeks for the search—say six months in all.

Having roughly drawn out his plan of action, and considered in broad outlines the leading features of the narrative, Captain Borlinder purchased a few sheets of paper, on which to set down the account of his voyage, which he intended should be a masterly performance. He then, without waiting for the Christmas festivities, though nigh at hand—and no such pudding anywhere as at Rydquist's—presented himself at Rotherhithe to take farewell before he started on his long and dangerous journey.

This haste to redeem his promise could not fail, he thought, of producing a favourable impression.

He carried a red pocket-handkerchief, as if that contained all the luggage required for a hardy mariner even with such a journey before him. He had tied a string, with a jack-knife at the end of it, round his waist, like a common sailor. He had a profoundly shiny hat, and his face was set to an expression of as deep sympathy as he could command.

"I know," he said in his lowest tones, "that to look for Cap'en Armiger in the Eastern Seas will very likely be a mighty tough job; but I've passed my word to tackle that job, and when Nick Borlinder's

word is passed to do a thing, that thing has got to be done, or the reason why is asked, pretty quick. Same as if I was in command of my own ship. For, sez to myself, before ever the Norweegees up and spoke, or the Yankee pretended to have meant it—but I am slow to speak, though amazing quick to think—I sez, 'What we three men have got to do in this business is to look after Lal's happiness.' That I sez after you read that most affecting letter, before the talk begun, and speaking in a whisper, as a man might say, down his baccy-pipe. 'Nothin' else consarns us now. It is that which we have to look after. The way to look after it is to make quite sure that Cap'en Armiger is gone, and the way he went, and where his remains remain; or else, if he is not gone, but he still alive-and-kicks, wherever that may be, then to bring him home.'

"Thank you, Captain Borlinder," said Lal, thinking that the Patriarch's dislike to this good and disinterested man was founded on prejudice; and, indeed, the meaning was quite plain, though the language was a little mixed.

"There's a many islands in the Eastern Seas," continued Nicolas the Brave. "I've been looking at them in the charts. There's thousands of islands—say ten thousand, little and big. Say every one of those islands has to be searched. If we give a month to each island all round, counting little and big, that will make close upon nine hundred years. If it's only a fortnight, four hundred years. What's four hundred years to a determined man? I shall search among them islands, if it's four hundred or nine hundred years, till I find him."

"But this will cost a great deal, Captain Borlinder, I am afraid."

"Never mind about the cost," he replied grandly. "If it was ten times as much I'd never grudge it. We will say good-bye now. Perhaps I shall come home, with news, in a year, or even less. Perhaps it may be forty years before I come home again. Perhaps I shall bring him home in a few months, well and hearty; perhaps in about fifty years, with never a tooth to his head. But never you fear. Pluck up. Say to yourself: 'Nick Borlinder, as never puts his hand to nothing but he carries that thing through, has got this job in hand.' Perhaps I may come with news that you don't want. But there—we will not talk of that. If I never come home at all, but get, maybe, devoured

by sharks, cannibals, and alligators, besides being struck with sunstroke, fever, rheumatics, and other illnesses, and knocked on the head with clubs, and shot with poisoned arrows, so that there's an end, then, Lal, you will perhaps begin to think kind of a man who loved you so dear, that he went all that way alone to look for Cap'en Armiger, also with the Lord. For women never know the value of a man until he's gone."

This said, he shook hands, wagging his head mournfully, but smiting his chest as if to repress the gloomy forebodings of his soul, and the manly sobs that choked further utterance.

Captain Holstius also went away, and Captain Wattles, who made no further allusion to the letter or the pledge he had made, also returned to Liverpool, whither, he said, business called him.

Then Lal was left alone with the letter of Rex to read and read again, and she never doubted that Captain Borlinder, true to his word, was on his way to the far East, to begin the search for her lost lover.

One man, however, doubted very much, but in a vague way. It was the Patriarch.

"Lal, my pretty," he said, "I mistrust two of them three chaps—the Yankee first, and Nick Borlinder next. As to Cap'en Wattles, he's told me over and over again that he wants to get back to the Pacific. It isn't hunting for Cap'en Armiger will take him back there. And as for Cap'en Borlinder, it's my opinion, my dear, that he means to make a voyage there and a voyage back, whereby to clear the cobwebs from his brain and the wrinkles from his eyes, and to gain experience. What then? Will either of them bring him back? Do they want him back? Think, my dear. No; they want him dead. The more dead he is the better they will be pleased. And if I was Cap'en Armiger, my pretty, and I was to see either of them brave master-mariners sailing up a creek with no one else in sight, I would sit snug or I would prepare for a fight. My dear, they may talk, but they don't want him back! The only man who means honest is the Norweege. As for him, he loves the very ground you tread upon, and I think he'd rather be your father than your husband, which, to be sure, was never a sailor's way when I was young; and that, my dear, is seventy, and soon will be eighty years ago: which proves the Fifth Commandment and shows how much I honoured my father

and my mother—all the more because I never saw neither of them since ten years old."

Captain Borlinder, dropping down the river on his next voyage, passed the Commercial Docks with a light and jocund heart. He was about to earn the gratitude of the girl he loved at a cheap rate, namely, at the cost of remaining out of her sight on the next occasion of his return to the Port of London. His love was not of that ardent and absorbing kind which prevents a man from feeling happy unless he is in the presence of the object of his affections. Quite the contrary. Captain Borlinder was happier away from the young lady, because conversation with her was carried on under considerable constraint. Once safely married, that constraint, he felt, would be removed, and expressions, now carefully guarded, might be again freely used. If a married man's house is not his own quarter-deck, what is it? thought the captain, who, despite the culture of many centuries and the religion of his ancestors, retained the ideas of marital authority common among primitive men. He is now married, however, though not to Lal, and has learned to think quite otherwise.

The weather was favourable across the Bay, and with all sail set, a rolling sea, and a fresh breeze, the Captain stood aft and began to consider the shaping of his narrative.

He was a good hand at a yarn. But then to write a yarn is, if you please, much more difficult than to spin one. The pen is a slow, tedious instrument. We want, in fact, something more rapid with which to interpret our thoughts. While we are painfully setting down one thing, the next, equally important, escapes us and is forgotten.

Captain Borlinder felt this, and therefore, very wisely, resolved upon not writing anything until he had thoroughly mastered the whole story and told it to himself half-a-dozen times over. Thus great novelists, I believe, get the whole of their situations clearly in their mind, with the grouping of the characters, before writing a word. And it would be an admirable plan if certain lady novelists would also follow the Captain's method, and write nothing before they are almost word-perfect with their story.

His crew were amazed at the behaviour of their skipper, both outward and homeward

bound. For he paced the quarter-deck all day long, gazing at sky and sea. He struck strange attitudes; he shook his head; he swore at himself sometimes; he left the navigation of the ship to the mate; he seemed to be perpetually repeating words.

These things were strange. He was not drunk. He even seemed to drink less than usual; and, if he had got a touch of "horrors," as sometimes happens to sailors after a spell ashore, they were manifested in a most unusual manner.

On the voyage to Cadiz and back the Captain restricted himself to mental composition. We all know how difficult it is to describe a place which you have never seen. One would like to see a competitive young man's description, say of Rotherhithe, which nobody but myself has ever visited. That difficulty is, of course, lessened when your readers are equally ignorant, but immensely increased by the consideration that perhaps they know the place.

Now, certainly Lal had not seen any of the islands of Micronesia, or Polynesia. The contemplation of the chart whereon the countless islands of the Pacific lie dotted among the coral-reefs, the shoals, and atolls of that great sea, only filled her mind with vague thoughts of palm-trees, soft winds, and brown natives. In those seas sailed the ships she had heard of, the whalers, the schooners trading from island to island. On those dots of dry land lived men, of whom she had heard, who had grown grey in these latitudes, who cared no more to return to England, who had learned native ways and native customs. Though Lal had never travelled, she knew a great deal more than Captain Borlinder, and it might be embarrassing for him to be asked questions arising out of her superior knowledge.

Again, there was Captain Zachariassen. Nobody knew where that old man had not been in his long life of sixty years' sailing upon the sea. In his garrulous way, he laid claim to a knowledge of every port under the sun. Now, supposing he had actually visited the place fixed on by himself for the scene of Captain Armiger's exile and death. This, too, would be embarrassing.

It is true that Nick Borlinder was not one of those who place truth among the highest duties of mankind, but rather considered the search for enjoyment, in all its branches, as a duty immensely superior,

and, indeed, a duty to be ranked foremost among those imposed on suffering humanity. Yet the worst of lying is that you have got to be consistent in order to be believed. Random lying helps no man. It is a mere amusement, a display of cleverness, intellectual fireworks, the indulgence of imagination. The story, therefore, must be constructed in accordance, somehow, with possible facts.

The romancer had provided himself, not only with a few sheets of paper but with a map, and over this he pored continually, seeking a likely spot for the scene of his Fabulous History. But it was not till his second return voyage that he found himself so far advanced with the story as to begin committing it to writing.

It is interesting to record further that the Captain on returning to London sought a bookseller's shop, and enquired after any work which treated of the Eastern Seas. He obtained a second-hand copy of an old book—I think by Captain Mundy—and then learned that the island of New Guinea, which he easily found on the map, was entirely unknown, and had hardly ever been visited. He therefore resolved to make New Guinea the scene of Rex Armiger's landing. At all events, Captain Zachariassen would be unable to put him to shame in the matter of New Guinea.

He made three voyages to and from Cadiz, bringing home a vast quantity of sherry, Portugal plums, raisins, oranges, and other things, and taking out I know not what, except that what he took out was not worth so much as what he brought home. And as this appears to be the case with every ship which leaves a British port, we must be working our way gaily through the national savings, and shall all very shortly take refuge in the national workhouse, so that the dreams of the Socialist will be realised, and all shall be on the same level. This is a very delightful prospect to contemplate, and the position of things reflects the highest credit on both sides of the House.

It was on October the fourteenth, eighteen hundred and seventy-nine, that Dick the Malay came back and told his tale. It was in December following that the Doctor of the Aryan brought the message from the sea. On January the second, Captain Borlinder took his farewell, and sallied forth on that desperate quest to the Eastern Seas, the description of which was written between Cadiz and London.

No news came to Rotherhithe all the

winter. The Aryan returned, and the Doctor came to say that the Company were making enquiries among the ships trading with the islands for news of a white man cast away upon one of them. No news had yet been received.

It was the eighth day of June, in the year eighteen hundred and eighty, that Captain Borlinder returned from the East.

He bore in his hand the same red silk pocket-handkerchief with which he had started, he wore the same blue clothes, in the same state of preservation, because they were his best; the same rough fur cap.

He presented himself in the kitchen because it was in the forenoon, and Lal was engaged in her usual occupation—namely, the daily pudding. The Patriarch as usual sat in the armchair sound asleep.

She dropped her work and turned pale, seeing that he was alone.

"Alone!" she cried.

"Alone," he answered in the deepest and most sepulchral notes which his voice contained. "Alone," he repeated. "I have been a long voyage, and have come back—alone. But not empty-handed. No; I have brought you news. Yes; bad news, I grieve to say."

She sat down and folded her hands, prepared for the worst.

"Go on," she said; "tell me what you have to tell."

At this juncture, Captain Zachariasen awoke and rubbed his eyes.

"Ho! ho!" he said; "here's one of them come back. Well, I thought he would be the first. What cheer, mate?"

"Bad," replied the traveller.

"Where's Cap'en Armiger?"

Captain Borlinder pointed upwards, following the direction of his finger with one eye, as if that eye of faith could readily discern Rex among the angels.

"I thought he'd say that; I told you so, Lal, my dear. Keep your pluck up, and go tell Cap'en Holstius and Cap'en Wattles. They must hear the news too."

"They here?"

Captain Borlinder changed colour. He had not thought of this possibility.

"In this very house, both of them," replied the Patriarch. "Cap'en Wattles he's been backwards and forwards between Liverpool and New York and London all the time, with his business, and Cap'en Holstius, he's just brought to port as fine a cargo of white deal as you ever see. Yes, they're both about."

At this point they entered and shook hands.

"And now," continued the old man, "let us be comfortable. Keep your pecker up, Lal, my dear, and give me a pipe. So I told you what he would say, Lal. What a thing it is to have the wisdom of four score! Now, my hearty, pay it out."

"I have set down on paper," Captain Borlinder began, "a Narrative—ahem!—a Narrative of my adventures since started to find Cap'en Armiger. If you please, I will read my Narrative."

He lugged his precious manuscript out of his pocket, unrolled it, coughed solemnly and began to read it.

"Stop," interrupted the Patriarch; "do you try Moreton Bay?"

"No, I did not."

Captain Zachariasen shook his head mournfully.

"Go on, my lad, go on," he sighed; "I doubt it's no good."

"Now, Venerable, keep your oar out," said Captain Borlinder impatiently. "You and your Moreton Bay! Lemme go on."

He looked round him half ashamed at reading his own literary effort, spread the manuscript upon his knees, flattening it out, and smoothing down the dog's ear. Then he began. He was, unfortunately unacquainted with the rules of punctuation, so that his reading was hardly up to the Third Standard, the point at which, believe, most school children stop. But the matter was clear and precise, so that the manner mattered little.

"I set sail," he said, "on January the third from Southampton aboard the P. and O. steamer *Batavia*, bound for Singapore, a second-class passenger.

"We navigated the Bay of Biscay, the weather being fine and the sea smooth. We had light showers and a breeze off Malta. We passed through the Canal and down the Red Sea—the weather being warm for the time of year, but cloudy with much rain—to Aden. From Aden we sailed in a furious gale of wind to Point de Galle, and from Galle with fair breeze and a smooth sea to Singapore, where we brought up all standing six weeks after leaving Southampton.

"At Singapore I began to look about me, making enquiries, but asking no questions for fear of arousing suspicion."

"What suspicion?" asked Captain Zachariasen.

The reader hesitated. Then he read the passage over again.

"For fear of arousing suspicion."

It was a phrase he had encountered somewhere or other in a somewhat limited course of reading, and he set it down, thinking that it sounded rather well.

"What suspicion?"

"If you don't keep your oar out," he answered, "we shall never get along."

"What suspicion?" repeated Captain Zachariasen. "Suspicion that you wanted to make away with the lad when you found him?"

"If you was five-and-forty years younger, my Patriarch," returned the traveller, "I'd let you know what suspicion. Now, Lal, if you'll believe me, my suspicion was that some one else beside me might tackle this job, and so spile it. I wanted it finished off workmanlike. So I cast about. Hold your old jaw, will you?"

He murmured something more in his throat which rumbled and echoed about the room like suppressed thunder.

"First, I went around the public-houses and hung about the bars." Captain Zachariasen grunted. "But nothing could I learn. Then I sat upon the wharf and went about the shipping. Mighty civil, well-spoken skippers they were, as a rule, but they could tell me nothing, though some of them knew the Philippine, and one or two remembered Cap'en Armiger. It will be a comfort to you, Lal, to reflect that they all spoke well of him as a good sailor, who could carry his drink like a man." Here Captain Zachariasen again grunted. "So I saw what I had all along suspected, that I should have to go upon the search myself. First, therefore, I picked up such information as a man can come by as to the currents and the winds. This done, I laid down the supposed course of the boat, with such winds and such currents, on the chart. Now, you must know that Cap'en Armiger made a great mistake. So far from the current being N.E., and the wind S.W., the current sets in strong S.W. And the prevalent wind, less it's a monsoon or a cyclone, is S.W. too. What the devil are you grunting at now?" This to Captain Zachariasen, who was making this sign again.

"Go on, my lad. Go on heavin'. Sooner we get to the bottom of the page, the better."

"Very well, then. Grunt and—— I beg your pardon, Lal. He's enough to make a bishop swear. Where was I? Oh! a cyclone, in S.W. too. What did I do

then? Laid down on the map the place where that boat would likely make the land, and then I cast about to get a ship which would land me on that very identical spot. Sure enough there was a boat in harbour just about to sail."

"What trade might she have been in?" asked the Patriarch.

"Coal trade," he replied promptly. "I took a passage, bargained to be disembarked and called for again in three weeks' time, and we set sail. Beautiful sailing it is in those seas, and one of these winter evenings, Lal, when you and me have got nothing to do, I will tell you such yarns of they islands as will make you long for to go there yourself. Our course was south of Borneo, and so into the narrow seas, through the Macassar Straits, north of Celebes and Gillolo, and so along the north-west of New Guinea, where I'd made up my mind to find Cap'en Armiger. If you've got a chart anywhere about, any of you, you might follow."

"Never mind the chart, my lad," said Captain Zachariasen; "go on."

"Nobody, before me and Cap'en Armiger, had ever landed on that desolate coast. They set me ashore with six foot or so of baccy, a pipe, a box of lucifers, a bottle of rum, a gun, and a small fishing-net. That, I thought, would be enough to carry me along for a spell, while I made my enquiries.

"I found the natives black but friendly. They appeared not to be cannibals. They greatly admired my appearance and manners. They invited me to stay among them with the gun and be their king. And, although I was obliged to refuse, they were civil, and answered all my questions to the best of their capacities, which are naturally limited."

Another grunt.

"After a bit I discovered that I had not been mistaken in my conclusions. Three years before, or thereabouts, because you cannot expect naked savages to be as accurate as us truth-telling Christians, a white man and a Malay had been washed ashore in an open boat.

"Directly I heard that I pricked up my ears. There might have been two different white men come ashore in an open boat, but not two pairs of white man and Malay man. That seemed impossible. So I up and enquired at once where they were.

"They told me that at landing there was a fight, but that they were taken up-country after the fight with their arms

bound to their sides." Here Captain Borlinder stopped. "You remember, Venerable," he said, "how you interpreted that scrimmage shown by the dumb man? You were quite right."

The Venerable grunted again.

"Of course," the discoverer resumed, "I made haste to find out which way they were taken, and it was not long before I started following their track, led by a native boy who knew the country well, having been born and brought up there."

"Where were the rest of the natives born and brought up?" asked Captain Zachariassen. "Go on, brother. Reel it out."

"The first day——" Captain Borlinder turned suddenly pale, as if a weak point had been discovered in his armour, and went on reading rapidly. "The first day we made five-and-twenty miles, as near as I could reckon, going in a bee-line across country, over hills and valleys where lions, bears, tigers, hyenas, leopards, elephants, and hippopotamuses roamed free, seeking whom they may devour; cross rivers where crocodiles sat with open jaws snapping at the people as they passed by."

"It is hot, I suppose, in these latitudes?" said Captain Zachariassen.

"Hottish," replied the traveller. "I was given to understand that it was their summer. Hottish, walking. Made a man relish his rum and water. And I found a pint of cold water with a jack-towel refreshing on a Saturday night. The next day we made thirty knots of sandy desert, where there were camels and ostriches, and never a drop of water to make a cup of tea with. The third day we crossed a mountain, twenty-five thousand feet high, on the sides of which were bears, wolves, and pemmican. From the summit we obtained a splendid view right across the China Seas, and with my glass I could easily make out Hong-Kong."

"On the fourth day, after doing thirty miles good, and living for a week on the bark of trees and wild roots, we passed through a thick forest inhabited solely by monkeys and snakes, after which we emerged upon a town, the like of which I had never expected to find in the heart of New Guinea. It appeared to consist of a million and a half of people, as near as I could learn. They go dressed in white cotton knee-breeches and turbans; they smoke cigarettes and drink Jamaica rum; their manners are pleasant and their ways hospitable.

"As soon as they saw that a white man had arrived, they flocked round me and began to ask questions. These I satisfied to the best of my power and requested to be taken to the king. They led me, or rather carried me, shouting along the streets to the Royal Palace, which is a trifle bigger than the Crystal Palace, and all made of solid gold.

"The king is a young man, who wears his crown both day and night. He is always surrounded by his guards, and has to be approached on bended knees.

"After the usual compliments, he invited me to tell him what I came for.

"I replied that I was sent by the most beautiful girl in Rotherhithe—at this he seemed pleased, and said he wished she had come herself—in order to discover what had become of her sweetheart, named Rex Armiger, wrecked upon his majesty's coast in the year 1876.

"I confess that I felt sorry, when I had put the question, but then I had come all the way on purpose to put it. For the king and all his courtiers immediately burst into tears.

"I then learned the whole story.

"Cap'en Armiger had, in fact, landed on this shore, as I expected and calculated. He had been separated from his steward Dick in a scrimmage on the coast, and had been brought inland to be presented as a captive to the king. At the court he made himself at once a great favourite, being a good shot, which pleased his majesty, and a good dancer, which pleased the ladies. He lived three years with them in great favour with everybody, and at the end, though this you will hardly credit, engaged to be married to the king's sister, being by that time in despair of ever getting away.

"Unfortunately, only the week before I arrived, he was killed and devoured by a lion, and the princess was gone off her royal chump.

"I am truly sorry to be the bearer of such bad news, Lal. You will own that I done my best.

"The rest of my log, how I got away, and how I came here again, would not interest you now. You will, perhaps, like to hear them yarns in the long winter evenings when we have got nothing else to do.

"As for poor Cap'en Armiger, I brought away with me one relic of him—the last cap he ever wore. The king sent it to you by my hands. He said a great many civil

things about my courage in coming all that way to find my friend, and I had to promise to go back again. However, that is nothing. Here, then, is Cap'en Armiger's cap—the cap of the Company."

He untied the handkerchief and took out a cap with a gold band and a couple of anchors in silver embroidery upon the front. It was a uniform cap, that of the Indian Peninsular Company.

Lal received it, and turned it over in her hand, but with some doubt, stimulated by Captain Zachariassen's grunts.

The old man reached out his hand for the cap, examined it carefully, tried it on his own head, and grunted again.

"What are you grunting for now?" asked Captain Borlinder in great uneasiness.

"Gentlemen," said Captain Zachariassen to the other two, "tell me what you think?"

Captain Holstius made answer, like the country gentleman who read Gulliver's Travels, that he did not believe a word of it. And why? Because, no one who had read accounts of those latitudes could reconcile Captain Borlinder's Narrative with the tales of other travellers.

Captain Wattles shook his head.

"Coarse work," he said. "Very common, and coarse work."

Upon this Captain Borlinder lost his temper, and behaved like an officer of his rank when in a rage upon his own quarter-deck.

"You shouldn't ha' thought, brother," said the old man, holding out the cap and examining it with contempt, "that a man of fourscore and odd could be taken in by such a clumsy jemmy as yourn. I'd ha' spun a better yarn myself, by chalks. Two things shall set you right. First, my lad, this cap, which, I suppose, you bought on your way in Houndsditch, is the cap of a boy of thirteen, a midshipmite. Now, Cap'en Armiger, like me, had a big head. We may toss the cap into the fire, Lal, my pretty, because it isn't your sweetheart's cap, and never was." He did toss it into the fire, where it was immediately consumed, all except the gold lace which twisted into all shapes. "Look at him!"

he added. "Sails in gaily with a boy's cap in one hand and a yard and half of lies, made up Lord knows where, in the other. Another thing." Captain Borlinder at this juncture, because he had in, fact, bought that cap in Houndsditch, presented every appearance of discomfiture. "When he

landed among the blacks, all alone, what language did he talk with them? English? He knows no other. What do you say, Cap'en Wattles?"

"Coarse work. Coarse and clumsy work."

Captain Borlinder replied in general terms, and endeavouring to bluster it out, that this was hard for a man to bear, this was, after going through all he had gone through.

But here Captain Wattles gave him the coup de grâce.

"I can tell all of you where that precious Narrative was written. For I made it my business to enquire at the London Docks. He has been all the time aboard his ownship, and he has made three voyages to Cadiz and back since January. If you doubt, go and ask his people."

This was an unexpected one. Captain Borlinder reeled.

Then Lal rose in her wrath.

"Go!" she cried. "You are not fit to be under the same roof with honest people. Go, impudent liar! Oh, that men can be so wicked. He has kept my Rex for six long months more in his captivity. Go! let us never see your face again."

She clenched her hands and pointed to the door with as threatening a gesture as Medea might have employed.

Captain Borlinder hastened to obey. He crammed the narrative in his pocket, and his fur cap upon his head, and walked forth, saying never a word. And although he has never since set foot upon the southern shores of the Port of London, I think he still sometimes feels over again the humiliation of that moment.

"And now," said Captain Wattles, "it is my turn. We have lost more than six months, it is true. I have settled all my business, and I have got command of a ship which trades among the islands, a Sydney schooner. I meant to tell you this to-day, not expecting to find this—this lying lubber here. Why, there ain't a lad of ten in the States that wouldn't put together a better story than that. Coarse and clumsy work."

CHAPTER VIII. THE QUEST OF CAPTAIN WATTLES.

THE next turn, therefore, fell to Captain Wattles. He, for his part, took leave in a quiet and business-like manner, making no protestations.

"I shall be," he said, "off and on about the Carolines, where we expect to find him.

He is not in the regular track of the traders, else you would have heard from him. He is on none of the islands touched for pearl and *bêche de mer*—that we may be quite certain of; therefore, I shall try at those places which are seldom visited. If I find him, good; if not, I will let you know. I don't pretend to waste my time in looking for a man and nothing else; I am going to trade on my own account, and look about me the while. News runs from island to island in an astonishing way, and we shall likely hear about him. That's all I have to say, Miss Lal, and here's my hand upon it. Barnabas, the Son of Consolation, will act up to his name." So he, too, disappeared.

Then, for a while, the house resumed its usual aspect, and things went on as before. A letter came in due course from Captain Wattles. He had arrived at Sydney and was preparing for departure. Then no more letters.

The time passed slowly. Captain Holstius was away with his ship. The life and light seemed to have gone from the girl. Only the old man was left to cheer her continually, and Dick to raise her courage.

"I shall live, Lal, my dear," he said, "to see Cap'en Armiger come home again. I have no doubt of that; and, pretty, I've been thinking about the mummicker and the end of his story. Somehow, I doubt whether it wasn't him, and not the Cap'en they took off to prison. I wish I could trust that Yankee chap; he's worse than the other. Now, if the Norweegee could go——"

As for Barnabas, there was something in his cold and quiet way which impressed those who made his acquaintance. Such men, when they are on the right side, make good generals; when they are on the wrong, they provide the picturesque element of history. Thus in the sixteenth century he would have been invaluable as a buccaneer, being full of courage and as cool as a melon; also, under favourable conditions, he might have developed a fine religious fanaticism, under the influence of which he would have hated a Spaniard and a Papist more than even Sir Walter Raleigh hated him. In the seventeenth century he would have found scope as a pirate, with Madagascar, the West-Indian and Floridan Keys, the harbours of Eastern Africa, and nearly all the ports of South America for refuge; and the navies of the world, with the rich galleons of Spain, and the East-

Indiamen of England, for his booty; and all the rogues and murderers afloat, actual or possible, longing to become part of his crew. In the eighteenth century the trade of pirate fell into disrepute, by reason of the singularly disagreeable end which happened to many of its followers. Happily, that of privateer took its place. In the present century, men like Barnabas B. Wattles have gone filibustering; have carried black cargoes from the West Coast across the Atlantic; and have gone blockade-running to Charleston and Galveston. All these exciting pursuits have come to an end; and there would seem, at first sight, little for a sailor to find ready for a willing hand to do, except perfectly legal pursuits.

There is not much. Still, there is always something. A man may carry Chinese coolies to Trinidad, Peru, or Cuba. Under what pretences he inveighs them aboard, what promises he makes them, and how much he gets for each, no one, outside the trade, which is a limited company, knows or can discover. You might sooner hope to learn the secrets of the Royal Arch. Again, you may ship coolies for Réunion. They are British subjects, but they are taken on board at Pondicherry, which is a French settlement. And the like mystery surrounds each transaction in Hindoo flesh. Lastly, there is a delightful pastime still carried on in Polynesia, known as the Labour Traffic. Opinions differ as to the beneficial results of a few years of cooliedom in Queensland. For whereas some authorities say that the Polynesian learns the blessings of second-hand reach-me-downs, with a smattering of Christianity, with which to astonish his relatives, the Browns, on his return; others declare that the extra garments are discarded as soon as he lands, the rudiments of the Christian faith forgotten, and only the taste for rum remains. I know not which is right, because in order to decide the point, one ought to live along with native Polynesians, or with Australian colonists, in order to hear both sides of the question, and no controversialist has as yet done that. One thing, however, is quite certain, that the coolies embark for various reasons, among which no one has as yet pretended to find a desire to toil on the Queensland cotton and sugar estates. Toil of any kind is, indeed, the last thing which these children of Equatorial Pacific desire. Rest is what they love, or, if any exercise, then a languid swim in tepid waters, a dance in the evening, and the joyous cup.

Now to ship these innocents and to bring them to the market where they may be hired is a profitable, albeit a dangerous, pursuit.

It is never a fault of the American adventurer that he too carefully considers the danger. Where there are dollars to be picked up there is generally danger. The round earth may be mapped out in different belts of fertility, so far as dollars are concerned. Where they most abound and may most readily be gathered there is such a crowd, with so much fighting and struggling, or there are so many perils from climate, crocodiles, settlers, snakes, natives, and sharks, that it is only the brave man who ventures thither, and only the strong man who comes home in safety, bringing with him the treasures he has fought for. Barnabas B. Wattles was brave and strong, and he knew the islands of old, where he had sojourned, though certainly not, as we have once heard him state, as a missionary. He now saw his way to a neat stroke of business combined with love. He would prove, not clumsily, as did his rival, but prove beyond a doubt, the death of Rex Armiger. Then he would return, carry off the girl with the money, which he supposed belonged to her, forgetting the existence of Mrs. Rydquist, and get back to America, where he knew of a certain dry dock, to possess which was the dream of his soul. It may be also stated that he firmly believed that the man was dead, and to find Rex Armiger alive was the last thing which he expected.

Yet this, as you will see, was exactly what he did find.

He took command of his trading schooner, loaded her with the things which Polynesians love, such as gaudy cottons, powder, tobacco, rum, and strong perfumes, and set sail.

It is not my purpose to follow the voyage of the *Fair Maria* across the Pacific Ocean, nor to tell of the various adventures which befell her Captain, and the trade he did. Wherever he touched he made enquiries, but could hear nothing of a young white man cast ashore in an open boat. No one knew or had heard of any such jetsam.

At last he began to think his search would lead to nothing, and that all trace of the man was lost. This he regretted, because he was unfeignedly anxious to send home or bring home proofs of his death; so anxious that he had grown perfectly certain that Rex was dead.

It came to pass, however, after many days that he sighted an island, an outlying member of a group at which he knew that traders never touch, because it was too small a place for trade and lay out of the usual track.

It is very well known that a large number of the Caroline Islands are composed of certain coral formations called atolla. These consist of a round ring of rock just appearing above the surface, enclosing a shallow lagoon, whose diameter varies from a few yards to a hundred miles, in which lie islands, some of them large islands with hills, streams, and splendid woods of cocoa-palm, bread-fruit, durian, and pandang; whose islanders lead, or would lead if they knew how, delightful lives in fishing in their smooth waters, eating the fruits which Heaven sends, and doing no kind of work. Others there are, small atolls with small lagoons, whose islets are mere rocks on which grow nothing but the universal pandang, the screw palm, which serves the people for everything. Such was this. It was too insignificant even to have a name; it was distant about two hundred miles from the group of which it might be supposed to be a member; it was simply laid down on the chart as a "shoal," and had, perhaps, never been visited by any ship since its first discovery.

Moved by some impulse, perhaps, a mere curiosity as to the capabilities of trade and the possibility of pearls, Captain Wattles steered towards this low-lying land.

When his boat lay upon the shallow waters within the reef he found a group of the inhabitants of the principal islet gathered upon the beach. They were of the brown Polynesian race, and were apparently preparing for a hostile reception.

Among them stood, passive, a man almost as brown as themselves, but with fair hair and blue eyes. He was a white man; he was a young white man; he was evidently no common beach-comber; and Captain Wattles immediately recognised, without any doubt, the man of whom he was in search. He was dressed in rags; the sleeves were torn from his jacket and his bare arms were tattooed; his trousers had lost most of their legs; he wore some kind of sandals made of the pandang leaf; his beard was long, his hair was hanging in an unkempt mass; his head was protected from the sun by an ingenious

arrangement of another leaf of the same tree. It could be no other than Rex Armiger.

A strange feeling, akin to pity, seized on Captain Wattles. He repressed it, as unworthy of himself. But he did at first feel pity for him.

The white man stood among the natives, afraid to excite their suspicion by running before them to meet the boat; yet his eagerness was visible in his attitude, in the trembling of his lips, in the way in which he looked upon the boat.

He carried a short lance in his hand like all the rest.

Captain Wattles rowed to within hailing distance of the shore. Then he stood up.

"White man, ahoy!"

The white man said something to his companions, and stepped forward, but in a leisurely manner, as if he was not at all anxious to speak the boat.

He came to the water's edge and sat down.

"I am an Englishman," he said, speaking slowly, because he was speaking a language he had not used for three years. "I am an Englishman. My name is Armiger. I was the Captain of the Indian Peninsular ship *Philippine*, wrecked on a shoal three years or so ago. I have been living since among these people."

"Do you know their lingo?"

"Yes."

"Then tell them I am harmless and I want to row nearer land."

Rex turned to the men and addressed them in their own language.

They all sat down and waited.

"You may come nearer," he said; "but make no movement that may alarm them, and do not attempt to land. They are suspicious since two years ago a ship came down from the Ladrone Islands and kidnapped twenty of them, including a Malay, cast away with me."

Here then was the interpretation of Dick's second pantomimic fight. He did not escape, he was kidnapped. How he got away from the Ladrone Islands, how he found his way to England, remains a matter hitherto undiscovered.

Captain Wattles brought up his boat within a few yards of the beach, but in deep water, holding his men in readiness to give way.

Sitting in the stern he was able to talk freely with Rex, who stood at the very edge of the water waiting for an opportunity to leap on board.

"So," said Captain Wattles, "you are Cap'en Armiger, are you?"

Rex was astonished at the salutation.

"Why? Do you know me?"

"You see I know your name, stranger. I confess I am sorry to find you. I thought you were dead. I hardly calculated that I'd find you, though I certainly did promise to keep one eye open for you."

"What promise?" asked Rex.

"I promised—— We'll come to that directly. Now, what are those black devils dancing about for?"

The natives had jumped to their feet, and were now shaking clubs and spears in a threatening way.

"They want my assurance," Rex said, "that you are not a black-birder."

"Honest trading schooner," replied Captain Wattles. "Tell them they may come aboard and see for themselves. What have they got to sell?"

"What should we have on this little island? We live on kabobo. Do you want to buy any? What is your name?"

"Barnabas B. Wattles, Cap'en of the *Fair Maria*, lying yonder. Guess you'd like to be aboard her. Well, business first. Let's trade something. Got no turtle?"

"No."

"No bêche de mer? No copra?"

"We have nothing."

"Very well, then," said Captain Wattles. "After business, pleasure. Mate, I guess you are tired of this gem of the sea—ah?"

"So tired," replied Rex Armiger, "that if you had not turned up I believe I should have made a raft out of the pandang leaves and tried my luck."

"Then I'm devilish glad we came," said Captain Wattles. "The more so as I have a little bargain to propose before you come aboard my craft."

"Any bargain that's fair."

"I guess this is quite fair and honourable," the Captain went on. "You have been a beach-comber upon this island for nigh upon three years. Three years is a long time. The gell you were in love with has likely got tired of waiting. Your name is wrote off the books; your ship is long since posted; your friends have put on mourning for you——"

"What's the good of so much talk?" interrupted Rex. "I want to be taken off this island. What's your bargain?"

"Fair and easy, lad. Let me have my talk out." Captain Wattles looked at him with a curious expression. "Why, you are as good as dead already."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this. There's one or two men who would like you to be dead. I'm one of those. What's more, I ain't goin', for my part, to be the means of restoring you to life. No, sir. I don't exactly wish you dead, and yet I don't want to see you alive in England."

This was said with great decision.

Rex listened with amazement.

"What harm have I ever done to you, man?" he cried. "You wish me dead?"

"There's no use keeping secrets between us two," continued the strange trader. "Look here, three years ago, before you got command of the Philippine, you were in love with a certain young lady who lives at Rotherhithe."

"Go on. For God's sake, go on."

"That sweet young thing, sir, whom it's a privilege to know and a pride to fall in love with, peaked and pined more than a bit, thinkin' about you and wonderin' where you were."

"Poor Lal! dear Lal!"

"Yes, she was real faithful and kind-hearted, that gell. Her friends, and especially her mother, who takes a kind of pleasure in reckoning up the dead men she knows located at the bottom of the briny, gave you up. But she never gave you up. No, never."

"Poor Lal! dear Lal!"

The tears stood in the castaway's eyes as he sat and listened. Behind him the men of the island stood like wild beasts on the alert, waiting for the moment of flight or attack. And also like wild beasts, they were never certain whether to fly or to fight.

"No one like that gell, sir, no one," continued Captain Wattles; "which is all the more reason why other fellows want to cut in."

Rex began to understand.

"Among other fellows is myself, Barnabas B. Wattles. Very good. Now you see why I would rather hear that you were dead than alive, and why I'm darned disappointed to meet you here. However, you are on about as desolate a place as I know of, that's one comfort."

The fact brought no comfort to Rex, but quite the reverse.

"Mate, I want to tell you the whole story fair and above board. I will tell you no lies. Therefore, you may trust what I say. And first let me know how you came here, and all about it."

Rex told his story. It was all as Lal

had divined from Dick's action. They sighted the island, being then half dead with hunger, and with difficulty managed to paddle themselves ashore. They were seized by the natives, and a consultation was held as to whether they should be killed. They were spared.

Life on that island is necessarily simple. The people live entirely on kabobo, which is a sort of rough bread made of the pandang nut. They have no choice, because there is nothing else to live upon. It is the only tree that grows upon this lonely land. Kabobo is said to be wholesome, but it is monotonous.

Rex explained briefly that he had learned to talk with them, and won by slow degrees their confidence; that he had taught them a few simple things, and that he was regarded by them with some sort of affection; that, after a year's residence on the island, a ship came in sight, but did not anchor. That a boat put off, manned by an armed crew, who, when the people came down to meet them, half disposed to be friendly, attacked them, killed some, and carried off others, among whom was the Malay. This made them extremely suspicious. Since that event nothing had happened; nothing but the slow surge of the wave upon the reef and the sigh of the wind in the pandang trees.

"Now that you have come," Rex concluded, "you who know—her," he added cheerfully, though his heart was heavy in thinking of the bargain, "you will take me off this island—for her sake."

"For her sake?" echoed Captain Wattles. "Man alive! It is for her sake that I won't do no such a silly thing. No, sir. You understand that she thinks you're alive. Very good then. Bein' a faithful gell, she keeps her word with you. Once she knows you are dead, why, there will be a chance for another chap. And who so likely as the man who came all the way out here to discover that interestin' fact? See, pard?"

"Good God!" cried Rex. "Do you mean that you will leave me here and say I am dead?"

"That is exactly what I am coming to, Cap'n Armiger. I take it, sir, that you air a sensible man, and I have been told that you know better than most which way that head of yours is screwed on. You can understand what it is to be in love with that most beautiful creature. What you've got to do is to buy your freedom."

"How am I to buy my freedom?"

"I've thought of this meeting, sir"—this was a happy invention of the moment—"and I considered within myself what would be best. The easiest way out of it, the way most men would choose, would be to get up a little shindy with those brown devils there and to take that opportunity of dropping a bead into your vitals. That way, I confess, did seem to me, at first sight, the best. But why kill a man when you needn't? I know it's foolish, but I should like to go back to that young creature without thinking that she'd disapprove if she knew."

Rex sprang to his feet. The man who lay there in the stern of the boat, six feet from the shore, his head upon his hands, calmly explaining why he did not murder him, was going back to England to marry Lal—his Lal. To marry her! He threw up his arms and was speechless with rage and horror.

Behind him the savages stood grouped, waiting for any sign from him to fly or rush upon the strangers with their spears.

The day was perfectly calm, the sea was motionless in the land-locked water, and, in the calm and peace of the hot noonday, the words fell upon his brain like words one hears in a ghastly dream of the night.

"Yes," the man went on, "I want to do what is right, and this is my proposal, Cap'en Armiger. I know you can be trusted, because I've made enquiries. Some Englishmen can lie like Rooshans, but some can't. You, I am told, are one of that sort who can't. Promise me to drop your own name, not to go back to England for twenty years at least, never to let out that you are Rex Armiger, to stay in these seas, and I'll take you aboard my schooner and land you at Levuka or Honolulu, or wherever you please. Come, you may even go to Australia if you like. As for names, I'll lend you mine. You shall have the name of my brother, Jacob B. Wattles, now in Abraham's bosom. He won't mind, and if he does, it don't matter. As for work, there's plenty to get and plenty to do among these islands. There's the labour traffic; there's pearl-fishing; there's trading. You may live among them, marry among them, turn beach-comber for life; you may get to Fiji and run a plantation. Cap'en Armiger, if I were you, I would rather not go back.

"As for this place, now, I don't suppose a man grows to get a yearning for kabobo

for a permanence, and on this durned one-horse island there doesn't seem much choice outside the pandang tree. Likewise, those young gentlemen with their toothpicks are not quite the company you were brought up to, I reckon. Whereas, except for the missionaries, who spoil everything, I don't suppose there's better company to be got anywhere in this world than you'll find in this ocean when I land you on an island worth the name. At Honolulu, for instance, there's nobblers and champagne, and—— Wal, I'd rather live there, or in one or two other islands that I know, than anywhere in Europe or the States. And so would you, come to look at things rightly."

Rex still kept silence, pacing on the narrow beach.

"As for being dead, you've been dead for three years, so that can't be any objection. Why, man, I give you life; I resurrect you. Think of that!

"As for being altered, you are so changed that your own mother would not know you again. No fear of any old friends recognising you. And, so far as a few dollars go to start with, say the word and you shall have them, with a new rig-out."

Still Rex made no reply.

"There is my offer, plain and open. I'm sorry for you, Cap'en Armiger, I re'lly am, because she's out an' out the best set-up gell that walks. But two men can't both have her. And I mean to be the man that does—net you. And all is fair in love."

"And if I refuse your offer?"

"Then, Cap'en Armiger, you stay just where you now happen to be. And a most uncomfortable location. Now, sir, make no error. Since the day that you landed on this island, have you seen ary a sail on the sea? No. Ships don't come here. Even the Germans at Yap know that it's no manner of good coming here. You are out of the reach of hurricanes, so you can't expect so much as a wreck. You are hundreds of miles from any land; you have got no tools to make a raft, and no provisions to put aboard her if you could make one; you are altogether lonely, and hopeless, and destitute. Robinson Crusoe hadn't a more miserable a look-out. As for that young lady, you have no chance, not the least mite of a chance, sir, of seeing her ever again. You have lost her. Why, then, give her another chance, and let me say you are dead. Cap'en, you can write—that's another of my conditions—a last dying will and testament on a bit o'

paper, which I will send her. Come, be reasonable."

Rex stood still, staring blankly before him. On the one hand, liberty and life—for to stay upon the island was death; on the other, perhaps a hopeless prison.

Yet—Lal Rydquist! If she mourned him as one dead, would it hurt to let her mourn until she forgot him? He shuddered as he thought of her marrying the cold-blooded villain before him. Perhaps she would never marry anyone, but go on in sadness all her days.

I am happy to say that the third course open to him—to give his parole and then to break it—did not occur to him as possible.

He decided according to the nobler way.

"Go without me," he said. And then, without a word of reproach or further entreaty, he left the beach and walked away, and was lost among the palm-trees standing thickly upon the thin and sandy soil.

Captain Wattles gazed after him in admiration.

"There goes," he said, "one of the real old sort. Bully for the British bulldog yet!"

The group of savages stood still, looking on and wondering. They suspected many things: that their white prisoner would run away with the boat; that the crew might fire upon them or try to kidnap them. They also hoped a few things, such as that the white Captain would give them things, fine beads, fine coloured stuffs, or rum to get drunk with. Yet nothing happened. Then Captain Wattles, seeing that Rex Armiger had disappeared, be-thought him of something. And he began to make signs to the black fellows and to show them from the stern of his boat things wonderful and greatly to be desired, and at the same time he gave certain directions to his crew.

Thereupon the savages, moved with the envy and desire of those things, did with one accord advance a few yards nearer.

Captain Wattles spread out more things, holding them up in the sun for their admiration, and making signs of invitation.

They then divided into two groups, of whom one retreated and the other advanced.

Captain Wattles next displayed a couple of most beautiful knives, the blades of which, when he opened them, flashed in the sun in a most surprising manner. And

he pointed to two of the islanders, young and stalwart fellows, and invited them by gestures to come into the water and take these knives.

The crew meantime remained perfectly motionless, hands on oars. Only those experienced in rowing might have observed that their oars were well forward ready for the stroke.

The advanced group again separated into two more groups, of which one consisting of a dozen of the younger men, including the two invited, advanced still nearer, until they were close to the water's edge, and the others retreated further back. All of them, both those behind and those in front, remained watchful and suspicious, like a herd of deer.

Presently the two singled out plunged into the water and swam out to the boat. At first they swam round it, while Captain Wattles continued to smile pleasantly at them and to exhibit the knives. Also the crew dipped their oars without the least noise, and with a half stroke, short and sharp, not moving their bodies, got a little way upon the boat. The swimmers, with their eyes upon the knives, did not seem to notice this manoeuvre. Nor did they suspect though the oars were dipped again and the boat fairly moving.

For just then they made up their minds that Captain Wattles was a kind and benevolent person, and they swam close to the stern of the vessel and held up their hands for the knives.

It is very well known that the Polynesian natives have long and thick black hair, which they tie up in a knot at the top of their heads.

What, then, was the surprise of these two poor fellows to find their top-knots grasped, one by Captain Wattles, and the other by his interpreter, and their own heads held under water till they were half drowned, while the crew gave way and the boat shot out to sea.

There was a wild yell of the natives on shore, and a rush to the water. But the boat was too far out for missiles to reach or shouts to terrify.

"Now," said Captain Wattles, when the half-drowned fellows were hauled up the ship's side, "we didn't exactly want this kind o' cargo, and I had hoped to have stuck to legitimate trade. Wal! this will make it very awkward for the next ship which touches here, and I don't think it will add to Cap'en Armiger's popularity.

After all," he added, "I doubt I was a fool not to finish this job and have done with it. Who knows but some blundering ship may find out the place by mistake and pick him up!"

When the Fair Maria returned to Sydney, some months later, the very first thing Captain Wattles did was to put into the post a bulky letter.

Like Captain Borlinder he had written a Narrative. Unlike that worthy's story, this had all the outward appearance of vraisemblance. I would fain enrich this history with it, at length, but forbear. Yet was it a production of remarkable merit, combining so much that was true with so much that was false.

As a basis we may recall the history, briefly touched upon, of the kidnapping by the ship from the Ladrões.

This story put Captain Wattles upon the track of as good a tale of adventure ending with the death of Rex Armiger as was ever told. Some day, perhaps, with changed names, it may see the light as a tale for boys.

The local colouring was excellent, and the writer's knowledge of the natives made every detail absolutely correct. It ended by an appeal, earnest, religious, to Lal's duties as a Christian. No woman, said Captain Barnabas, was allowed to mourn beyond a term; nor was any woman (by the Levitical law) allowed to consider herself as belonging to one man, should that man die. Wherefore, he taught her, it was her bounden duty to accept the past as a thing to be put away and done with.

"We forget," he concluded, "the sorrows of childhood; the hopes and disappointments of early youth are remembered no more by healthy minds. So let it be with the memory of the brave and good man who loved you, doubtless faithfully as you loved him. Do not hide it, or stifle it. Let it die away into a recollection of sadness endured with resignation. I would to Heaven that it had been my lot to touch upon this island, where he lived so long, before the fatal event which carried him off. I would that it had been my privilege to bring him home with me to your arms. I cannot do this now. But when I return to England, and call at Seven Houses, may it be my happiness to administer that consolation which becomes one who bears my christian-name."

This was very sweet and beautiful. Indeed, Captain Wattles had a poetical spirit, and would doubtless have written

most sweet verses had he turned his attention to that trade.

After the letter was posted, he was sitting in a verandah, his feet up, reading the latest San Francisco paper. Suddenly he dropped it, and turned white with some sudden shock.

His friends thought he would faint, and made haste with a nobbler which he drank. Then he sat up in his chair and said solemnly:

"I have lost the sweetest gell in all the world, through the darndest folly! Don't let any man ask me what it was. I had the game in my own hands, and I threw it away. Mates! I sha'n't never—no, never—be able to hold my head up again. A nobbler! Ten nobblers!"

The letter reached England in due course, and, for reasons which will immediately appear, was opened by Captain Zachariassen. He read it aloud right through twice. Then he put it down, and the skin of his face wrinkled itself in a thousand additional crow's-feet, and a ray of profound wisdom beamed from his sagacious eyes, and he said slowly:

"Mrs. Rydquist, ma'am, I said at first go off that I didn't trust that Yankee any more than the Borlinder lubber. Blame me if they ain't both in the same tale. You and me, ma'am, will live to see!"

"I hope we may, Captain Zachariassen; I hope we may. Last night I lay awake three hours, and I heard voices. We have yet to learn what these voices mean. Winding-sheets in candles I never knew to fail, but voices are uncertain."

CHAPTER IX. THE GREAT GOOD LUCK OF CAPTAIN HOLSTIUS.

THE clumsy cheat of Captain Borlinder brought home to Lal the sad truth that nobody, except herself and perhaps Captain Holstius, believed Rex could still be living. Even the Doctor of the Aryan, who called every time the ship came home, frankly told her that he could not think it possible for him to be anywhere near the track of ships without being heard of. The Company had sent to every port touched by Pacific traders, and to every missionary station, asking that enquiry should be made, but nothing had been heard. All the world had given him up. There came a time when anxiety became intolerable, with results to nerve and brain which might have been expected had Lal's

friends possessed any acquaintance with the diseases of the imagination.

"I must do something," she said one day to Captain Holstius, who remonstrated with her for doing too much. "I must be working. I cannot sit still. All day I think of Rex—all night I see Rex—waiting on the shore of some far-off land, looking at me with reproachful eyes, which ask why I do not send some one to take him away. In my dreams I try to make him understand—alas! he will not hear me, and only shakes his head when I tell him that one man is looking for him now, and another will follow after."

Captain Holstius, slowly coming to the conclusion that the girl was falling into a low condition, began to cast about, in his thoughtful way, for a remedy. He took a voyage to Norway to think about it.

Very much to Lal's astonishment he reappeared a month later, without his ship. He told her, looking a little ashamed of himself, that he had come by steamer, and that he had made a little plan which, with her permission, he would unfold to her.

"I drew the shortest straw," he said; "otherwise I should have gone long ago. Now, without waiting for Captain Wattles, who may be an honest man or he may not be—"

"Not be," echoed the Patriarch.

"I mean to go at once."

Lal clasped her hands.

"But there is another thing," he went on. "Lal, my dear, it isn't good for you to sit here waiting; it isn't good for you to be looking upon that image all day long as well as all night."

"It never leaves me now," she cried, the tears in her eyes. "Why, I see him now, as I see him always while you are talking—while we are all sitting here."

Indeed, to the girl's eyes, the figure stood out clear and distinct.

"See!" she said, "a low beach with palm-trees, such as you read to me about last year. He is on the sands, gazing out to sea. His eyes meet mine. Oh, Rex—Rex! how can I help you? What can I do for you?"

Captain Holstius shuddered. It seemed as if he, too, saw this vision.

Captain Zachariasen said that mummicking was apt to spread in a family like measles.

"Then, Lal dear," said Captain Holstius, "hear my plan. I have sold my

share in the ship. I got a good price for it—three hundred pounds. I am ready to start to-morrow. But I fear that when I am gone you will sit here and grieve worse because I shall not be here to comfort you. It is the waiting that is bad. So"—he hesitated here, but his blue eyes met Lal's with an honest and loyal look—"so, my dear, you must trust yourself to me, and we will go together and look for him."

"Go with you?"

"Yes; go with me. With my three hundred pounds we can get put from port to port, or pay the Captain of a trader to sail among the Carolines with us on board. I daresay it will be rough, but ship Captains of all kinds are men to be trusted, you know, and I shall be with you. You will call me your brother, and I shall call you my sister if you like."

To go with him! Actually to sail away across the sea in quest of her lover! To feel that the distance between them was daily growing less! This seemed at first sight an impossible thing, more unreal than the vision of poor Rex.

To be sure such a plan would not be settled in a day. It was necessary to get permission from Mrs. Rydquist, whose imagination would not at first rise to the Platonic height of a supposed brotherhood.

She began by saying that it was an insult to the memory of her husband, and that a daughter of hers should go off in broad daylight was not what she had expected or hoped. She also said that if Lal was like other girls she would long since have gone into decent crapes and shown resignation to the will of Heaven. That fair warning with unmistakable signs had been given her; that, after all, she was no worse off than her mother; with more to the same effect. Finally, if Lal choose to go away on a wild-goose chase, she would not, for her part, throw any obstacle in the way, but she supposed that her daughter intended to marry Captain Holstius whether she picked up Rex or not.

"He ought, my dear," said Captain Zachariasen, meaning the Norweegee, "to have been a naval chaplain, such is his goodness of heart. And as gentle as a lamb, and of such are the kingdom of heaven. You may trust yourself to him as it were unto a bishop's apron. And if 'twill do you any good, my pretty, to sail the salt seas o'er in search of him who may be for aught we know, but we hope he isn't, lying snug

at the bottom, why take and up and go. As for the Captains, I'll keep 'em in order, and with authority to give a month's warning, I'll sit in the kitchen every morning and keep 'em at it. Your mother can go on goin' on just the same with her teapot and her clean handkerchiefs."

This was very good of the old man, and in the end he showed himself equal to the task, so that Rydquist's fell off but little in reputation while Lal was away.

As for what people might say, it was very well known in Rotherhithe who and of what sort was Lal Rydquist, and why she was going away. If unkind things were spoken, those who spoke them might go to regions of ill repute, said the Captains in discussion.

How the good fellows passed round the hat to buy Lal a kit complete; how Captain Zachariassen discovered that he had a whole bag full of golden sovereigns which he did not want, and would never want; how it was unanimously resolved that Dick must go with them; how the officers of the Aryan for their share provided the passage-money to San Francisco and back for this poor fellow; how the Director of the Company, who had come with the Secretary to see the "mummicking," heard of it, and sneaked to Rotherhithe unknown to anybody with a purse full of bank-notes and a word of good wishes for the girl; how everybody grew amazingly kind and thoughtful, not allowing Lal to be put upon or worried, so that servants did what they ought to do without being looked after, and meals went on being served at proper times, and the Captains left off bringing things that wanted buttons; how Mrs. Rydquist for the first time in her life received supernatural signs of encouragement; and how they went on board at last, accompanied by all the Captains—these things belong to the great volumes of the things unwritten.

All was done at last, and they were in the Channel steaming against a head wind and a chopping sea. They were second-class passengers, of course; money must not be wasted. But what mattered rough accommodation?

All the way across to New York on the Rolling Forties they had head winds and rough seas. Yet what mattered bad weather? It began with a gale from the south-west in the Irish Sea, which bucketed the ship about all the way from the Mersev to Queenstown. The sailors

stamped about the deck all night, and there was a never-ending yo-ho-ing with the dashing and splashing of the waves over the deck. The engines groaned aloud at the work they were called upon to do; the ship rolled and pitched without ceasing; the passengers were mostly groaning in their cabins, and those who could get out could get no fresh air except on the companion, for it was impossible to go on deck; everything was cold, wet, and uncomfortable. Yet there was one glad heart on board who minded nothing of the weather. It was the heart of the girl who was going in quest of her lover; so that every moment brought them nearer to him, what mattered for rough weather? Besides, Lal was not sea-sick, nor was her companion, as by profession forbidden that weakness.

When they left Queenstown, the gale, which had been south-west, became north-west, which was rather worse for them, because it was colder. And this gale was kept up for their benefit the whole way across, so that they had no easy moment, nor did the ship once cease her plunging through angry waters, nor did the sun shine upon them at all, nor did the fiddles leave the tables, nor were the decks dry for a moment. Yet what mattered wind and rain and foul weather? For every moment brought the girl nearer to her lost lover.

When Lal stood on the rolling deck, clinging to the arm of Captain Holstius, and looked across the grey waters leaden and dull beneath the cloudy sky, it was with a joy in her heart which lent them sunshine.

"I see Rex no longer in my dreams," she said; "what does that mean?"

"It means, Lal," replied Captain Holstius, who believed profoundly that the vision was sent direct by Providence, "that he is satisfied, because he knows that you are coming."

Some of the passengers perceiving that here was an extremely pretty girl, accompanied by a brother—brothers are not generally loth to transfer their sisters to the care of those who can appreciate them more highly—endeavoured to make acquaintance, but in vain. It was not in order to talk with young fellows that Lal was crossing the ocean.

Then, the voyage having passed through like a dream, they landed at New York, and another dream began in the long journey across the continent among people whose ways and speech were strange.

This is a journey made over land, and there was no more endurance other than that of patience. But it is a long and tedious journey which even the ordinary traveller finds weary, while to Lal, longing to begin the voyage of search, it was well-nigh intolerable. Some of the passengers began to remark this beautiful girl with eyes that looked always westward as the train ploughed on its westward way. She spoke little with her companion, who was not her husband and did not seem to be her brother. But from time to time he unrolled a chart for her, and they followed a route upon the ocean, talking in undertones. Then these passengers became curious, and one or two of them, ladies, broke through the American reserve towards strangers and spoke to the English girl, and discovered that she was a girl with a story of surpassing interest. She made friends with these ladies, and after a while she told them her story, and how the man with whom she travelled was not her brother at all, and not even her cousin, but her very true and faithful friend, her lover, more loyal than Amadis de Gaul, who had sold all that he had and brought the money to her that she might go herself to seek her sweetheart. And then she told what reason she had to believe that Rex was living, and pointed to the Malay who had brought the message from the sea, and was as faithful to her as any bull-dog.

They pressed her hands and kissed her; they wished her God-speed upon her errand, and they wondered what hero this lover of hers could be, since, for his sake, she could accept without offer of reward the service, the work, the very fortune of so good and unselfish a man.

He was no hero, in truth, poor Rex! nor was he, I think, so good a man as Captain Holstius; but he was her sweetheart, and she had given him her word.

Yet, although she talked, although the journey was shortened by the sympathy of these kind friends, it was like the voyage, a strange and unreal dream; it was a dream to be standing in the sunshine of California; a dream to look upon the broad Pacific; a dream that her brother stood beside her with thoughtful eyes and parted lips, looking across the ocean on which their quest was to be made.

"Yes, Lal," he murmured, pointing where westward lie the lands we call Far East, "yonder, over the water, are the Coral Islands. They are scattered across the sea

for thousands of miles, and on one of them sits Captain Armiger. Doubt not, my dear, that we shall find him."

Now it came to pass that the thing for which a certain English girl, accompanied by a Norwegian sea-captain, had come to San Francisco became noised abroad in the city, and even got into the papers, and interviewers called upon Captain Holstius begging for particulars, which he supplied, saying nought of his own sacrifices, nor of the money, and how it was obtained.

The story, dressed up in newspaper fashion, made a very pretty column of news. It was copied, with fresh dressing up, into the New York papers, and accounts of it, with many additional details, all highly dramatic, were transmitted by the various New York correspondents—all of whom are eminent novelists—to the London papers. The story was copied from them by all the country and colonial papers, whence it came that the story of Lal's voyage, and the reason of it, became known, in garbled form, all over the English-speaking world. But, as a great quantity of most interesting and exciting things, including the Irish discussion, have happened during this year, public interest in the voyage was not sustained, and it was presently forgotten, and nobody enquired into the sequel.

This, indeed, is the fate of most interesting stories as told by the papers. An excellent opening leads to nothing.

But the report of her doings was of great service to Lal in San Francisco. In this wise. Among those who came to see the beautiful English girl in search of her sweetheart was a lady with whom she had travelled from New York, and to whom she had told her story. This lady brought her husband. He was a rich man just then, although he had recently spent a winter and spring in Europe. A financial operation, which was to have been a Bonanza boom, has since then smashed him up; but he is beginning again in excellent heart, none the worse for the check, and is so generous a man that he deserves to make another pile. He is, besides, so full of courage, resource, quickness, and ingenuity that he is quite certain to make it. Also, he is so extravagant that he will most assuredly lose it again.

"Miss Rydquist," he said, "my wife has told me your story. Believe me, young lady, you have everybody's profound sympathy, and I am here, not out of curiosity, because I am not a press man, but to tell

you that perhaps I can be of some help to you if you will let me."

"My dear," said his wife, interrupting, "we do not know yet whether you will let us help you, and we are rather afraid of offering. May we ask whether—whether you are sure you are rich enough for what may turn out a long and expensive voyage?"

"Indeed," said Lal, "I do not know. Captain Holstius sold his share in a ship, and that brought in a good deal of money, and other friends helped us, and I think we have about five hundred pounds left."

"That is a good sum to begin with," said the American. "Now, young lady, is your—your brother what is reckoned a smart sailor?"

"Oh yes." Lal was quite sure about this. "Everybody in the Commercial Docks always said he was one of the best seamen afloat."

"So I should think. Now then. A week or two ago—so that it seems providential—I had to take over a trading schooner as she stands, cargo and all. She's in the bay, and you can look at her. But—she has no skipper."

"Now," said his wife, "you see how we might help you, my dear. My husband does not care where his ship is taken to, nor where she trades. If it had not been for this accident of your arrival, he would have sold her. If Captain Holstius pleases, he can take the command, and sail wherever he pleases."

This was a piece of most astonishing good fortune, because it made them perfectly independent. And, on the other hand, it was not quite like accepting a benefit and giving nothing in return, because there was the trading which might be done.

In the end, there was little profit from this source, as will be seen.

Therefore they accepted the offer with grateful hearts.

A few days later they were sailing across the blue waters in a ship well manned, well found, and seaworthy. With them was a mate who was able to interpret.

Then began the time which will for ever seem to Lal the longest and yet the shortest in her life, for every morning she sighed and said, "Would that the evening were here!" and every evening she longed for the next morning. The days were tedious and the nights were long. Now that they are all over, and a memory of the past, she recalls them, one by one.

each with its little tiny incident to mark and separate it from the rest, and remembers all, with every hour, saying, "This was the fortieth day before we found him," and "Thirty days after this day we came to the island of my Rex."

The voyage, after two or three days of breeze, was across a smooth sea, with a fair wind. Lal remembers the hot sun, the awning rigged up aft for her, the pleasant seat that Captain Holstius arranged for her, where she lay listening to the plash of the water against the ship's side, rolling easily with the long waves of the Pacific, watching the white sails filled out, while the morning passed slowly on, marked by the striking of the bells.

It seemed, day after day, as her eye lay upon the broad stretch of waters, that they were quite alone in the world; all the rest was a dream; the creation meant nothing but a boundless ocean, and a single ship sailing slowly across it.

In the evening, after sunset, the stars came out—stars she had never seen before. They are no brighter, these stars of the equator, than those of the North. They are not so bright; but, seen in the cloudless sky from the deck of the ship, they seemed brighter, clearer, nearer. Under their light, in the silence of the night, the girl's heart was lifted, while her companion stood beside her and spoke out of his own fulness, noble thoughts about great deeds. She felt humbled, yet not lowered. She had never known this man before; she never suspected, while he sat grave and silent among the other Captains, how his brain was like a well undefiled, a spring of sweet water, charged with thoughts that only come to the best among us, and then only in times of meditation and solitude.

Thinking of those nights, she would now, but for the sake of Rex, fain be once more leaning over the taffrail, listening to the slow and measured words of this gentle Norweegee.

As for Dick, he knew perfectly what they left England for, and why they came aboard this ship. At night, when they got into warm latitudes, he lay coiled up on deck, for'ard; all day long he stood in the bows, and gazed out to sea, looking for the land where they were cast ashore.

It matters little about the details of the voyage. The first land they made was Oahu, one of the Sandwich Islands. They put in at Honolulu and took in fresh provisions. Then they sailed again across a lonely stretch of ocean, where there are no

islands, where they hailed no vessel, and where the ocean soundings are deepest.

Then they came into seas studded with groups of islands most beautiful to look upon. But they stayed not at any, and still Dick stood in the bows and kept his watch. Sometimes his face would light up as he saw, far away, low down in the horizon, a bank of land, which might have been a cloud. He would point to it, gaze patiently till he could make it out, and then, as if disappointed, would turn away and take no more interest in it.

If you look at a map you will perceive that there lies, north of New Guinea, a broad open sea, some two thousand miles long, and five or six hundred in breadth. This sea is shut in by a group of islands, great and small, on the south, and another group, all small, on the north. There are thousands of these islands. No one ever goes to them except missionaries, ships in the *bêche de mer* trade, and "black-birders." On some of them are found beach-combers, men who make their way, no one knows how, from isle to isle, who are white by birth, but Polynesian in habits and customs, as ignorant as Pagans, as destitute of morals and culture as the savages among whom they live. They have long since imparted their own vices to the people, and, as a matter of course, learned the native vices. They are the men who have relapsed into barbarism. All over the world there are found such men, they live among the lands where civilised men have been, but where they do not live. On some of these islands are missionary stations with missionary ships.

It was among these islands that they expected to find their castaway, or at least to hear something of him. And first Captain Holstius put his helm up for Kusaie, where there is a station of the American mission.

Kusaie, besides being a missionary station, occupies a central situation among the Carolines; if you look at the map you will see that it is comparatively easy of access for the surrounding islands. Unfortunately, however, communication between is limited. In the harbour there lay the missionary schooner, and a brig trading in *bêche de mer*. She had returned from a cruise among the western islands. However, she had heard nothing of any such white man living among the natives. Nor could the missionaries help. They knew of none who answered at all to the description of Rex. But there were many

places where they were not permitted to land, the people being suspicious and jealous; and there were other places where traders had set the people against them so, that they were sullen and would give no information. There was a white man, more than one white man, living among the islands in the great atoll of Hogoleu. There was a white man who had lived for thirty years on Lugunor, and had a grown-up family of dusky sons and daughters. There were one or two more, but they were all old sailors, deserters at first, who had run away from their ships, and settled down to a life of ignoble ease under the warm tropical sun, doing nothing among the people who were contented to do nothing but to breathe the air and live their years and then die.

One of them, an old beach-comber of Kusaie, who knew as much as any man can know of this great archipelago, gave them advice. He said that it was very unlikely a castaway would be killed even by jealous or revengeful islanders. No doubt he was living with the natives, but the difficulty might be to get him away; that the temper of the people had been greatly altered for the worse by the piratical kidnappings of English, Chilian, and Spanish ships, and he warned them wherever they landed to go with the utmost show of confidence, and to conceal their arms, which they must however carry.

From Kusaie they sailed to Ponapé, where the American missionaries have another station. Here they stayed a day or two on shore, and were hospitably entertained by the good people of the station, their wives making much of Lal, and presenting her with all manner of strange fruit and flowers. Here the girl for the first time partly comprehended what beautiful places lie about this world of ours, and how one can never rightly comprehend the fulness of this earth which declareth everywhere the glory of its Maker. There are old mysterious buildings at Ponapé, the builders of which belong to a race long since extinct, their meanings long since forgotten as the people who designed them. They stand among the woods, like the deserted cities and temples of Central America, a riddle insoluble. As Lal stood beside those mysterious buildings with an old missionary, he told her how, thousands of years before, there was a race of people among these islands who built great temples to their unknown gods, carved idols, and hewed the rock into

massive shapes, and who then passed away into silence and oblivion, leaving a mystery behind them, whose secret no one will ever discover. Lal thought the man who told her this, the man who had spent contentedly fifty years in the endeavour to teach the savages, who now dwelt here, more marvellous and more to be admired than these mysterious remains, but then she was no archaeologist.

Then with more good wishes, again they put out to sea.

They were now in the very heart of the Caroline Archipelago. Nearly every day brought them in sight of some island. Dick, the Malay, in the bows, would spring to his feet and gaze intently while the land slowly grew before them and assumed definite proportions. Then he would sit down again as if disappointed, and shake his head, taking no more interest in the place. But, indeed, they could not possibly have reached the island they sought. That must be much further to the west, somewhere near the Pelew Islands.

"See, Lal," said Captain Holstius for the hundredth time over the chart, "if Rex was right as to the current and the wind, he may have landed at any one of the Uliea Islands, or on the Swedes, or perhaps the Philip Islands, but I cannot think that he drifted farther east. If he was wrong about the currents, which is not likely, he may be on one of the Pelews, or on one of the islands south of Yap. If he had landed on Yap itself, he would have been sent home in one of the Hamburg ships, long ago. Let us try them all."

For many weeks they sailed upon those smooth and sunny waters, sending ashore at every islet, and learning nothing. Lapped in the soft airs of the Pacific, the ship sailed slowly, making from one island to another. Lal lay idly on the deck, saying to herself, as each land came in sight, "Haply we may find him here." But they did not find him, and so they sailed away, to make a fresh attempt.

Does it help to name the places where they touched? You may find them on the map.

They examined every islet of the little groups. They ventured within the great lagoon of Hogoleu, a hundred miles across, where an archipelago of islets lie in the shallow land-locked sea, clothed with forest. The people came off to visit them, paddling in canoes of sandal-wood; there were two or three shins put in for pearls and *bêche de*

mer. Then they touched at the Enderby Islands, the Royalist Islands, the Swede Islands, and the Uliea Islands.

"Perhaps," said Captain Holstius, as they sighted every one, "he may have drifted here."

But he had not.

To these far-off islands few ships ever come. Yet from time to time there appears the white sail of a trader or a missionary schooner, or the smoke of an English war-vessel. The people are mostly gentle and obliging, when they recognise that the ship does not come to carry them off as coolies. But to all enquiries there was but one answer, that they had no white man among them, unless it was some poor beach-comber living among them, and one of themselves. They knew nothing of any boat. Worse than all, Dick shook his head at every place, and showed no interest in the enquiries they prosecuted.

A voyage in these seas is not without danger. They are shallow seas, where new reefs, new coral islands, and new shoals are continually being formed, so that where a hundred years ago was safe sailing, there are now rocks above the surface, and even islands. There are earthquakes too, and volcanic eruptions. There are islands where plantations and villages have been swallowed up in a moment, and their places taken by boiling lather; in the seas lurk great sharks, and by the shores are poisonous fish. The people are not everywhere gentle and trustful; they have learned the vices of Europe and the treacheries of white men. They have been known to surround a becalmed ship and massacre all on board. Yet Captain Holstius went among them undaunted and without fear. They did not offer him any injury, letting him come and go unmolested. Trust begets trust.

So they sailed from end to end of this great archipelago and heard no news of Rex.

Then their hearts began to fail them.

But always in the bows sat Dick, searching the distant horizon, and in his face there was the look of one who knows that he is near the place which he would find.

And one day, after many days' sailing—I think they had been out of San Francisco seventy-five days—they observed a strange thing.

Dick began to grow restless. He borrowed the Captain's glasses and looked through them, though his own eyes were almost as good. He rambled up and

down the deck continually, scanning the horizon.

"See," cried Lal, "he knows the air of this place; he has been here before. Is there no land in sight?"

"None." He gave her the glass. "I see the line of sea and the blue sky. There is no land in sight."

Yet what was the meaning of that restlessness? By some sense unknown to those who have the usual five, the man who could neither hear or speak knew very well that he was near the place they had come so far to find.

Captain Holstius showed his companion their position upon the chart.

"We are upon the open sea," he said. "Here are the Uliea isles two hundred miles and more from anywhere. A little more and we shall be outside the shallow seas, and in the deep water again. Lal, we have searched so far in vain. He is not in the Carolines, then where can he be? Nothing is between us and the Pelews excepting this little shoal."

The charts are not always perfect. The little shoal, since the chart was laid down, had become an atoll, with its reef and its lagoon.

It was early morning, not long after sunrise.

While they were looking upon the chart, which they knew by heart, the Malay burst into the cabin and seized Lal by the hand. He dragged her upon the deck, his eyes flashing, his lips parted, and pointed with both hands to the horizon. Then he nodded his head and sat down on deck once more, imitating the action of one who paddles.

Lal saw nothing.

The captain followed with his glasses.

"Land ahead," he said slowly, "off the starboard bow."

He gave her the glasses. She looked, made out the land, and then offered the glass to Dick, who shook his head, pointed, and nodded again.

"We have found the place," cried Lal, "I know it is—I feel it is—Oh, Rex, Rex, if we should find you there!"

As the ship drew nearer, the excitement of the Malay increased. It became certain now that he had recognised the place, of which nothing could be seen except a low line of rock with white water breaking over it.

The day was nearly calm, a breath of air gently floating the vessel forward; presently the rock became clearly defined;

a low reef, of a horse-shoe shape, surrounded, save for a narrow entrance, a large lagoon of perfectly smooth water; within the lagoon were visible two, or perhaps three islands, low, and apparently with little other vegetation than the universal pandang, that beneficent palm of the rocks which wants nothing but a little coral sand to grow in, and provides the islanders with food, clothing, roofs for their huts, and sails for their canoes.

As soon as Dick saw the entrance to the lagoon he ran to the boats and made signs that they should lower and row to the land.

"Let him have his way," said the captain, "he shall be our leader now. Let us not be too confident, Lal, my dear, but I verily believe that we have found the place, and, perhaps, the man."

They lowered the boat. The first to jump into her was the Malay, who seated himself in the bows and seized an oar. Then he made signs to his mistress that she should come too.

They lowered her, and she sat in the stern. Then the Captain got in, and they pushed off.

"What do you say, Lal?" asked Holstius, looking at her anxiously.

"I am praying," she replied, with tears in her eyes. "And I am thinking, brother," she laid her hand in his, "how good a man you are, and what reward we can give you, and what Rex will say to you."

"I need no reward," he said, "but to know and to feel that you are happy. You will tell Rex, my dear, that I have been your brother since he was lost. Nothing more, Lal, never anything else. That has been enough."

She burst into tears.

"Oh! what shall I tell him about you? what shall I not tell him? Shall I in very truth be able to tell him anything—to speak to him again? Kiss me, before all these men that they may know how much I love my brother, and how grateful I am, and how I pray that God will reward you out of His infinite love."

She laid her hand on his while he stooped his head and kissed her forehead.

"Enough of me," he said, "think now of Rex."

By this time they were in the mouth of the lagoon. The boat passed over a bar of coral, some eight feet deep, and then the water grew deeper. In this beautiful and remote spot Lal was to find her lover. All the while the Malay looked first to the islands and then back at his mistress, his

face wreathed with smiles, and his eyes flashing with excitement.

The sea in this lagoon was perfectly, wonderfully transparent. The flowers of the seaweeds, the fish, the great sea slugs—the *bêches de mer*—collected by so many trading vessels; the sharks moving lazily about the shallow water were as easily visible as if they were on land. This small land-locked sea was, apparently, about three miles in diameter, bounded on all sides by the ring of narrow rocks, and entered by one narrow mouth; the islets, which had been visible from the ship, were four in number. The largest one, of irregular shape, appeared to be about a mile and a half long, and perhaps a mile broad; it was a low island, thinly set with the pandang, the screw palm, which will grow when nothing else can find moisture in the sandy soil; there were no signs of habitation visible. The other three islands, separated from the larger one, and from each other, by narrow straits, were quite small, the largest not more than two or three acres in extent.

The place was perfectly quiet; no sign of life was seen or heard.

Dick pointed to the large island, which ran out a low bend of cape towards the entrance of the lagoon. His face was terribly in earnest, he laughed no longer; he kept looking from the island to his mistress and back again. As they drew nearer, he held up his finger to command silence.

The men took short strokes, dipping their oars silently, so that nothing was heard but the grating of the oars in the rowlocks.

On rounding the cape they found a narrow level beach of sand stretching back about a hundred feet. This was the same place where, five months before, Captain Wattles held his conference with the prisoner.

"Easy!" cried the Captain.

The boat with her weigh on slowly moved on towards the shore. There seemed on the placid bosom of the lagoon to be no current and no tide, nor any motion of the waters. For no fringe of hanging seaweed lay upon the rocks, nor was there any belt of the flotsam which lies round the vexed shores where waves beat and winds roar. Strange, there was not even the gentle murmur of the washing wavelet, which is never still elsewhere on the calmest day.

All held their breaths and listened. The

air was so still that Lal heard the breathing of the boat's crew; the boat slowly moved on towards the shore. The Malay in the bows had shipped his oar and now sat like a wild creature waiting for the moment to spring.

"Hush!" It was Lal who held up her finger.

There was a sound of distant voices. The place was not, then, uninhabited.

The boat neared the shore. When it was but two feet or so from the shelving bank, the Malay leaped out of the bows, alighting on hands and knees, and ran, waving his arms, towards the wood.

It was now three months since the offer of freedom was brought to Rex and refused on conditions so hard. So far the prediction of Captain Wattles was fulfilled; no sail had crossed the sea within sight of the lonely island, no ship had touched there. It was likely, indeed, that the castaway would live and die there abandoned and forgotten. Rex kept the probability before his mind; he remembered Robinson Crusoe's famous list of things for which he might be grateful; he was well; the place was healthy; there was food in sufficiency though rough; and he was not alone, though perhaps that fact was not altogether a subject for gratitude.

The sun was yet in the forenoon, and Rex, inventor-general of the island, while perfecting a method of improving the fishing by means of nets made of the pandang fibre, was startled by the rush of twenty or thirty of the people, seizing clubs and spears, and shouting to each other.

The rush and the shout could mean but one thing—a ship in sight.

He sprang to his feet, hesitated, and then went with them.

He saw, at first, nothing but a boat close to land, and a figure running swiftly across the sandy beach.

What they saw, from the boat, was a group of very ferocious natives, yelling to one another and brandishing weapons, intent, no doubt, to slay and destroy every mother's son. They were darker of hue than most Polynesians; they were tattooed all over; their noses and ears were pierced and stuck with bits of tortoise-shell for ornament; their abundant and raven-black hair was twisted in knots on the top of their heads.

And among them stood one with a long brown beard; he wore a hat made out of a palm-leaf; his feet were bare; his clothes were shreds and rags; his bare arms were

tattooed like the islanders' arms; his hair was long and matted; his cheeks, his hands, arms, and feet were bronzed; he might have passed for a native but for his face and hair.

It was exactly what Captain Wattles had seen, but that the men were fiercer.

When they saw from the boat the white man, they grasped each other's hands.

"Courage, Lal," said Captain Holstius. "Courage and caution."

When Rex, among the natives, saw and recognised Dick, his faithful servant, running to greet him and kissing his hand; when he saw the people suddenly stop their shouts, and gather curiously about their old friend, who had been kidnapped long before with their own brother, he stared about him as if in a dream.

Then Dick seized his master's hand and pointed.

A ship was standing off the mouth of the lagoon; a boat was on the beach; and in the boat— But just then Captain Holstius leaped ashore, and a girl after him. And then—then—the girl followed the Malay and ran towards him with arms outstretched, crying:

"Rex! Rex!"

This must be a dream. Yet no dream would throw upon his breast the girl of whom he thought day and night, his love, his promised wife.

"Rex! Rex! Do you not know me? Have you forgotten?"

For a while, indeed, he could not speak. The thing stunned him.

In a single moment he remembered all the past; the long despair of the weary time, especially of the last three months; the dreadful prospect before him; the thought of the long years creeping slowly on, unmarked even by spring or autumn; the loneliness of his life; the gradual sinking deeper and deeper, unto the level of the poor fellows around him; living or dead no one would know about him; perhaps the girl he loved being deceived into marrying the liar and villain who had sat in the boat and offered him conditions of freedom—he remembered all these things. He remembered, too, how of late he had thought that there might come a time when it would be well to end everything by a plunge in the transparent waters of the lagoon. Two minutes of struggle and all would be over. Death seemed a long and conscious sleep. To sleep unconscious and without a waking, is nothing. To sleep conscious of repose, knowing that

there will be no more trouble, is the imaginary haven of the suicide.

Then he roused himself and clasped her to his heart, crying:

"My darling! You have come to find me!"

But how to get away?

First, he took the ribbons from Lal's hat and from her neck, and presented them to the chief, saying a few words of friendship and greeting.

The finery pleased the man, and he tied it round his neck, saying that it was good. The Malay he knew, and Rex he knew, but this phenomenon in bright-coloured ribbons he did not understand. Could she, too, mean kidnapping?

Meantime the boat was lying close to the beach, and beside the bow stood Captain Holstius, motionless, waiting.

"Lal," said Rex. "Go quietly back to the boat and get in. Take Dick and make him get into the boat with you. I will follow. Do nothing hurriedly. Show no signs of fear."

She obeyed; the people made no attempt to oppose her return; Captain Holstius helped her into the boat. Unfortunately Dick did not obey. He stood on the beach waiting.

Then Rex began, still talking to the people, to walk slowly towards the boat. He was promising to bring them presents from the ship; he begged them to stay where they were, and not to crowd round the boat; he bade them remember the bad man who stole two of their brothers, and he promised them to find out where they were and bring them back. They listened, nodded, and answered that what he said was good.

When he neared the boat they stood irresolute, grasping the idea that they were going to lose the white man who had been among them so long.

I believe that he would have got off quietly, but for the zeal of Dick, who could not restrain his impatience, but sprang forward and caught his old master in his strong arms, and tried to carry him into the boat.

Then the islanders yelled and made for the beach all together.

No one but Lal could tell, afterwards, exactly what happened at this moment.

It was this. Two of the islanders, who were in advance of the rest, arrived at the beach just as Dick had dragged his master into the boat, Captain Holstius had pushed

her off and was standing by the bows, up to his knees in water, on the point of leaping in. In a moment more they would have been in deep water.

The black fellows, seeing that they were too late, stayed their feet, and poised their spears, aiming them, in the blind rage of the moment, at the man they had received amongst themselves and treated hospitably—at Rex. But as the weapons left their hands, Captain Holstius sprang into the boat, and standing upright, with outstretched arms, received in his own breast the two spears which would have pierced the heart of Rex. The action, though so swift as to take but a moment, was as deliberate as if it had been determined upon all along.

Then all was over. Rex was safely seated in the stern beside his sweetheart; Dick was crouching at his feet; the boat was in deep water; the men were rowing their hardest; the savages were yelling on the beach; and at Lal's feet lay, pale and bleeding, the man who had saved the life of her lover at the price of his own.

She laid his pale face in her lap; she took his cold hands in her own; she kissed his cold forehead, while from his breast there flowed the red blood of his life, given, like his labour and his substance, to her.

He was not yet quite dead, and presently he opened his eyes—those soft blue eyes which had so often rested upon her as if they were guarding and sheltering her in tenderness and pity. They were full of love now, and even of joy, for Lal had got back her lover.

"We have found him, Lal," he murmured—"we have found him. You will be happy again—now—you have got your heart's desire."

What could she say? How could she reply?

"Do not cry, Lal dear. What matters for me—if—only—you—are happy?"

They were his last words.

Presently he pressed her fingers; his head, upon her lap, fell over on one side; his breath ceased.

So Captain Holstius, alone among the three, redeemed his pledge. If Lal was happy, what more had he to pray for upon this earth? What mattered, as he said, for him?

At sundown that evening, when the ship was under weigh again and the reef of the lonely unknown atoll low on the horizon,

they buried the Captain in the deep, while Rex read the Service of the Dead.

The blood of Captain Holstius must be laid to the charge of his rival; the blood of all the white men murdered on Polynesian shores must be laid to the charge of those who have visited the island in order to kidnap the people, and those who have gone among them only to teach them some of the civilisation out of which they have extracted nothing but its vices.

As regards this little islet, the people know, in some vague way, that they have had living among them a man who was superior to themselves, who taught them things, and showed them certain small arts, by which he improved their mode of life; if ever, which we hope may not be their fate, they fall in with the beach-combers of Fiji, Samoa, or Hawaii, they will easily perceive that Rex Armiger was not one of them. They will remember that he was a person of such great importance that two chiefs came to see him; one of them carried off two of their people, the other, with whom was a great princess, carried off their prisoner himself.

In a few years' time the story will become a myth. Some of the missionaries are great hands at collecting folk-lore. They will land here and will presently enquire among the people for legends and traditions of the past. They will hear how, long, long ago (many years ago), they had living among them a white person, whose proper sphere—by birth—was the broad heaven; how he stayed with them a long time (many moons); how one after the other white persons came to see him, both bad and good; for some kidnapped their people and took them away to be eaten alive; how at last a goddess, all in crimson, blue, and gold, came with a male deity and took away their guest, who had, meantime, taught them how to make clothes, roofs, and bread, out of the beneficent pandang; how the companion was killed in an unlucky scrimmage; and how they look forward for their return—some day.

The missionaries will write down this story and send it home; wise men will get hold of it, and discuss its meaning. They will be divided into two classes; those who see in it a legend of the sun-god, the princess being nothing but the moon, and her companion the morning star; the other class will see in the story a corruption of the history of Moses. Others,

more learned, will compare this legend with others exactly like it in almost all lands. It is, for instance, the same as the tale of Guinevere returning for Arthur, and will quote examples from Afghanistan, Alaska, Tierra del Fuego, Borneo, the valleys of the Lebanon, Socotra, Central America, and the Faroe Isles.

Five weeks later Lal was married at San Francisco. The merchant who lent her the schooner gave her a country house for her honeymoon.

"She ought," said Rex, "to have married the man who gave her himself, all his fortune, and his very life. I am ashamed that so good a man has been sacrificed for my sake."

"No, sir," said the Californian; "not for your sake at all, but for hers. We may remember some words about laying down your life for your friends. Perhaps it is worth the sacrifice of a life to have done so good and great a thing. If there were many more such men in the world, we might shortly expect to see the gates of Eden open again."

"Unfortunately," said Rex, "there are more like Captain Wattles."

"Yes, sir; I am sorry he is an American. But you can boast your Borlinder, who is, I believe, an Englishman."

The account of Lal's return and the death of Captain Holstius duly appeared in the San Francisco papers. It was accompanied by strictures of some severity upon the conduct of Captain Barnabas B. Wattles, who was compared to the skunk of his native country.

It was this account, with these strictures, which the Son of Consolation found in the paper after posting his packet of lies.

Further, a Sydney paper asked if the Captain Barnabas B. Wattles, of the Fair Maria, was the same Captain Wattles who behaved in the wonderful manner described in the Californian papers.

He wrote to say he was not.

From further information received, it presently appeared to everybody that he was that person.

He has now lost his ship, and I know not where he is nor what occupation he is at present following.

It remains only to suggest, rather than to describe, the joyful return to Seven Houses. We may not linger to relate how

Mrs. Rydquist, who still found comfort in wearing additional crape to her widow's weeds for Rex, now kept it on for Captain Holstius, calling everybody's attention to the wonderful accuracy of her predictions: how Captain Zachariassen first sang a *Nunc dimittis*, loudly proclaiming his willingness to go since Lal was happy again; and then explained, lest he might be taken at his word, that perhaps it would be well to remain in order to experience the fulness of wisdom which comes with ninety years. He also takes great credit to himself for the able reading he had given of the mummicking.

The morning after their arrival, Rex, looking for his wife, found her in the kitchen, making the pudding with her old bib on and her white arms flecked with flour, just as he remembered her three years before. Beside her, the Patriarch slept in the wooden chair.

"It is all exactly the same," he said; "yet with what a difference! And I have had three years of the kabobo. Lal, you are going to begin again the old house-keeping?"

She shook her head and laughed. Then the tears came into her eyes.

"The Captains like this pudding," she said. "Let me please them once more, Rex, while I stand here looking through the window, at the trees in the churchyard and through the open door into the garden, and when I listen to the noise of the docks and the river, and for the white sails beyond the church, and watch the dear old man asleep there beside the fire, I cannot believe but that I shall hear another step, and turn round and see beside me, with his grave smile and tender eyes, Captain Holstius, standing as he used to stand in the doorway, watching me without a word."

Rex kissed her. He could hear this talk without jealousy or pain. Yet it will always seem to him somehow, as if his wife has missed a better husband than himself, a feeling which may be useful in keeping down pride, vain conceit, and over masterfulness; vices which mar the conjugal happiness of many.

"He could never have been my husband," the young wife went on in her happiness, thinking she spoke the whole truth; "not even if I had never known you. But I loved him, Rex."

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